

The Official Record – 14th September 2006

Senator W. Kinnard (The Minister for Home Affairs):

Just on 10th October - P.94 - the Council of Ministers is going to be discussing this issue and also, in fact, the Connétables have asked for a meeting to discuss it with me. I am in no particular rush so I am happy for it to slip back to 24th October.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Very well. This is the Policing commercial and profit-making events: 'new user pays' charge, which Members are content will be moved back to 24th October.

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2.2 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the number and cost of States and honorary police officers on duty at the recent "Sure Mobile Service" launch event:

Would the Minister inform Members of the number of States police and honorary police officers engaged on duty in connection with the launch of the Sure Mobile Service at Lower Park on Saturday, 16th September 2006, together with the cost of policing the event, how many officers, if any, were brought in from outside the Island and which of the police forces was responsible for policing the event?

Senator W. Kinnard (The Minister for Home Affairs):

There were 59 States' police officers and one civilian support officer engaged on duty in connection with the Sure Mobile event on 16th September. In addition to this, there were 32 honorary officers engaged from 5 Parishes providing those officers to complement those of St. Helier. The total cost to the States of Jersey Police of policing the event has been estimated to be £13,851. No officers were brought in from outside the Island. The States of Jersey Police had overall responsibility for policing this together, of course, with the valuable support of St. Helier and the other Parishes' honorary forces for which I express my appreciation and thanks.

2.2.1 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin:

May I ask a supplementary, Sir? I ask the Minister if the "user pay" proposition is adopted, approximately how much would the organiser of that event be charged for holding that event? Also, will there be any appeal mechanism put in place so that if the organisers felt they were being over-policed and, therefore, over-charged, what redress will they have?

Senator W. Kinnard:

I think that is a question that is extremely difficult to answer as indeed the States has not yet had an opportunity to debate that proposition and Members will also be aware that there are going to be discussions going on between the Ministries affected to decide how we might take this matter forward. So, I think, Sir, it is impossible to answer a question that at this stage is really not a question that can be set down in that way.

2.2.2 The Deputy of St. Martin:

If I could follow up on that question? If indeed the Minister would look at P.94 of 2006, would the Minister agree that really there is no appeal mechanism within the actual proposition? So, as the proposition stands, would she agree that there is every likelihood it will not succeed unless there are amendments made to it?

Senator W. Kinnard:

I have already agreed with my Ministerial colleagues that we will look at a different approach to this. What I would say clearly is that I have never ever said that all costs would be passed on to any of the event organisers. That would have been an issue that would have been under discussion in accordance with others involved in setting up these events. I think to ask these sorts of questions at

this stage, Sir, is really not sensible because we will be coming back with a new proposition at some point and I think the Deputy would be better advised to hold his questions until a new proposition is on the table. Thank you, Sir.

2.2.3 Deputy S.C. Ferguson of St. Brelade:

I wonder if the Minister could comment on the risk assessment because it seems to me we have one policeman per every 80 people. Now, how does this compare with equivalent events in the U.K.? It seems somewhat of an overkill situation and I wonder about the basis of the risk assessment and perhaps that document could be made available for those of us who are interested?

Senator W. Kinnard:

I have no idea where the Deputy gets her figure of one policeman for every 80 people. There were 59 States of Jersey police officers - as I have mentioned - one civilian support officer, and there were estimated to be some 10,000 people at this event, so I am not quite sure how she does her calculation on that, but I do not really think that is the point. In terms of risk assessment, I think it is important for us not to be armchair strategists after the event. My view, Sir, as the Minister for Home Affairs, is that we in the States pay professionals to give us advice on risk assessments and those, of course, are the States of Jersey Police. Indeed, if States' Members wish to not take that advice and to think that somehow they have a better idea how to risk assess such events, I think it is entirely inappropriate then to lay that responsibility upon the shoulders of States of Jersey Police if anything were to go wrong if there were insufficient resources at an event such as this. I think, Sir, that really the time has come for us to accept that some of us may like to think that we know sometimes better than the professionals, but indeed we do not.

2.2.4 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Given that the number attending the function at Lower Park were roughly about the same number that attended Jersey Live, will the Minister explain why it was not felt necessary this time to bring in members of police from outside the Island?

Senator W. Kinnard:

The simple answer to that question is there were not 3 events going on, over that weekend. There have been lessons that have been learned from this scenario, one of which is that if event-led tourism is going to take off in the way that it seems it is going to, there are now going to be training needs for States of Jersey Police because clearly there is a stretching of resources, particularly when there is more than one event going on. I think another lesson to be learned is better coordination by all of those involved in planning these events to ensure that we do not have too many events happening on the same occasion. It is clear that there has to be better coordination and indeed also when policies have been developed which affect other Ministries, there needs to be, I think, better discussion about the effects on other parts of the States. I do not criticise my colleagues in this at all. I have been criticised perhaps for not consulting with others sufficiently over this but indeed I am not aware that Home Affairs was consulted about the likely impact on policing resources should event-led tourism of this sort be increased in the future. Now, clearly those discussions have to go on and, as I say I make no criticism of my colleagues, I think that going forward we will come out with a policy that I think will be suitable for all. Thank you, Sir.

2.2.5 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

I would like to ask the Minister if she was aware of the implications that having 3 events on one weekend would have such an effect as it did? Was she aware before the event of this and was she consulted whether there was anything that could be done to alleviate such a position? Thank you.

Senator W. Kinnard:

The States of Jersey Police do not organise the timetable of cultural events. We are responsible for policing the Island to the best of our ability, whatever is going on in the Island, but quite clearly that event did show a stretching of resources. We did what we had to do under those circumstances which was, according to the risk assessment, to bring-in assistance through our mutual aid agreements. Clearly, if there were not 3 events going on that risk assessment might have been different and indeed fewer officers would have been included in the policing from the U.K. But as I say, what that has taught us, I think, is that there are going to be training needs which we are going

to seek to address in the States of Jersey Police to ensure that more of our officers have the necessary training in policing these sorts of large events so that we will not perhaps need to call on resources so much from the U.K. But clearly, if there are going to be lots of events going on over a weekend when we maintain a force which is the right size for policing this size of Island, we have to accept that there are going to be costs in terms of overtime, in terms of re-rostering and so on. We cannot get away from that. Thank you, Sir.

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The Deputy of Grouville:

I attended a meeting this week with the Minister of Home Affairs, among other people, whereby she confirmed that the “Policing commercial and profit-making events: new ‘user pays’ charge” (P.94/2006) proposition would be withdrawn from the agenda. I am wondering if she could confirm that she is willing to do this. Thank you.

Senator W. Kinnard:

We had a very constructive meeting and, in fact, I passed a note to the Greffier only yesterday and Members will note it will not be on the next agenda paper because it will be replaced by a new proposition at some point soon. Thank you.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

So you are formally informing the Assembly, Minister, that P.94/2006: “Policing commercial and profit-making events...” is withdrawn and you will replace it with a different one.