

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HERISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 2006

Question

Would the Chairman inform members of the estimated hourly cost of operating the States Assembly when it is in session?

Answer

Members will appreciate that it is difficult to give a precise answer to this question as the estimated costs of operating the States Assembly for one hour depend on the assumptions used to allocate overheads etc. For example the Chamber may only be used for States sittings for a maximum of some 40 days per year for 7 hours a day even though the rental recharge needs to be paid for 365 days a year.

For the purposes of this answer matters such as rent have been calculated on the basis of dividing the annual figure by the approximate number of hours the Chamber is used during the year for States meetings.

There are, in fact, very few direct costs that are incurred during a States meeting that would not arise whether or not the Assembly is in session. For example the officers such as the Greffier, the Deputy Greffier, and the recording equipment operators are, of course, paid an annual salary and will undertake other duties if they are not present in the Chamber. Similar considerations apply to the Bailiff, the Deputy Bailiff, the Law Officers, the ushers and indeed to members themselves. The only direct costs that can be avoided if the Assembly does not sit are the hourly costs of paying the tea lady, the cost of the Hansard transcription, the provisions consumed during a sitting and the costs of phone calls made by members in the precincts of the Chamber.

In order to respect the confidentiality of the salaries of individuals PPC does not consider it is appropriate to give the precise breakdown of costs, but the detailed calculations that have been undertaken during the summer recess indicate that the estimated hourly cost of operating the Assembly is £657.90. This covers the following matters –

- salary costs for the Bailiff/Deputy Bailiff
- salary costs for the Law Officers
- an estimated hourly rate for the remuneration and expenses of elected members
- salary costs for the Greffier, Deputy Greffier and Assistant Greffier
- salary costs for the operators of the recording equipment
- salary costs for the tea lady
- salary costs for the ushers
- the rental of the Chamber (includes utilities such as heating, electricity)
- provisions for members
- maintenance of IT equipment for electronic voting etc.
- phone/fax costs
- cost of public entrance security
- transcription costs for Hansard.

Although the calculation on an approximately hourly rate has been undertaken as above to enable a written answer to be tabled in response to this question from Deputy Le Hérissier PPC wishes to point out that it is somewhat concerned by the implication that might underlie the question namely that the number of hours members spend debating matters might somehow be ‘costed’. In submitting the question to the Chairman of the PPC Deputy Le Hérissier stated that he was ‘furious’ at spending 3 hours discussing the proposition on the Aquasplash swimming pool. PPC does not believe that democracy, and in particular the ability of private members to bring forward propositions for debate, should be related to cost and would not wish the fact that it has

responded to this question to be seen as an indication that the Committee believes debates could in future be 'costed' against a notional hourly rate.