



Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Retail Policy

THURSDAY, 13th MARCH 2014

Panel:

Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin (Chairman)
Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade
Connétable M.J. Paddock of St. Ouen
Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville

Witnesses:

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council
Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council

[8:16]

Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin (Chairman):

Good morning, everybody. This is another one of our hearings in the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel into retail policy in Jersey. Before we start this morning's first hearing with the Jersey Consumer Council if we could just go round the table for the benefit of the tape to identify ourselves. I am Deputy Steve Luce, Chairman of the panel.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Thank you very much indeed. Welcome, ladies, to our hearing. Rose, we did not get a submission from you but we know we were keen to talk to you and we know you were keen to talk to us. In the first instance what we need to do is to listen to what you have to say. We are not here to scrutinise you this morning. We want to pick up all the things you have to tell us about retail in general. You are obviously aware why we are here. Retail is under more and more pressure at the moment and we are looking to draw things together to see if we cannot collate a review which is going to at least show a way forward that we might come to move to. If I could hand over to you, your concerns, good, bad, indifferent and where you think we could be making some progress.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Okay, I think the things that have occurred to us are clearly there is this issue in terms of the threat of the internet and there is the issue in terms of how we deal with that. I know separately the whole issue of opening and Sunday opening is being considered and we have obviously made our submissions on that in terms of there probably should be a trial, 18 month or 2-year period, in relation to that. We accept all the arguments for and against that but that is the view that we came to. Around that issue is obviously the issue in relation to local retail presence on the internet which we think is really important going forward. There has been some movement made on that but I think a number of consumers have also said that they would buy more goods locally if you could buy on the internet for example, either would deliver to your door as clearly Amazon, John Lewis do, or have some sort of click and collect system. What we have said is that even if Sunday trading per se did not go ahead what there should be is an opportunity for stores that want to at least have part of their premises open so that people can collect things on a Sunday.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

If the front door is not open the back door is. You could order on the internet, go to that premise on a Sunday and pick it up, a bit like, I have to think, De Gruchys in town have a back door, have they not, for example?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes. It would be a like, I guess, a mini warehouse. Of course that has been common in the U.K. (United Kingdom) now for quite a long time, Oxford Street for example has had that for a number of years. That is one issue. The other issue is, and Anne can probably say a bit more about this because she has spoken to the Inland Revenue on the mainland, prices and V.A.T. (Value Added Tax) and the consumer trying to find out whether V.A.T. is excluded, included. Anne has had an interesting conversation with the Inland Revenue so I do not know if you want to so we do not lose that point.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, a very good point. It comes in 2 ways the whole debate about V.A.T. inclusive pricing, one on our own High Street that people still see they are being charged V.A.T. but I will come back to that. The other side is where people are buying on the internet. Providers are now giving what they call a global price which from a HMRC point of view does not include V.A.T.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Some V.A.T.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Some V.A.T., some of them are. The John Lewis' of this world have V.A.T. and their mechanism is they automatically take it off if you have a Channel Island postcode. However some of them are now charging the global price which does not include V.A.T. allegedly, however it is the same price as if you were purchasing it in the U.K. Inland Revenue cannot do anything about that.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

That was a conversation you had with them, was it not?

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

I spoke directly to them because it is not called V.A.T. Inland Revenue have no sanction at all as they would not if anyone here charging V.A.T. inclusive prices if it is not considered as V.A.T. Clearly on the price tags you have U.K. High Street prices plus G.S.T. and I think that is what really grates with local consumers, that there is no transparency; a lack of possible honesty is where a lot of the key issues are emanating from.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

You could then end up paying more.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Definitely.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Yes, absolutely, but in your discussions, I am sure you did, did you not point out to Inland Revenue that if a company is charging what they call a global price which happens to be identical to the local price plus V.A.T. that the company are obviously up to no good?

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Indeed I did.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

There was really nothing they could do about that?

