

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE FINANCE AND ECONOMICS  
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 20th JANUARY 2004,  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

**Question**

The President recently announced that the Committee would be seeking a further £20 million reduction in States' revenue expenditure in 2005. Would the President assure members that he will seek to prevent further hardship to those least well off in the community by protecting both the Social Security Benefits system and housing rental abatement/rebate schemes?

**Answer**

The Finance and Economics Committee considers that the forecast deficits in States' finances are best addressed by a package of measures that includes significant reductions in expenditure. Indeed, the public made it abundantly clear during the 2004 Budget debate that in the first instance they expect deficits to be addressed through cuts in spending rather than increases in taxes.

At present the Committee is merely proposing a target of a £20 million reduction in budgeted expenditure. It will be for Committee Presidents, and ultimately for States members, to decide whether to accept this target and if so where cuts will be made, and I think I can speak for most, if not all, States members in confirming that we shall endeavour to prevent hardship to the least well off. However nobody should underestimate the magnitude of the challenge we all face.