

CHAIRMEN'S COMMITTEE

Meeting of Chairmen held on 23rd May 2008

Meeting Number 81

Present	Deputy S C Ferguson, President Deputy R G Le Hérissier, Vice-President Deputy R C Duhamel Deputy G P Southern [end item 8 to end] Deputy D.W. Mezbourian Deputy J G Reed
Apologies	Deputy A. Breckon Deputy P J D Ryan
Absent	
In attendance	Mrs K. Tremellen-Frost, Scrutiny Manager Mr. M. De La Haye, Greffier of the States [Items 6 and 7 only]

Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
	<p>1. Minutes The Minutes of the 25th and 29th April and 12th May 2008, having been approved were signed accordingly.</p>	
	<p>2. Action update The legal advice received by the Public Accounts Committee from a third party which it had been agreed to circulate to all Chairmen's Committee Members would be circulated forthwith</p>	SF
	<p>3. Internal Review into Working Practices/successes paper The Committee noted that, in respect of the paper on scrutiny successes that this had been progressed by the President, Vice-President and Scrutiny Manager as tasked at Committee meeting of 25th April 2008. That report had been finalised and forwarded to the media with the press release in respect of the Newsletter.</p> <p>With regard to the internal review into working practices report, this had been circulated to all Members with the intention of offering the opportunity to all scrutiny members to discuss this at an away-day. The Committee further considered the possibility of an away-day and it was agreed that individual Panels should consider whether an away-day was required and advise the Chairmen's Committee at its next meeting.</p>	Panels/ KTF
	<p>4. Staffing The Committee received an update on staffing levels and noted that the latest recruit to the post of Scrutiny Officer had now been allocated to the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel providing that Panel with its full allocation of officers. Long-term sickness remained an issue and a temporary worker had been employed to assist the remaining officer allocated to the Environment Panel. The Committee also noted that half a post had been provided to support the Public Accounts Committee.</p>	
	<p>5. Panel reports</p>	

The Committee considered the Panel's and Public Accounts Committee monthly report and noted the following matters additional to those included on the Panel reports:-

Corporate Services

Bovine Semen Importation review: the Committee noted that Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier had withdrawn from this Sub-Panel due to a possible conflict of interest. The Committee congratulated the officer working on this review for her efficiency and the work she had undertaken on it.

Education and Home Affairs

Early Years: this report had prompted the Jersey Child Care Trust to bring an expert to the Island to consider the Panel's recommendations.

Social inclusion: the Committee noted that the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture had advised the Chairman that the review was not now required as the funding had been identified, although it had previously been identified as a funding pressure in the Annual Business Plan. However, the intention was to proceed as planned. The review would be in two parts, the first considering Mont à Abbé in particular and the second, consideration of the provision at Highland's College.

Marriage and Civil Status: The Panel had held a hearing and the Committee noted that the Minister of Home Affairs was not prepared to accept the raft of amendments lodged by the Deputy of St. Martin as there was an important debate to be had on the matter.

User Pays: The Committee was advised that the Minister of Home Affairs had accepted all the recommendation in the report.

Environment

The Committee noted the Chairman's concerns regarding questions asked in the States in respect of the work of the Environment Panel when he had been out of the Island. The Committee also noted the Chairman's concerns at the lack of willingness of other Panels to refine their work programmes to permit some officer support to the Environment Panel in the knowledge that one of the officers allocated to that Panel was absent on sick-leave for a considerable period of time.

Drainage Law: it was likely that the Panel would prepare comments on the Law in advance of the debate.

Health, Social Security and Housing

New Directions: the Committee noted that a delegation from the Health Department was attending on the Panel that afternoon to discuss the status of this initiative.

Public Accounts Committee

In June the PAC would start to look at financial controls and States insurance. In July there would be hearings with the Treasurer of the States and appropriate Chief Executive Officers.

The Committee gave consideration to a request being made to all Departments for information pertaining to all financial transactions

	<p>under consideration which would require a policy change to identify whether Property Holdings had been involved.</p> <p>The Committee also considered the perceived costs of the enquiry into Haut de la Garenne and recommended that the Public Accounts Committee look at the expenditure over the first quarter. Deputy Ferguson agreed to discuss the matter with the Comptroller and Auditor General</p>	PAC
	<p>6. Spending Review [Comptroller and Auditor General]</p> <p>The Committee noted receipt of the above report and the summary papers provided by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. It considered the preferred methodology for progressing scrutiny of the various areas and agreed that Panels should consider areas relevant to their respective remits and prepare a summary paper to be submitted to the Chairmen's Committee, preferably for the next scheduled meeting. It was agreed that such a paper would be useful for future scrutiny panels.</p> <p>With regard to the recommended cut of £100,000 from the 2009 scrutiny budget, the Committee recalled that both the Chairmen's Committee and the Privileges and Procedures Committee had agreed to retain the budget at the 2008 level. However, this was prior to the release of the Spending Review report. The Committee noted that the Privileges and Procedures Committee would be revisiting the matter at its forthcoming meeting and, although some consideration was given to the fact that if other Departments were to have budget cuts, scrutiny should also, decided that it would request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to maintain its original decision.</p> <p>The Committee also agreed to request information from the Comptroller and Auditor General as to how he had arrived at the sum of £100,000.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the original proposed budget allocation and to the fact that the majority of money was spent on research. The Committee considered whether, in the first instance, it would be advantageous to review the calculation of the original scrutiny budget and its original allocation. The Committee considered whether the budget could have been better allocated on qualified staff competent of undertaking research. Communication facilities were also considered in that there was an obligation to rely on existing media which was not obliged to broadcast the scrutiny message as scrutiny might so wish. It was agreed that Deputy Duhamel would look into these matters.</p>	<p>Panels/ KTF</p> <p>SF/KTF</p> <p>SF/KTF</p> <p>KTF/SF</p> <p>RD</p>
	<p>7. Travel/accommodation/subsistence policy</p> <p>The Committee considered a draft policy for scrutiny in respect of off-Island visits and hosting on-Island as appropriate. This had been based on the policy for public employees. Whilst it was recognised that off-Island visits and hosting consultants and similar whilst on-Island was recognised and accepted practice, the Committee was mindful of the fact that the funds were from the "public purse". In view of this, the Committee approved the policy and agreed that it should be forwarded to the Council of Ministers so that Ministers and Scrutiny</p>	KTF

	<p>could both subscribe to the same policy.</p> <p>The Committee also requested that it should be forwarded to the Law Officers' Department.</p>	KTF
	<p>8. Crown Officers -- [Gibraltar]</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Crown Officers in Gibraltar were no longer part of the government. The Committee also noted that Deputy Duhamel had requested relevant documentation and the Committee agreed that this would be beneficial for the Privileges and Procedures Committee.</p>	

Signed

Date:

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President, Chairmen's Committee