

# STATES OF JERSEY



## JERSEY LEGAL INFORMATION BOARD: INTRODUCTION OF 'USER PAYS' CHARGES

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Lodged au Greffe on 7th October 2003  
by the Finance and Economics Committee

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STATES GREFFE

## **PROPOSITION**

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

to refer to their Act dated 24th June 2003 in which they agreed that no new ‘user pays’ charges would be introduced by Committees of the States without any such charge receiving prior in principle approval by the States Assembly and –

to agree that, with effect from 1st January 2004, commercial users accessing the unreported judgements in the password protected area of the Jersey Legal Information Board website should be charged such annual sums as may be determined from time to time by the Board after consultation with the Finance and Economics Committee.

**FINANCE AND ECONOMICS COMMITTEE**

## REPORT

The Vision of the Jersey Legal Information Board (JLIB) is “to see Jersey’s legal system recognised as the global best for a small jurisdiction”. This is underpinned by a Strategy with 3 key elements –

- to make the law and legal processes more accessible to the public;
- to develop an integrated legal system;
- to strengthen Jersey’s position as a leading business centre.

JLIB has adopted a progressive and forward-looking approach to achieving its Vision, exploiting emerging technologies, but respecting and being sensitive to the way in which Jersey’s legal processes have developed in the light of the Island’s unique historical and social status. JLIB has brought together the heads of all the judicial and legal departments, and other key stakeholders.

The JLIB website has been in existence for over 5 years. During that time the site has been extensively developed. It is now recognised as one of the leading websites of its type and currently receives in excess of 200,000 visits per annum. The contents of the website include the Island’s primary and secondary legislation, case law (the unreported judgments series and the Jersey Law Reports), a section providing information for law students, and many other legal information resources. The website can be accessed at –

[www.jerseylegalinfo.je](http://www.jerseylegalinfo.je).

JLIB has not, until this year, been formally funded. It was originally funded from the IS/IT Fund. In addition, the Judicial Greffe and other departments have sponsored, on an ad hoc basis, some of JLIB’s work. The Finance and Economics Committee has also assisted JLIB in the Law Revision project.

The Finance and Economics Committee has agreed with JLIB that such formal funding procedures and income targets should now be put in place. One of the measures JLIB proposes is to introduce a charge for commercial users to access the password-protected area of the website (the unreported judgments area). The purpose of the charge will be to recover some of the website costs. All other sections of the site would remain accessible free of charge.

This proposal by JLIB is strongly supported by the Finance and Economics Committee, as it has the benefit of reducing calls on general revenues of the States, but also provides funds to continue to develop JLIB’s excellent website in the future which is of particular benefit to commercial users.

Having regard to the number of registered users of the website, to charges applied when accessing similar online databases, and taking into account JLIB’s operational costs, it is proposed that the initial base annual charge from 1st January 2004 should be £1,000 per firm of commercial users. In addition, a further £100 per fee earner, where the number of users of the website who are fee earners in the firm exceeds 2, would be charged. JLIB proposes that these fees should be levied on an annual renewable basis in advance.

It is intended that these proposals will apply only to commercial users of the site (users gaining a commercial advantage from the site’s availability). The States are asked to approve the levying of these charges, and to agree that future variations will be approved by JLIB, after consultation with the Finance and Economics Committee.

As these proposals are limited to the levying of charges on commercial users only, various categories of exemption from full payment will apply (for example, in the case of legal academics and law libraries). Applications for exemption will be considered individually by JLIB and will be dealt with on their own merits.

It should be noted that with effect from 1st January 2004, as part of this process of increasing rationalisation, it is intended generally to withdraw the circulation of unreported judgements other than by publication on the JLIB website.

The financial implications are explained above and there are no additional manpower implications in respect of this matter.