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

If it is not called V.A.T. there is nothing they can do.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Obviously we did not realise until Anne had that conversation.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is exactly the same as a shop over here. So long as it does not call it V.A.T. it can charge that and take it as profit.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, exactly.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

The end result is there is this breakdown of the honest customer relation with the consumer versus the retailer. If the consumer tries to challenge the retailer about it, we are often told it is shipping costs and so on which of course then for various reasons people will then possibly migrate to the internet which still may be cheaper even with a V.A.T. inclusive price.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

We know, although they only looked at food, the C.I.C.R.A. (Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authority) report recently that shipping costs are probably around 5 per cent. They are certainly not 20 per cent, 15 per cent, whatever. It cannot all be shipping costs clearly. That is an issue for the consumer and I think it makes the consumer somewhat suspicious in the High Street, also the U.K.-based stores, and also there is an argument to say it drives people online because they think: "I will pay perhaps a little bit more if I can get the goods locally", but if it is a lot cheaper online then people are increasingly making that decision. There is that whole area. In terms of our retail generally, the other issues for the Council is that we have tried for a while now to become more involved in trying to talk to people in the markets because we recognise as I think local consumers recognise that if we were to lose the market then that would obviously be a very sad day for the Island. We have found it quite difficult to track people down because they do not seem to have a market traders' association. We have, for example, been able to speak to one lady because she came to our breakfast who owns, I think, it is the Beanies Card Shop, who is really passionate and enthusiastic about the market. She senses this lack of coherence or any sort of common goals within the traders in the market.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do you feel there is a lot more scope for the use of the central market or they are both markets for that matter?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

There is a huge amount of scope. Visitors obviously love the markets but it is one of the jewels in our crown. Local people of all ages, you can see particularly in the weekends using the markets. It is really good that increasingly certainly in the central market there are more places where you can sit down and eat. The Charity Café always produce really, really good food because I know lots and lots of the younger people in my office go there at lunch time because it is really well priced. If you sit there then you get the buzz of the market and you think: "What a really lovely place this is".

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do you think there is enough seating in the market?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I do not think so, no. There could be more and I think sadly there is one the butcher's shops that is now empty in the market and has been for a while, and in the fish market, one went.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Patrick's went a couple of years ago and it has not been replaced.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

That is quite sad because you go in there and that whole side until you get further down is empty.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Have you not heard why those premises are still vacant?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

No.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

In your inquiries nobody has said cost or whatever?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

No, I know that the lady in the card shop has had concerns in terms of not just her rent but also some of the clauses in her lease although I did not look at it in detail.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We have the Assistant Minister, Deputy Noel, in later this morning and we are certainly going to be quizzing him very hard. It is part of his responsibility so we will be looking very hard at the markets. It always seems when we talk about the markets that people come back to us and say: "It is a long way to carry our shopping. If we go to the market for our food and veg, where do we park, how do we get there, how do we get home?" Do you have a view on buses, on traffic, pedestrianisation as well?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I do.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

How do you feel about extending the scope of the King Street/Queen Street pedestrian zones?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

That would be really good because if people congregate they are far more likely to use the area. You are far more likely to have outdoor seating which can only be a good thing. On transport in particular, 3 things, certainly I know one of the veg shops in the market now delivers if you spend over £10. It would be perhaps good if that initiative could be followed by some of the others because it can be heavy to carry particularly vegetables and fish and all of the other things home. Parking, clearly apart from Minden Place and possibly Snow Hill if you can ever get in there, perhaps more could be done in relation to looking at that. Perhaps to make it easier to almost drop off and pick up, perhaps if there were a dedicated like at the airport whereby you do your shopping and then your partner comes along and collects you. That might be an idea.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

What about Hoppa buses? There has always been discussion ever since the Hoppa bus started and then stopped again, we get people calling for the return of the Hoppa bus.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

One of the submissions we made to CT Plus even before we came here was discussion about a town Hoppa bus service and I understand that there is no real appetite for that at the moment.

[8:30]

What did change, and I know this affected a lot of the older people at Le Marais was that there was a bus, I think it was the number 18, which used to do a circular loop. I only know because I live at Havre Des Pas and I used to use it. I used to go the market on a Saturday and use it to go

home again. It was always full of older people who had clearly done their shopping in town. We have raised this with CT Plus because of course it is not a circular service any more.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

No, the problem is you cannot drive from the inner road to the coast road through Le Squez anymore. You used to be able to go up Marina Avenue just past the FB through Le Squez, Le Marais and on to the coast road and it did go round as you say the circular route but they have stopped the traffic driving through there now.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

It becomes then a long way for a lot of the older people from the bus station to the market excluding a whole section of town because they cannot access it.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

