SCRUTINY PANEL RELEASES REPORT ON TOURISM SHADOW BOARD PROPOSALS

The Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel has today released its report on the Minister for Economic Development’s proposals to set up a Tourism Shadow Board. It is intended that Shadow Board structure will improve the development and performance of the tourism industry. The concept of the proposed Tourism Shadow Board, which will act in an advisory capacity to the Minister, is to attract individuals with significant business experience in the areas of tourism and marketing, from within and outside the Island, to provide advice to the Minister on future strategy for Jersey’s tourism industry. It will also undertake an oversight role of the operations of Jersey Tourism and make recommendations about its possible re-organisation, which may well see the idea of public/private partnership style body (for example Jersey Finance) revisited.

Having heard from the key stakeholders, the Panel is satisfied that the establishment of the Tourism Shadow Board is a sensible step at this stage, with limited cost implications. The Panel has, however, made a number of findings and recommendations to the Minister, including:

Findings:

- The Tourism industry is supportive of the establishment of the Tourism Shadow Board, but sees it ultimately as a short term stepping stone to an independent PPP structure for Jersey Tourism.

- Based on the strength of feeling within the Tourism industry and the ‘clean slate’ approach of the Minister for Economic Development, it is quite possible that within 12 months of being constituted the Tourism Shadow Board could make a recommendation for significant restructuring and reorganisation of Jersey Tourism.

- Whilst the political accountability for public sector expenditure on Tourism rests with the Minister for Economic Development and the financial accountability rests with his Chief
Officer, it is quite correct that those responsibilities are reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding (that will govern the relationship between the Minister and the Shadow Board). However, all parties agree that undue political influence on the work and recommendations of the Tourism Shadow Board must be avoided.

Recommendations:

- There should be a mixture of local and non-local members on the Tourism Shadow Board, but the Minister for Economic Development should be guided by the opinion of the Shadow Board’s Chairman as to the most appropriate balance and size, to help achieve a Shadow Board which remains independent of a “Government” majority.

- The Tourism Shadow Board’s Chairman should be centrally involved in the recruitment process of its non-executive directors, and be a member of the appointment panel.

- As with the new Tourism Strategy, the Minister for Economic Development must ensure that the Tourism Shadow Board is given the independence to take ownership of the process of developing recommendations for the future organisational structure of Jersey Tourism.

- The Minister for Economic Development should allow the Tourism Shadow Board to undertake its work on recommendations regarding the future organisation, structure and rebranding of Jersey Tourism, covering all areas that it deems necessary including the role and responsibilities of the Chief Executive of any recommended organisation, before making any related decisions.

Panel Chairman Deputy Steve Luce said:

‘With general widespread support for this initiative throughout the industry, it is hoped that this Shadow Board can produce a new strategy and operational programme for the Tourism Industry which all participants can sign up to with confidence. The key to success will be the independence of the Shadow Board. The Minister for ED has assured the Panel that he will not “interfere” and will allow the Shadow Board to get on and make their own decisions. This political independence will be vital. The Board will need to move quickly, be bold and brave, and make timely decisions. The Tourism Industry in Jersey cannot be allowed to contract further, and the Minister has advised the Panel that he will listen and, more importantly, act on Board advice.’