

STATES OF JERSEY



ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2009 (P.113/2008): THIRD AMENDMENT (P.113/2008 Amd.(3)) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 12th September 2008
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers rejects this Amendment of the Deputy of St. Ouen.

Part 1

The Council cannot accept Part 1 of this Amendment.

The Council has already given a commitment that the development of any planned new initiatives, policies or strategies will be supported by the likely resource implications and delivered within the approved total net revenue contained in Summary Table A of the 2009 Annual Business Plan. Prioritisation was a key part of the business planning process and the Council is confident that it can deliver the elements of Business Plan within the proposed net revenue summary outlined in Summary Table A. The amendment is therefore unnecessary.

More importantly, this amendment removes any flexibility to deal with unforeseen or changing circumstances. For example, this year, the States has already agreed additional funding for the investigation into historic child abuse and arrangements for an outbreak of pandemic flu. As the amendment is worded, this funding would have to be held within cash limits with a consequential unacceptable impact on the funding of services. The States must have the right to consider whether such unforeseen matters should be funded by an increase in cash limits. Indeed the Finance Law accords the right to the Minister for Treasury and Resources to bring such matters before the States for decision. The amendment cannot change this and is therefore meaningless. The Council of Ministers therefore asks the States to reject it.

Part 2

The Council of Ministers rejects Part 2 of the Amendment of the Deputy of St. Ouen.

2(ix)

The Council rejects this item. There are a number of criteria that may affect target dates for finalising Propositions for debate set during a planning process that can be more than a year ahead. These include unavoidable delays in policy preparation; a change in priorities due to unforeseen circumstances; Law Drafting issues; Scrutiny involvement; the outcomes of consultation processes requiring further work. There may also be unforeseen items during the year that require States approval. This means that whilst the Council sets its overarching programme for the year ahead, it is difficult to be precise at the start of the year when particular items will be finalised for consideration by the States.

The Council appreciates that Scrutiny Panels also wish to plan their activity early on in the year. However, a more effective and practical way for this to be achieved is for individual Scrutiny Panels to meet with the appropriate Ministers to discuss intended policy programmes for the year.

The Council will undertake to provide, early in the year, a summary of the major policy issues that are planned to be brought to the States for consideration during the year.

2(x)

The Council of Ministers rejects this item. Approval of the Annual Business Plan does not automatically confer approval of any major policies, strategies and initiatives highlighted for development. As a matter of principle all such items are, and will continue to be, brought to the States for consideration. The Annual Business Plan also includes many lower level operational initiatives and 'business as usual' type items which are included to give Members a fuller picture of the priorities of a Minister for the coming year. The Report accompanying the amendment makes it clear that the intention is not to frustrate the work of Ministers. However, as it is currently worded, this amendment would require all of these items to also be brought to the States for consideration. This would both be unworkable and impractical.