To the market, yes. Again I only know because I use the bus a fair amount, a lot of the people who live at La Collette flats at the bottom of Green Street use the number one that used to use the bus.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

That is right. That bus was there.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think some sort of Hoppa service that did the fringes of the residential areas in town could only be a good thing, even if there were some sort of frequent Hoppa between Snow Hill and the bus station without having to pay £1.30 for the privilege or whatever you have to pay on your little card now. A lot more could be done.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you honestly believe that access is a real issue? In terms of the market, just in terms of price you mentioned visiting the market and shopping in the market. People visit the market but they do not necessarily shop in the market, and they do not shop in the market because the people I have spoken to it is about cost. Do you think people are prepared to pay a little bit more to shop in the market than shop maybe in the supermarket which is cheaper?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think there probably is a section of our society who is particularly if it is local produce.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Local produce is now available in the supermarkets. People do not have to go into the Central Market. Waitrose now are quite keen to promote local produce. Do you think that is damaging to the Central Market itself because people can access the sort of products they want? They do not have to go into town to do it anymore now. In respect of the access issues, they do not need to shop in town.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

It possibly falls into another whole area of customer service, does it not, for part of our society?.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I was going to go on to that.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

That can be good and bad.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, exactly.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is an experience. You are going into town to shop because you get a better service, because you get an experience. Do you think in talking about coffee shops that towns generally although it is contracting into the centre a little bit more than it used to do that they are going to have to provide more to pull people into that central part of town? It is not just about access. It is about the whole experience.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

No, it is about the whole experience and it is about the point that was made by Deputy Luce in terms of more places to sit. Perhaps also it is about having, I do not know, perhaps slightly more variety and perhaps potentially, though this is probably controversial, the market moving slightly more away from just food within the market.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

You would be looking for quite a serious revamp, a real proper rebranding of the market to get people interested and excited when they go there.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

If the market is going to survive and attract younger consumers apart from the food outlets which I know they do use, there does need to be a coherent strategy. At the moment there is not and it is a real shame.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

It has been suggested that maybe some entertainment could help draw tourists and people into the market. Do you think there is any merit in that?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think there is always merit in some entertainment. Although it is not quite the same you only have to look at 2 examples I know, Covent Garden where there are always entertainers and Belfast city centre which is really well known for having groups of entertainers. Whether they attract people into the town I do not know. They probably mean that people perhaps stay longer, and I guess that links into one thought I had, because I lived in London when Covent Garden was first revamped, on opening hours. It is not just Sunday, it is also about getting people perhaps in town certainly in the long summer evenings as well. Entertainment could help to do that.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

It helps to forge that public spirit that you were talking about. People are coming and enjoying it, dwell time and good customer service.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Local crafts, and that is how part of the Covent Garden market has built itself up.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you see that is a possibility of developing that on a Sunday rather than a weekday? You maybe can pull locals into town but you need to open the market on a Sunday to be able to do that.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, and I do not know if it is still the case but a few years ago, again using the example of Covent Garden, I know it is very different but they have different goods on different days of the week. A stall might sell, I do not know, cheese one day but then there are lots more local crafts.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am not sure that would be quite so easy to achieve over here because I guess in Covent Garden the cheese supplier on a Tuesday then goes and takes his cheese to another market on a Wednesday as they would do in France.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, I assume but I do not know. The idea of having more variety and more happening at the weekends and certainly in the summer evenings is something that should be explored.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Where do you think we should be going with opening hours? I am not talking specifically about Sunday here but during the day, during the week. Do you think the opening hours need to be tweaked?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

In which direction?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think younger consumers particularly. More shops being open certainly until 7.00 p.m., M&S for example after work is really quite busy, certainly their food hall is. That really is the only choice apart from the Co-op after work.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

There is no legal requirement on any of these shops that they have to close at a particular time at the moment, is there?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

No.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We need to try and find a way to keep people in town or to encourage them to shop in town after work.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

