

STATES OF JERSEY



SOCIAL AFFAIRS SCRUTINY PANEL: DIVISION TO CREATE A FIFTH SCRUTINY PANEL (P.64/2006) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 18th July 2006
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers supports the view that the current workload of the Social Affairs Scrutiny Panel is too onerous.

In this connection, the Council notes that Standing Orders has stipulated that there shall be 4 scrutiny panels, each with responsibility for examining particular topics. The current allocation of scrutiny responsibility in relation to the 10 ministerial departments is set out in the table below.

Panel	Minister/Department
Corporate Services	Chief Minister Treasury and Resources
Economic Affairs	Economic Development
Social Affairs	Education, Sport and Culture Home Affairs Health and Social Services Housing Social Security
Environment	Planning and Environment Transport and Technical Services

It would certainly appear from the above that the Social Affairs Panel has an excessive workload when compared against the other panels. The Council of Ministers does not, however, consider that a compelling case has been made for additional funding to be made available for the establishment of a second Social Affairs Panel. The additional cost would be in excess of £185,000 a year, and the Council believes that it would be premature for the States to make a commitment to provide this additional funding so soon after the introduction of ministerial government.

The Council recommends instead that the Chairmen's Committee should consider a reallocation of the current areas of responsibility of the 4 scrutiny panels in order to determine whether these can be spread more evenly between the 4 panels.

The Council also notes that Senator Shenton is proposing that there should be a review of the first 12 months of the new ministerial system of government. Such a review would provide a further opportunity to consider the current division of responsibilities, and to establish whether there are any alternative ways in which the 4 scrutiny panels can divide up their work.