

2.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of St. Saviour of the Chief Minister regarding the plans for the States Property Company and the appointment of a Chairman of the Waterfront Enterprise Board (W.E.B.), or its successor, for the long-term:

Would the Chief Minister explain why the assurances he gave on 19th July 2006 to bring forward the plans for the States' property company to the States in September 2006 have not come to fruition and will he outline his plans for the appointment for a chairman of W.E.B (Waterfront Enterprise Board) or its successor for the long term?

Senator F.H. Walker (The Chief Minister):

Deputy Hérisier is quite correct. I did give assurances to bring a proposal to the States in September and I apologise for the fact that this has been delayed. I do now intend to lodge a proposition before the end of the year, hopefully before the end of November, but if the States agree to the proposal, I will then initiate the process to appoint the chairman of the new company and I hope that the appointments process could start in January 2008.

2.1.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Given the various statements the Chief Minister did make on 19th July, for example: "Following States approval, we will engage in a full advertising and properly constructed recruitment process to find the long-term chairman", would he acknowledge, Sir, that the current incumbent, given he was appointed in a situation of great consternation to certain States Members... would he agree that the current incumbent - highly esteemed though he is - was an interim appointment only and that there will be a full and open process for the long-term?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Yes, Sir.

2.1.2 Deputy A. Breckon of St. Saviour:

In reply, the Chief Minister mentioned a new company. I wonder if he could give the House some indication of what he means by that because I understand originally there was some discussion about W.E.B. being a body that would manage all States property. I wonder if he could give the House some indication of his line of thought.

Senator F.H. Walker:

This has all been put to the States previously but the bottom line is that there will be a proposition - as I said in my reply - coming to this House, hopefully in January, the main purpose of which will be to set up the new property company which I have referred to in this House on a number of occasions and which will take over the duties of W.E.B. and have an extended brief beyond that for the management of property on behalf of the States. That is well known to the House and will all be included in the report and proposition to be debated in - as I said - I hope, January.

2.1.3 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:

It is just for the Chief Minister to clarify. He was guarded in his answer. Can he confirm to the House that he did not bring a proposition in September 2007 but it was promised in 2006? It was not just 2 months late. It was a year and 2 months late or will be more than that.

Senator F.H. Walker:

Yes, Sir, I can confirm that and no one regrets the delay more than I but we have come up hard and fast against the resource issue here, not least in the Law Officers' Department because there is a great deal of legal work to be done here on Articles of Association, et cetera, and we come up against a blockage. There are no 2 ways about it. I have apologised in my original answer to the House. I do so again but I am pushing to bring this forward with the utmost haste.

2.1.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would the Chief Minister confirm that the interim nature of the current appointment has hindered development at W.E.B. and it will only be when a clear picture is put forward of the respective powers of the Planning Minister, for example, that we will have a clear picture of the future of this company and of the role of the future chairman?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I do not accept that the interim chairman has hindered the development of W.E.B. - anything but. I believe that the chairman - former Deputy Gerald Voisin - has done an excellent job in that position, and the Council of Ministers is delighted with the progress that has been made in this respect. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the fact that it is an interim appointment and it has to be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity and I have already given every possible assurance that I can give at this time in response to previous questions.