To encourage them, and a lot of it is to do with information, for example I did not realise but De Gruchy during the week is open until 6.00 p.m. but I suspect lots of people do not know that. They obviously must have made that decision at some point.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We get back to the subject we were talking about right at the beginning of internet and we were talking about not knowing what you are purchasing. There is obviously a case here for trying to educate the public a lot better or give them the ability to educate themselves as to when they are on a particular site what they are looking at, when the shops are open in St. Helier, what is available, what is on, what events are happening.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, and the whole market, going back to the market, and Thursday closing, I know the arguments from the traders is that they work incredibly hard and they get up incredibly early but it really, really does confuse people.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Thursday afternoon closing has to stop.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think it is just now in today's market place something which has to change.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Yes, people of the younger generation do not relate to Thursday afternoon closing at all. We can barely just do it because I think when we were very young it happened.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, I can just remember.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

It is interesting we had Chamber come to one of our Council meetings to talk through what their plans are and the way that they are looking to the future. Obviously we went into the whole retail area with them and in dialogue we were talking about some of the big shops like John Lewis, Tesco, but obviously they are planning now 5, 10 years ahead for people changing their habits. That is one thing that we have to be aware of. Although we are looking back and saying: "Consumer habits have changed", I think we have to be far more forward thinking in keeping up with some of the very futuristic changes not just trying to meet today's market place which is what

we are trying to look at consumer needs now. We have to start to put into place a joined up thinking strategy that is going to take us forward several years hence. The way we behave, the way we shop, our interactions with other people are changing dramatically.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think there is a need for something like a retail champion, not necessarily a Minister or certainly someone in Government to take responsibility for that? Can I add on to that a bit? Do you think E.D.D. (Economic Development Department) and certainly Government have been very slow to react to the downturn in retail in the town area?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Probably they were certainly to begin with. There was a growing realisation that something did have to be done and I know there are certain things outside their control, for example, rents in terms of the properties that are privately owned. I know some of those rents certainly were a few years ago absolutely huge.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think landlords are being a bit more flexible at the moment?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I only know this wearing my legal hat, and I understand that some of them are, and that may be why certainly some of the empty units are now being filled. That can only be a good thing.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The feedback we have had is it is more the locally owned shops, local shop owners that are being a bit more flexible but the nationals and the U.K. companies are not, and are not prepared to move on price, is that the feeling you get as well?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

That is the feeling I get, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of a retail champion, who do you see that coming from? Do you see that coming from the private sector or does it need to be somebody in Government?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think probably to have clout, because in some ways Chamber do what they can, it does need to be someone in Government.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We have spoken about Chamber, we have spoken about John Lewis and De Gruchys and the larger chains. Do you share the view that many others do that what keeps our High Street different from every other High Street in the U.K. is that we do have a number of small businesses, local businesses? We still have at the moment the ability to be that little bit different from the U.K. because we are not all U.K. High Street brands.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

The answer to that is yes, of course, I think very few people disagree with that but increasingly, certainly in the main retail area that is perhaps becoming lost.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do you venture to suggest why you think that might be?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

It might be to do with rents.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Again competition, a lot of it is bound to consumers becoming more and more aware of cost. Often I will get people who contact us to say: "That is all very well if I can buy this half price over the internet. Okay, it is not made in Jersey. What am I going to do?" There is this whole area of customer relations, trust, we need to consider as well because people feel as though that the prices over the years have gone up and up and up, and now they are disproportionate. People are unhappy about it.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes. One of the things I do not know is how many of the U.K. branded shops on the High Street are franchised. Therefore if they are franchised they may well be operated by local people. I do not know the answer to that.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We are starting to close in on our time but I do want to talk a little bit about customer service if I could before we close. Do you have any feedback from consumers about the quality of customer service that they receive in St. Helier or anywhere else for that matter?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

It varies from what I have experienced and what I know people have said to us. There are some stores where clearly training is needed but I guess training can be quite expensive, I do not know.

[8:45]

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

It was raised when we took the Consumer Council out on to the High Street last summer, and that is one of the topics that passers-by commented on was the customer service. Sometimes they feel it is not as good as it should be and it does become a barrier and a deterrent to some people. When they are trying to source a particular item there was a lack of interest on occasions, language barrier comes up that they feel that culturally there are different expectations.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Even just communication.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think that is a very good point. It is a topic that cannot be ignored.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is it more so in the smaller local shops or the larger stores, or is it just across the market?

