

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
BY DEPUTY J.B. FOX OF ST. HELIER**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2006

Question

Would the Minister inform members –

- (a) whether the Police Motor Cycle Unit was disbanded without prior knowledge or approval of the former Home Affairs Committee?
- (b) who authorized the sale of the Police motor cycles and, in particular, when did the Minister know of the intended sale and did the Minister agree to the sale?
- (c) whether any representations were made by Deputy J.B. Fox to the former Home Affairs Committee to retain the Police Motor Cycle Unit, and whether, as a result, a report was to be produced regarding options for the way forward? If so, why was the sale authorised if such a report was still awaited?
- (d) whether an independent authority valued the sale price of the seven motorcycles in question and, if so, which authority?
- (e) whether the sale of the motor cycles was put out to tender either locally or nationally?
- (f) whether the public was consulted on the decision to disband the Police Motor Cycle Unit?
- (g) whether, prior to the disbandment, new radios were purchased specifically for the motor cycle unit?
- (h) whether any work has been undertaken to identify the effectiveness of a Police Motor Cycle Unit in the prevention and detection of crime and safety of the public, or otherwise, by the provision of a Police Motor Cycle Unit and, if so, what did this conclude?

Answer

- (a) A report was submitted to the former Home Affairs Committee informing it of the operational decision taken to disband the Motor Cycle Unit in order to achieve compliance with an H.M.I.C. recommendation in respect of the formation of a pro-active policing unit. Unfortunately, it was leaked to the press before the report was received. The former Committee recognised that failure to act on the H.M.I.C. recommendation could have resulted in the Island being judged to be non-compliant with recognised good practice and also that this additional commitment had to be achieved without any overall increase in resources.
- (b) A report went to the former Home Affairs Committee on 19th September 2005, which asked for authorisation to sell the motor cycles. Verbal representations had been made by Deputy Fox, and as a result, the former Committee gave interested parties until the next meeting to formally submit an alternative proposal which satisfactorily addressed the issues of performance and affordability. No alternative proposal was received, nor did the former Committee at any stage receive any written proposal which offered any alternative view. Two bids were made for the motor cycles, both were acceptable but one was withdrawn.
- (c) The answer to the previous question partly answers the question. In addition, the police report outlined no loss in productivity around roads policing but an increase in detection of crime matters attributable to the 'Proactive Investigation Team' set up, in place of the motor cycles. The statistics speak for themselves. There was also an improvement in response times to incidents following the disbandment of the bikes.
- (d) The motor cycles were sold for the best price available having taken stock of Glass's Guide and the

professional advice of Workshop Technicians.

- (e) The motor cycles were high powered machines which the States of Jersey Police Force does not consider to be appropriate for untrained use on the Island's roads, nor would the service wish to be seen as indirectly responsible for any mishap as a result of their use by other than trained specialist riders. For this reason they were offered to emergency services in the U.K., and were not put out to tender.
- (f) This was seen as an operational decision taken by professionals with a responsibility to deliver the best policing service possible in accordance with H.M.I.C. advice on best practice. The public are frequently consulted about the priorities of the States of Jersey Police, and their views taken into account. They usually place dealing with speeding motorists at or near the top of those priorities, and the job of the police is then to deliver on this and to decide the operational methods used to do so. The disbandment of the motor cycle unit has led to improved performance, not only in that area, but also in other crime related areas as a result of the increased emphasis on intelligence-led policing which the disbandment allowed the Force to do.
- (g) No. The radios were in fact almost obsolete because the Force was moving to second generation encryption of the TETRA radio. Keeping the bikes would have involved spending £3,500 to equip them with new radios this cost being out of all proportion for their usefulness.
- (h) Yes. Research submitted to the former Home Affairs Committee showed that performance had improved in a number of areas following the disbandment of the Motor Cycle Unit. Response times to Emergency calls improved in 2005 without the Unit. Serious Injury Road Traffic Crashes showed a decrease following disbandment. In the 18 months before disbandment the monthly average was 4.16. In the first seven months of 2005 this had fallen to 2. In 2005, the number of detections for speeding increased to an average of 110 a month. Before the Unit was disbanded, the figure was 51. Additionally, with the formation of the Proactive Policing Team which replaced the Unit, detections for burglary and thefts of vehicles have increased substantially. The report submitted earlier concluded that not having a motorcycle unit did not result in any loss of service to the public and that with the addition of a Proactive Unit actually gave a better service to the public with a decrease in reported crime and an increase in detected crime.