

STATES OF JERSEY



ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2009 (P.113/2008): THIRD AMENDMENT

**Lodged au Greffe on 2nd September 2008
by the Deputy of St. Ouen**

STATES GREFFE

1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (a) –

In paragraph (a)i after the words “pages 10 to 12” insert the words –

“except that for success criteria (iii) in Objective 1 on page 10 there shall be substituted the following success criteria –

‘(iii) As part of the prioritisation process, the development of any new initiatives policies or strategies to be supported by all resource implications and funded within the approved total net revenue expenditure for States funded bodies contained in Summary Table A of the 2009 Annual Business Plan;’ ”.

2 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (a) –

In paragraph (a)i after the words “pages 10 to 12” insert the words –

“except that after success criteria (viii) in Objective 1 on page 10 there shall be inserted the following success criteria (with the subsequent success criteria renumbered) –

‘(ix) Annual work programme produced at the beginning of each year by the Council of Ministers, after consultation with the scrutiny panels, setting out the proposed timetable of debate for propositions to be lodged by all Ministers;

(x) all new policies, strategies and initiatives for all Departments identified in the 2009 Annual Business Plan considered by the States;’ ”.

DEPUTY OF ST. OUEN

REPORT

Part 1

An important element of the States approving key objectives and success criteria is that departments will use those objectives as a basis for their Departmental Business/Action Plans in the coming year. It is therefore important that where possible clear targets are used as departments will ultimately be measured against the delivery of those success criteria.

In the 2006 - 2011 Strategic Plan a commitment was given by the Council of Ministers and I quote, "The Council of Ministers will ensure that in the development of any new initiatives, policies or strategies consideration will be given to all cost revenue and manpower implications which may arise from the proposals. Priority will be given to those which can be achieved within approved revenue and manpower resources".

Under Commitment 6 of that same document entitled "We will ensure that States Services are necessary, efficient and good quality", further priorities were included which required action. Under the heading "What we will do", 6.1.5 states "Ensure that any new policies will be financed within existing resources unless other wise agreed by the States Assembly in the Annual Business Plan".

This amendment is therefore simply aimed at reinforcing the commitments made by the Council of Ministers in the Strategic Plan.

Part 2 (ix)

Following the introduction of ministerial government much comment has been made on the manner in which the States organise their business in the States Assembly. There are times when conflict has arisen between Scrutiny Panels and Ministers over the timing and lodging of propositions for debate, which has not been helpful. Equally, at certain times of the year, the Assembly is faced with large amounts of business to deal with in a single States sitting which can affect the quality of debate and decision making process.

Following the Review of Ministerial Government carried out by the Privileges and Procedures Committee a number of recommendations were made which are reproduced in the Appendix.

It is clear that if one is to improve the present situation, the Council of Ministers must coordinate and develop an overall annual work programme that takes into account all departments aspirations for the introduction of new policies, strategies or pieces of legislation. Although each department produces an annual work programme, there is not presently an effective way of coordinating the separate work programmes or ensuring that those programmes are realistic.

Efforts have been made to address this situation but as yet little improvement has been noticed. Furthermore if Scrutiny is to be effective, sufficient time must be allowed for reviews to take place, especially if consultation is to play a part in the process.

Improved time management must be in the best interests of all concerned and this amendment should go some way to achieving this.

PART 2 (x)

The second part of amendment 2 is simply to underline the procedure of how new policies, strategies and initiatives identified in this Business Plan are approved and implemented. Departments and Ministers clearly have a responsibility to direct and manage their individual departments however it is equally important that the States as a whole sign up to and demonstrate support for, new proposals brought forward by them.

In recent years, comments have been made during debates that the States have sanctioned approval of new initiatives, policies and strategies solely on the basis of a few words included in the Business Plan. Equally Ministers have given assurances on more than one occasion that more detailed information will be provided on a particular subject or that they will come back to the States when a particular policy is further developed. In order to avoid any uncertainty and build greater trust in those in authority, it is only right that the commitment already given to involve this Assembly in the decision making and implementation process is restated. The aim is not to frustrate the work of Ministers but increase the ability of Ministers to implement plans in the knowledge that the States, and indeed the public, are fully informed and support their efforts.

Finally, at the end of this year, a new Council of Ministers will be formed and within four months a new Strategic Plan will be brought to the States for debate. It is also quite likely that the plan will not just build on previous plans but also incorporate new thinking. I am sure that the present membership of the States would not want to in any way, restrict the ability of the new Assembly in determining the way ahead. This amendment will help in ensuring that freedom is maintained.

This in turn will help maintain the commitment to the strategic direction approved by the States as laid out in the Strategic Plan.

Financial and Manpower implications

If these amendments are approved and action taken, the likely result is a better use of available resources rather than actual changes in existing financial or manpower levels.

APPENDIX

Recommendation 24	<p>At the beginning of each year –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Council of Ministers must inform the Chairmen’s Committee of its indicative programmes in relation to the Annual Business Plan and the Budget, and every third year, the Strategic Plan, and the dates of the key meetings which Scrutiny members would be invited to attend in relation to each;• Scrutiny must provide the Council of Ministers with scheduled dates of each of its Panels for meetings/hearings in relation to these documents; and dates upon which it would seek informal briefing meetings with officers, and meetings with Ministers; <p>with a view to ensuring the timely transfer of information, the dovetailing of meetings of the Executive and Scrutiny, sufficient time for Scrutiny and the efficient and effective use of manpower resources.</p>
Recommendation 40	<p>The Chairmen’s Committee and the Council of Ministers should meet specifically for the purpose of exchanging information on the work programme of Ministers and the review programme of Scrutiny. The agenda for this meeting should be agreed in advance, and participants should be aware of their rôles in the discussion. On both sides, prior work should be undertaken to agree priorities and set timetables for the work/review programmes. Update meetings should be timetabled and held if changes to the programme have occurred or are likely to occur, in order that everyone is fully informed, and to ensure as far as possible that no abortive work is undertaken.</p>