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think it is in different pockets but from what people have said to us it is not endemic in a big store or a small store. It is across and it is something that could be improved dramatically because you notice when you go in and have particularly good customer service how good you feel about it, and how you feel better about the purchase. You generate a loyalty. You begin to have that rapport, relationship which is all important in such competitive times.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Yes, I know we are talking to the converted but a lot of people say the customer service is one of the few things that the internet cannot offer you which somebody on the other side of the counter being helpful, guiding you, giving the benefit of their experience. It is something that certainly we feel needs to be looked at seriously.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think it probably does because it is definitely variable, and I can think of an example where you can go into the same place 2 days running. The girls in it on those 2 days are different and one day I feel I will go back there. The other day I feel I really do not want to go there again. It can even vary within very small outlets.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just interesting the point about somebody trading and opening the Sunday trading market up. Do you think by opening up Sunday trading to the larger stores is going to be damaging to the smaller shops which will ultimately damage choice for consumers because some of the smaller shops may be damaged by Sunday trading? Do you see that being an issue where choice could be at risk by larger shops being able to operate on a Sunday?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

The answer to that is possibly but we really do not know.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are you saying it is worth the risk?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think on balance from the consultations we have had that it is worth the risk.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

As a trial?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

As a trial. This must have happened elsewhere in the universe and therefore there must be information and lessons that can be learned.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

That is where your consumer champion will have such a pivotal role that if small traders are struggling in a Sunday trading trial that is part of the continual ongoing dialogue feedback. It can be monitored and maybe adjusted and considered. That is why I think you need somebody at the helm.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

It may well be that in reality when it happens and if it happens there will not be Sunday trading every single Sunday of the year. It may well be that it is, for example, only at certain times of the year, possibly perhaps not for much longer than it is now. We simply do not know.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just to finish on that point, in terms of retail champion be it an Assistant Minister or whatever, they need to react quickly if we change and things do not work out. They need to react in a quicker way than they have in the past.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

They do, and whoever it is they have to have an understanding of retail but also a passion for the benefits that retail can give to the Island.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Can I just ask something on the back of that? If you feel that we go through the trial period, say of 18 months with everything open and it was not successful, do you think it would be easy to reverse it and go back to as we were after the consumers have had access of 18 months of all the shops being open and suddenly somebody says: "No, this is no good. We have to go back to as it was"? How easy do you think that would be for the consumer to accept?

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

It is really based on good communication and you are right, some of these decisions could be made far quicker and maybe something that phases out because you have obviously mentioned not just Sunday. We are looking at possibly longer opening hours particularly in the longer daylight. There are so many variables here but that is where we have to work with the consumer base, keep people informed so they clearly know that this is a trial and it is for this duration and this is what will happen. If we do not try it then we will never know.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

We will never know.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

We will probably be having a similar conversation with more catastrophic results that we are trying to pull back again but why I think it needs to have a champion at the helm who can be empowered to make some very fast decision making where necessary, and have a go forward thinking plan that embraces all the different elements we have mentioned. There is a huge distrust from the consumers about the big U.K. national companies being here as well. I have been told that several times there is a huge perception they do not put anything back into our society at all, and that is an issue for some consumers.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Not only that, it is communication.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, to look at all these different areas for people.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the internet and the vast number of goods that come in over the internet now that are not taxable, and Amazon have obviously been mentioned in the past that I think Jersey posted 70 per cent of their parcel mail is now through Amazon, do you think consumers would be prepared, make it a little bit more of a level playing field, to pay that extra 5 per cent G.S.T. across the board on everything that comes in over the internet? Do you think they are so used now to getting their goods?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

I think there would be huge resistance to it. It certainly would not be popular. I am not saying you should not do it but it certainly would not be popular.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

To level that playing field for local business who feel that they are looking out will it pull it back a little bit more on to a level playing field? Do you think consumers will react badly against that?

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Consumers would react badly.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Particularly given the current economic climate, yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It does put our retailers at a distinct disadvantage.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

It does.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If you are trying to sell a £200 product and it is 5 per cent more expensive it does seem unfair, although to change it would be unpopular it would be the right thing to do.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

The enormous conundrum we have is that everybody wants the High Street/King Street/Queen Street, the market they all want to go home and buy everything on the internet.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

We all want our cake and eat it.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We do indeed.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Yes, we do.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We have run out time, I am afraid, but can I thank you both very much for coming this morning.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Thank you.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We look forward to speaking to you again.

Executive Officer, Jersey Consumer Council:

Thank you very much.

Chairman, Jersey Consumer Council:

Thank you.

[8:56]