Social Affairs Scrutiny Panel Income Support Sub-Panel

Meeting 1
Date: 21st March 2006
Location: Blampied Room, States Building

| Present | | Deputy F.J. Hill, B.E.M., Chairman Deputy J.A. Martin, Vice Chairman Senator B.E. Shenton Deputy G.P. Southern Deputy S. Pitman | | |
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| Apologies | | | | |
| Absent | | | | |
| In attendance | | Deputy D.W. Mezbourian (For a time) Mr. C. Ahier, Scrutiny Officer Mr. W. Millow, Scrutiny Officer | | |
| Ref Back | Agenda | matter | Action | |
| | 1. Chairman and Vice-Chairman | | | |
| | | Panel agreed that Deputy F.J. Hill, BEM, would be its and Deputy J.A. Martin its Vice-Chairman. | | |
| | 2. Matte | rs Arising | | |
| | requests noted that | Panel was requested to pass information received and relating to the review through the Scrutiny Office. It was at members of the Sub-Panel would inform the Scrutiny f they had not received a relevant document. | | |
| | Orders of these issue | Panel noted that a number of issues concerning <i>Standing f the States of Jersey</i> had become apparent. It noted that ues represented a matter for discussion by the n's Committee. | | |
| | The Sub-Panel noted that Scrutiny adverts placed in the Jersey Evening Post were subject to contractual agreements made by the States relating to the format of such adverts. The Sub-Panel was informed that the Chairmen's Committee was in correspondence with Mr. C. Bright, Editor of the Jersey Evening Post. | | | |
| | | onship between the Sub-Panel and Social Affairs | | |
| | Order 13 | Panel noted the provisions for sub-panels under Standing 9: establishment of sub-panels. It further noted provisions anels under Items 4.13 to 4.16 of the Code of Practice. | | |
| | manpowe informed | Panel noted the initial estimates for budget and er allocations to the Income Support Review. It was that transcription costs provided the bulk of the budget of for Public Hearings. | | |
| | well as in review, w | Panel agreed that agendas for Sub-Panel meetings, as formation received in relation to the Income Support would be sent to those members of the Social Affairs Panel who were not also members of the Sub-Panel. | | |

| 4. Meeting arrangements | |
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| The Sub-Panel agreed that it would meet on the following dates. The Officers were requested to make the necessary arrangements: | CA/WM |
| 7th April 2006 at 10:30am | |
| 24th April 2006 at 9:30am | |
| • 2 nd May 2006 at 2:00pm | |
| • 15 th May 2006 at 2:00pm | |
| • 30 th May 2006 at 2:00pm | |
| The Sub-Panel noted that arrangements had been made for the following groups to meet with the Social Affairs Scrutiny Panel. It was agreed that these arrangements would be altered and that each group would be invited in the first instance to meet with the Sub-Panel during its meeting on 7 th April 2006: | CA/WM |
| Jersey Childcare Trust | |
| Age Concern | |
| Citizens Advice Bureau | |
| 5. Public Hearings | |
| The Sub-Panel noted the list of provisional hearing dates. | |
| The Sub-Panel noted that Public Hearings would occur in either the Blampied Room or Le Capelain Room. It further noted that Hearings could theoretically be held in other locations and that research into this matter had occurred. | |
| The Sub-Panel considered whether it would involve those members of the Social Affairs Scrutiny Panel who were not also members of the Sub-Panel in its Public Hearings. It agreed that a decision on this matter would be deferred pending further advice on the provisions under Standing Orders. | |
| 6. Review Progress | |
| The Sub-Panel considered the Progress Update on the Review. | |
| a) Correspondence from Minister for Social Security | |
| The Sub-Panel noted correspondence received from Senator P.F. Routier, Minister for Social Security, on 9 th March 2006, regarding the Terms of Reference for the Income Support Review. The Sub-Panel agreed that correspondence would be sent to the Minister indicating that the Sub-Panel was considering the questions raised in his correspondence. | CA/WM |
| The Sub-Panel noted that it was able to set its own Terms of Reference. It further noted that the first Term of Reference referred explicitly to a stated aim of the Department of Social Security. It agreed that clarification was required as to whether such a reference could legitimately be made. | CA/WM |
| b) Implications of Former Committee Acts | |

The Sub-Panel considered Act A3 of the former Finance and Economics Committee of 16th June 2005 regarding the sum of money allocated by this Department to mitigate the effect of a Goods and Services Tax (GST) on those on low incomes. The Sub-Panel agreed to write to the Minister for Treasury and Resources to ask for clarification on this matter. The Sub-Panel noted that this information could be put into the Public domain subsequent to an answer being received from the Minister.

CA/WM

The Sub-Panel considered Act B3 of the former Employment and Social Security Committee of 3rd March 2005 regarding information received from the Department of Housing. The Sub-Panel agreed to write to the Minister for Social Security to ask for clarification on this matter.

CA/WM

The Sub-Panel noted Act B6 of the former Housing Committee of 11th March 2005 regarding the manner in which people would be affected by the introduction of an income support system.

c) Welfare Payments

The Sub-Panel considered an article which had appeared in the Jersey Evening Post on 20th March 2006 relating to welfare payments. It agreed to write to each Connétable to clarify what arrangements were in place regarding people who were 'asset rich but cash poor'. It further agreed to notify formally the Comité des Connétables of this action.

CA/WM

d) Data Protection

The Sub-Panel noted that Mrs. E. Martins, Data Protection Commissioner, had advised that, as of 9th March 2006, she had not been given sight of the Draft Income Support Law. It was further noted that recommendations had been made during the Shadow Scrutiny phase that the Commissioner be consulted as a matter of course on draft legislation. It agreed to contact the Department of Social Security in order to establish what consultation it had undertaken with the Commissioner.

CA/WM

e) Other matters

The Sub-Panel noted that the document *Pensions at a Glance* (produced by the OECD) would potentially be useful as a source of background information.

The Sub-Panel considered what reference had been made in the *States of Jersey Draft Strategic Plan 2006-2011* to the proposed Income Support system

The Sub-Panel noted that requests for information had been made to the Department of Social Security (with a subsequent follow-up request) but that no information had yet been received.

The Sub-Panel considered the provision of the Christmas and Winter Bonuses and the manner in which they would be affected by the implementation of the Income Support system. It was

| agreed that discussion of this matter would be deferred. | |
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| The Sub-Panel considered whether it would like to use an external adviser during the course of the Income Support review. It was advised that protocols were in place for the appointment process. It was agreed that discussion of this matter would be deferred until the next meeting. | CA/WM |

| Signed | Date |
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| Chairman, Income Support Sub-Panel, | |