

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th APRIL 2010**

Question

“Will the Minister confirm whether the Fisheries Department/Planning and Environment chartered an Aviation Beauport aircraft to take officers to St Malo/Dinard on 16th March 2010 and, if so will he -

(a) advise why the Fisheries vessel was not used and outline the weather/sea state for 15th and 16th March 2010;

(b) advise why the visit did not take place on a date when Condor were sailing;

(c) give details of the reasons for the meeting and who attended?

Would the Minister give a detailed breakdown of the total cost of the trip including meals, transport and all other costs and does the Minister consider that value for money was achieved?”

Answer

I can confirm that an aircraft was chartered from Aviation Beauport to take 4 officers and 3 representatives from the Jersey fishing industry to two meetings at Chambre de Commerce in St Malo on 16th March and 17th March 2010. It was intended that 4 representatives of the Fishing Industry would have been available but unfortunately one representative had to withdraw shortly before the travel date. The group were met at the airport by their French counterparts and taken back following the conclusion of their meeting on 17th March.

The meetings were with representatives of the French National and Regional Governments and the French fishing industry. The first meeting – which started at 14.00 16 March and re-convened at 09.00 17th March - was the Joint Advisory Committee for the Granville Bay Treaty. The second meeting was the Joint Management Committee of the Granville Bay Treaty which ran from 14.00 to 16.30 17th March. The French Fishing industry hosted the delegates on the evening of 16th March.

The Joint Advisory Committee meeting was one of the three regular meetings required each year under the International Granville Bay Treaty. Two of these meetings occur in France and one in Jersey. Attendance is required by Jersey Fisheries officers and Jersey fishing industry representatives and the meetings have to be evenly spaced throughout the year. The fishing industry representatives attend the group on a strictly voluntary basis and take time out from their occupation for the meetings.

The Joint Management Committee meeting was one of the two meetings required each year under the International Granville Bay Treaty. Attendance is required by Jersey Fisheries officers, who with Senior French Administrators, are tasked with making joint recommendations to their respective governments.

Turning now to the individual points raised

(a) Advise why the Fisheries vessel was not used and outline the weather/sea state for 15th and 16th March 2010;

The fisheries protection vessel was not used on this occasion for the following reasons:

(i) The fisheries vessel has only 5 seats and should not be relied upon to transport larger groups particularly if inclement weather is prevalent. When planning these meetings at this time of year and in advance, it is not

advisable to predict sea state conditions, which if adverse, would prevent travel to this meeting that is an obligation of the Treaty.

(ii) In order to access the appropriate part of St Malo harbour given the state of the tides on 16th March a departure time of 05.30 would be required. Obviously there would be some time required prior to this to prepare the vessel and indeed crew. Added to this the weather cannot be guaranteed particularly in March so the window when passage is safe is much smaller with a 15m vessel than with commercial operators. Following this early start the Officers and Fishing Industry representatives then had to attend meetings and the civic reception until late in the evening. This does not facilitate proper negotiations particularly when these take place in a foreign language

The sea state for the 15th and 16th March was slight becoming moderate on both days.

(b) Advise why the visit did not take place on a date when Condor were sailing;

The dates for the meetings were set at the last Granville Bay Treaty meeting in October 2009. By setting the dates of the meetings well in advance it ensures the availability of all parties when co-ordination is essential. Officers from different disciplines and tiers of government in France attend the meeting some of whom are involved with French Foreign Affairs. Their attendance is mandatory and their time needs to be booked well in advance as they spend substantial amount of time abroad.

Using Condor for these meetings would have meant travelling to France on Monday 15th March and returning first thing on 18th March with the Officers and fishing industry representatives dedicating 3 full days to the meeting and eating into a 4th day rather than the 2 that were taken. This time has a cost not only for Officers but also for the Fishing industry representatives – who are skippers of boats - who attend in a voluntary capacity. Added to this the crews of the fishing industry representatives have to wait until their skippers return before taking to sea.

Using scheduled flights for the trip would have required travelling via Guernsey on 16th March but returning on 18th March due to departure times of the flights and arriving back in Jersey late in the afternoon of 18th March.

