

STATES OF JERSEY



STATES STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 – 2014 (P.52/2009): FIFTH AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 19th May 2009
by the Deputy of St. Mary

STATES GREFFE

1 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Aim on page 7, before the first bullet point insert the following new bullet point –

- Maintain the overall population of the Island at its present level.”

2 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Priority 1 on pages 10–11, in the section entitled “What we will do”, after the last bullet point insert an additional bullet point as follows –

- Evaluate on an ongoing basis Peak Oil and Climate Change and report to the States once a year on their impacts on policy for Jersey.”

3 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Priority 4 on pages 15–16, in the section entitled “What we will do”, for the fourth bullet point (which begins “Introduce a range of environmental taxes”) substitute the following bullet point –

- Investigate the introduction of environmental taxes and charges part of the pursuit of environmental objectives as set out in Priority 13.”

4 PAGE 2 –

After the words “attached as Appendix 1” insert the words –

“, except that in Priority 11 on pages 25 –

- (a) in the section entitled “Why we must do this”, in the fourth bullet point for the words “maintaining their own healthy lifestyles” substitute the words “for adopting or maintaining healthy lifestyles”;
- (b) in the section entitled “What we will do”, after the last bullet point insert an additional bullet point as follows –
 - Support healthy choices via policies in all areas.
- (c) in the section entitled “Key Indicators”, after the last bullet point insert an additional bullet point as follows –
 - Indicators of positive health across the population.”

DEPUTY OF ST. MARY

REPORT

Amendment 1

The principal reason for bringing this amendment is that it is in line with public opinion, as it has been stated many times. Of course it is a challenging prospect, as the COM's own Appendix A to their Appendix 2 shows. But then the prospect of net inward migration at +150 heads of household per year as shown in the Council of Ministers' (COM's) Appendix B to their Appendix 2 is also a challenging prospect.

The problems we face in connection with the ageing population cannot be wished away by bringing in more people. As the COM's own calculations show (see table on page 11 of Appendix 2 to P.52/2009) the fiscal contribution which would be made by net inward migration that they are proposing would have an effect which is smaller, and in most cases much smaller, than any of the other policy measures.

It is these other policies, together with pursuing the goal of achieving more with less in every part of the Island's life (a concept which does not appear in P.52/2009) and the goal of reaching a society geared to satisfying the needs of Islanders and not to the pursuit of endless economic growth, which will deliver the changes that are needed.

At the top of page 9 of Appendix 2 to P.52/2009 the COM writes: "The Council does, however, recognise and indeed shares public concern about the impact of inward migration on the Island, in particular keeping the population at a sustainable level, protecting green fields and not creating a problem for the future through too much inward migration in the short term".

It is notable that St. Helier simply does not get a mention in this context of possible concerns about the effects of an ever-rising population. Except that on page 20 of Appendix B of Appendix 2 we learn where the 6,150 units of accommodation which would be required under +150 heads of household will go. Not in St. Helier, but in "the built-up area." P.52/2009 says absolutely nothing about the implications of such an increase in the urban population.

Growing the population, in spite of the effect it would have on the quality of life in Jersey, and in spite of public opinion, is in fact a shibboleth of Jersey's ruling party. They would have to promote it, regardless of the situation. Population has steadily risen over the decades, and public opinion has been steadily against this happening. No-one has been measuring quality of life in the Island or people's happiness or sense of fulfilment, but research elsewhere shows that increasing wealth does not lead to increased happiness. There is no evidence to show that this increase in population, and the economic growth it was intended to create, has made people happier.

So, when +150 heads of household would have yielded a steady population, and when +250 gave the required population increase, then the COM was proposing +250. When the demographic assumptions changed, and + 150 heads of household would give the required population increase, then +150 became the policy.

This amendment recognises the trade-offs which have to be made and, finally, draws a line in the sand.

Financial and manpower implications

In terms of implementing the necessary controls for zero growth in the population, the issues to be solved, the mechanisms to be put in place and the costs thereof would be

virtually the same as for any other limit number for net inward migration. So there would be no major change from the financial and manpower implications of what the COM would already be planning to spend in implementing the policy they are proposing, as stated on page 5 of their report:

“Any additional financial and manpower implications will be brought forward in specific proposals and the Annual Business Plan”.

Amendment 2

As the “Strategic Plan” has no section for over-arching principles, in spite of making frequent use of the word “sustainable,” the need to consider the twin themes of Peak Oil and Climate Change has to be inserted at this point in the Plan. It can be argued that their effect will be most dramatic in the sphere of business, but of course the effects of these 2 global constraints will be felt in every aspect and corner of our society.

It is imperative that the States and the COM be well-informed about the latest developments on these issues and therefore well-positioned to take whatever action is necessary. Ignoring these constraints would indeed be to govern with a blindfold on. How else can we assess the likely impact on the Tourism industry for example, or on the need for sea-defences, or on the future of inflation or indeed of the entire economy?

The report accompanying P.52/2009 states (page 3 near foot) –

“With this in mind, it is essential that this Strategic Plan achieves a balance between –

- (1) dealing with the current economic downturn in order to reduce the impact of the global economic situation on Jersey’s residents, communities and businesses; and
- (2) developing a plan to secure the long-term future of the Island.”

This amendment is designed to improve the Strategic Plan by putting a little flesh on the bones of item 2 in the above statement.

Financial and manpower implications

This work will form part of the existing overall strategic planning process. There are therefore no financial and manpower implications to this amendment.

Amendment 3

The inability of the COM and the States to agree environmental taxes has stifled much-needed initiatives. There is still no Environmental Education Adviser at Education because the post would have been funded “by environmental taxes”. Improvements to the bus service are on hold because there is no money to undertake serious improvements, as having better bus services “costs money”. Leaving aside the fact that if Cost Benefit Analysis were to be carried out, then it would likely be seen that improving bus services in fact saves money, it is not right that worthwhile environmental policies just get put on hold because the issue of environmental taxes has not been resolved.

This amendment seeks to put environmental objectives on the same footing as any other objectives of the States. It is not acceptable that some environmental objectives

have their own special funding, which the States or the COM then proceed to get bogged down over, and so are hostages to fortune, while other objectives get funded through the usual sources of taxation.

The amendment also seeks to bring consistency into this aspect of the Strategic Plan. The existing paragraph is inconsistent with P.52's AIM as set out on page 7, where bullet 4 reads –

- “• Protect the countryside and our environment”.

Only by decoupling environmental taxation from environmental objectives can this aim be realistically achieved.

Financial and manpower implications

This work will form part of the existing overall strategic taxation planning and evaluation process. There are therefore no financial and manpower implications to this amendment.

Amendment 4

Amendment 4(a) adds explicitly the notion of proactively seeking to influence those with unhealthy lifestyles. Much is made within this Priority and rightly so of the costs of health care if nothing is done to improve the general health status of the population. Therefore it is clearly not enough to help people to “maintain” their lifestyles if “healthy.”

Amendment 4(b) adds the notion that to “make the healthy choice the easy choice” (page 25, paragraph 1) involves government action across departments other than the Health and Social Security Department (H&SS). Without this amendment the entire responsibility for enabling a healthy population rests on H&SS; this is clearly a nonsense and is not in the spirit of the holistic approach of New Directions.

Amendment 4(c) requires little explanation. It is more motivating for both government and people if indicators are positive. If the aim is good health, then it is indicators of good health which we should focus our attention on.

Financial and manpower implications

These amendments all clarify the policy being proposed, or form part of normal policy creation and evaluation.

There are no financial and manpower implications to this amendment.