

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY T. M. PITMAN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2009**

Question

“Will the Chief Minister clarify and outline what advice, if any, he took prior to taking the decision to effectively increase the expenses limit for members of the Executive by the supply of Blackberry mobiles, setting all such bills against the Chief Minister's office and will he also confirm that no documented policy exists defining a cap on such expenses or that any checks have been carried out to ensure that all bills being paid are work related?”

Answer

The question asserts that a decision has been taken “to effectively increase the expenses limit for members of the Executive by the supply of Blackberry mobiles”. This is incorrect. At the meeting of the Privileges and Procedures Committee of 17th July 2009 it was agreed that members who wished to be provided with a Blackberry should hold the contract in their own name, although departments would be permitted to provide their Minister or Assistant Minister with a departmental Blackberry should they chose to do so.

With the advent of Ministerial government, at the Council of Ministers’ meetings held on 9th December 2005 and 12th January 2006, it was agreed that Ministers and their departments would be able to communicate more effectively by the use of Blackberry mobiles and that training in their use should be given.

All Ministers are fully aware that these States-provided Blackberries are to be used in order to perform their Ministerial duties and not for personal use.

The Deputy will be aware that Ministers should carry out their Ministerial duties in accordance with the Ministerial Code of Conduct (R.14/2006) which was distributed to all States Members. I would, in particular, wish to draw the Deputy’s attention to these extracts from the Code of Conduct:

“Ministers must ensure that no conflict arises, or appears to arise, between their public duties and their private interests, financial or otherwise.

Ministers will receive executive and administrative support from States departments in the conduct of their work, and they must ensure that this support is not used at any time in relation to their private interests, financial or otherwise.”

I attach the full Ministerial Code of Conduct for States Members’ information.

Ministers were issued with Blackberries as a pilot scheme by the Information Services Department (ISD), which forms part of the Chief Minister’s Department, and as such the expenses incurred from the use of Blackberries by Ministers were borne by ISD. Going forward, future invoices for Blackberry use will be billed directly to Ministerial Departments for monitoring.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: The direct billing has been trialled and is planned to go live in November.