When schedules were made available every attempt at getting the most cost effective option was made well in advance of the trip to get the best possible prices. The Department will always use the cheapest commercial option available while also considering work time away from Jersey.

(c) Give details of the reasons for the meeting and who attended?

As indicated above the meetings were with representatives of the French National and Regional Governments and the French fishing industry. The first meeting on 16th March and continued on 17th March was of the Joint Advisory Committee for the Granville Bay Treaty. This meeting is at heart between the respective fishing industry representatives in order to discuss issues of mutual concern and seek solutions to any conflicts that may have arisen or might well arise in the future. Civil Servants from France and Jersey attend in an advisory capacity and to fully understand any issues that might arise. The second meeting on 17th March was the Joint Management Committee of the Granville Bay Treaty. This is essentially the respective Civil servants crystallising and putting into action the conclusions of the discussions between the industries.

The Joint Advisory Committee meeting was one of the three regular meetings required each year under the International Granville Bay Treaty. Attendance by Department representatives and fishing industry representatives is mandatory and is set out in the Treaty. Two of these meetings occur in France and one in Jersey. Attendance is required by Jersey Fisheries officers and Jersey fishing industry representatives and the meetings have to be evenly spaced throughout the year.

Costs of the Visit

The charter plane in question was a Piper PA31 Navajo and carried 8 persons. The cost of the trip, including meals, transport and accommodation was £2621.43. The Jersey contingent to the meeting were away for 2 working days

The comparative cost of the trip if scheduled flights were used would have been £3116 with all of the contingent being away for 3 full working days. The cost of an extra night accommodation with meals would also have been incurred.

The comparative cost of the trip utilising scheduled ferry crossings would have been £2277 with all of the contingent being away for 3 full working days along with some time lost on the morning of 18th March. The cost of two extra nights accommodation with meals would also have been incurred.

A summary of the comparative costs is included at the end of this answer

In assessing the efficiency of any such trip the potential for lost working time carries significant weight. This is particularly the case for the fishing industry representatives who attend these essential meetings on a voluntary basis but without whom the Treaty would soon come under strain. Consequently whilst using Condor may be the least expensive option in cash terms the loss of production of 4 Officers and 4 fishing industry representatives and their crews for at least a full working day significantly outweighs the difference in the costs.

Every effort is made when attending any of the required meetings to obtain the most appropriate arrangements. If Condor are running frequently then they will be used and in some circumstances – where the trip is the shorter distance to Granville for example and tides etc are appropriate – then the fisheries vessel will be used.

The Granville Bay Treaty is immensely valuable to the Jersey Fishing Industry which is valued at £6.6M per annum. Without the Treaty the good relationship with the French concerning fishing and marine conservation in our jointly fished waters would be jeopardised and this could well lead to a situation where Jersey fisheries would not be allowed to fish outside Jersey’s territorial waters. The cost of servicing this international treaty annually is £6,400, which is only 0.09% of the fishery value. We are exploring as part of CSR a charge for Granville Bay permits which will recoup these costs.

Comparative Costs

As Done	Via Condor	Scheduled Flights
Charter Flights Total: £2110	Ferry Fares Total: £360	Air Fare Total: £1776
Hotel Date/s: 16/3 Duration: 1 x Night Total: £467 @£58.00 per person per night	Hotel Date/s: 16/3,17/3,18/3 Duration: (3 x Nights) Total: £1401 @£58.00 per person per night	Hotel Date/s: (16/3, 17/3) Duration: (2 x nights) Total: £934 @£58.00 per person per night
Lunch Date/s 16/3 Total £44 (Officers only)	Lunch Date/s: 15/3, 16/3 Total: £196 @£11 per person per day	Lunch Date:(16/3,18/3) Total: £196 @£11 per person per day
	Evening Meal Date/s: 15/3,17/3 Total: £320 @£20 per person per night	Evening meal Date/s: 17/3 Total: £160 @20 per person per night
		Transport to airport Date/s: 18/3

		Total: £50
Total: £2621	Total: £2277 + Cost of non-productive Officer time of 15/3 and 18/3 and fishing industry representatives time	Total: £3116 +Cost of Officer time for all of 18/3 and fishing industry representatives time.