

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th JANUARY 2006

Question

Would the Minister inform members of his strategies for rejuvenating the agriculture and tourism industries, together with timescales and costings?

Answer

I should start by saying that all policies within Economic Development are being reviewed and where necessary updated as part of the Strategic Plan drafting which is being worked on by the Council of Ministers. Over the next few weeks I will be prioritising the political objectives for the departments and setting out policies to achieve sustainable and well balanced economic growth for now and the future.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Tourism sectors are important not only to the economy, but to the community, in terms of the way the sectors support and enhance Jersey's culture, the environment and heritage. The department will work in close partnership with the Ministers for Education, Sport and Culture, and Planning and Environment in reviewing these areas.

Agriculture

The agriculture remit will be formally delegated to one of my Assistant Ministers for the reasons set-out in my declaration of interests statement. An announcement on that will be made later this week, after I have consulted the Chief Minister. Currently, various agriculture matters are being handled ably by both Assistant Ministers for Economic Development.

It would be inappropriate for me to answer this question. I will ask the Assistant Minister with responsibility for agriculture to set-out his answer to this part of the question when he has been appointed later in the week.

In the meantime, I am advised that I can confirm that the Department is implementing the Rural Economy Strategy (P.112/2005) which was adopted by the States on 19th July 2005. Costings are shown within the Strategy document.

Tourism

In the weeks since being elected I have already had a number of meetings with Tourism Industry representatives regarding the revitalisation of the tourist economy as one of the big challenges within the portfolio.

The Tourism Strategy for Jersey needs to evolve to reflect the objectives of the States Strategic Plan. A revised policy will supersede the most recently published Tourism Strategy document of the former Economic Development Committee published in the autumn of 2004.

The need to revitalise the Tourism Industry has been recognised by the Industry itself. There are now many excellent examples of innovation within the sector now coming to fruition. Significant levels of investment are currently taking place. These are strongly supported by the Economic Development Department which recognises that future success will depend upon a partnership approach between the public and private sectors.

I support a well thought out co-ordinated approach to developing a world class waterfront for the economic and cultural benefit of the Island. It is encouraging to see brands such as Radisson and Center Parcs showing great confidence in the Jersey brand.

There is an important opportunity to develop off season business, building a new client base and attracting

younger professional couples to a new form of Jersey leisure experience.

The inclusion of Jersey Harbours and Jersey Airport within Economic Development will ensure full integration of transport, tourism and economic development strategy; for example, a strategy where variations in landing charges are used to facilitate growth in visitor numbers during periods of lower demand in the season is planned to be introduced in the late spring of 2006.

Realignment of staff and financial resources within the Economic Development Department will ensure that greater focus is placed on identifying key customer attractions and ensuring that these are connected with accommodation and travel providers so that they can be marketed in an integrated way.

The Tourism Development Fund provides a significant opportunity for government funding for facilities which are capable of generating future growth. A report has been commissioned through OXERA, the States economic consultants, to establish how the Tourism Development Fund might best be used in the future to leverage private sector investment to the overall benefit of the Industry.

The Island branding project, which is being managed between the Chief Minister's Department and the Economic Development Department, should enhance Jersey's international standing and, therefore, provide better opportunities for our export industries. The branding project will enhance the sense of pride within the community and lead to a more distinct and single minded positioning for all of our products.

There are excellent opportunities ahead for the tourism industry in Jersey. The strength of our brand and geographical location of the Island are positive factors which will contribute towards future success. However, tourism in the future will be different. Our customers are seeking new experiences and higher quality offerings and we will work towards this success by ensuring that our product development and marketing strategies are geared up to meeting those customer expectations.