

Health, Social Security & Housing Scrutiny Panel

Income Support Sub-Panel

PUBLIC MEETING

Record of Meeting

Date: 13th October 2009

Meeting Number: 2

Present	Deputy G.P. Southern, Chairman Deputy T. Vallois, Vice Chairman Deputy D.J. De Sousa Mr. E. Le Quesne
Apologies	Connétable S.A. Yates Connétable D. Mezbourian
In attendance	C. Le Quesne, Scrutiny Officer

Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
	1. Vice-Chairman The Sub-Panel appointed Deputy T. Vallois as its Vice-Chairman.	
	2. Relationship between the Sub-Panel and the Health, Social Security and Housing Panel The Sub-Panel noted the provisions for Sub-Panels under Standing Orders and the Code of Practice. It also noted its budget, officer allocation and project plan. The Sub-Panel indicated that it would prefer to receive hard copy documentation pertinent to its work and the review. Agendas would be provided at least four working days prior to meetings.	
517/13(8)	3. Terms of Reference The Sub-Panel discussed the review and considered its purpose and focus. It noted that significant effort would be required to access and evaluate the statistical information to ascertain whether benefit levels were appropriately set. The Sub-Panel noted that the terms of reference and the estimated review budget would be forwarded to the Chairmen's Committee. The officer was directed to take the necessary action.	CLQ
517/13(8)	4. Appointment of Advisors The Sub-Panel noted a list of possible advisors to assist with the review. It agreed that two advisors should be appointed. The Sub-Panel was advised that three potential advisors had been contacted but that Dr. Martin Evans, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford who had previously assisted on a review had indicated that he was currently available. The Sub-Panel agreed that given Dr. Evans' local knowledge and qualifications he should be offered the appointment. The Chairman advised that the purpose of appointing a second advisor was to broaden the expertise available to the Sub-Panel and to get a wider perspective from an economist's point of view and as such three	GS/C LQ

	<p>suitable qualified individuals had been approached. Dr. S. Harkness, Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, University of Bath had indicated that she would be available later in the year. The Sub-Panel agreed to appoint Dr Harkness in due course.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel directed the officer to make the necessary arrangements for the contract of engagement initially for Dr. Evans and as appropriate for Dr. Harkness.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted that Dr. Evans was available for a visit to Jersey on the 29th and 30th October 2009 and the officer was directed to make the necessary arrangements and to facilitate meetings for him with Social Security and the Statistics Unit. The Sub-Panel would meet with the Advisor on the 30th October 2009 at 9.30 am. Statistical information had already been requested from the Social Security Department at the Advisor's request.</p>	
517/13(8)	<p>5. Meeting with the Minister</p> <p>The Chairman advised that he had met with the Minister for Social Security to discuss the review and that a consensual approach would be taken.</p> <p>The Minister had advised that the Sub-Panel would be afforded access to the necessary statistical data</p>	CLQ
517/13(8)	<p>6. Review work</p> <p>The Sub-Panel noted and agreed the following -</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That it was important that the social impact of States policies was recognised and that not enough emphasis was afforded to social issues despite documents such as 'Keeping Jersey Special';</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That an innovative and inclusive approach to engaging with the public must be taken. Various options for engaging with the public were discussed and would be developed at subsequent meetings - the use of surveys issued via Social Security database was an option to be further explored. It was noted that a clear focus of what information was required would be necessary;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Members would attend upon groups such as Age Concern, the Good Companions Club and single parent groups to access the financial 'pinch points' for people either wholly or partly dependent on benefit,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Chairman would produce a press release with the officer to launch the review at the appropriate time.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel was advised by the Chairman that he would be pursuing the issue of fettering of discretion as an individual member as it was not within the remit of the Sub-Panel or the Panel to pursue the particular course of action required.</p>	GS
517/13(8)	<p>7. Working Practices</p> <p>The Sub-Panel confirmed that it was happy for the officer to liaise with the Members by email, and when appropriate for Electronic Meetings to be held. The Sub-Panel agreed that such meetings required the Members to respond with a clear decision regarding the matters being determined.</p>	

	<p>The Sub-Panel further agreed that where it had agreed for letters to be sent out, the Chairman would approve the final draft. The Chairman's electronic signature would be added and the letter would be distributed electronically to the Sub-Panel for information rather than being included on a subsequent Agenda.</p> <p>The Sub-Panel further agreed that all communication and requests to the Departments under its remit should be undertaken via its officer.</p> <p>Members would also advise the Chairman and officer of any Sub-Panel related media contact that they may have prior to its occurrence.</p>	
	<p>8. Next Meeting The Panel agreed its schedule of meetings for 2009 and that its next scheduled meeting was due to take place on 30th October 2009 at 9.30 am.</p>	

Initials



Date:

30th October 2009

Deputy G. Southern
Chairman, Income Support Panel

