

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE FINANCE AND ECONOMICS
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY, 22nd JULY 2003 BY SENATOR E.P. VIBERT**

Question 1

Would the President advise members whether the Committee has recently appointed a press officer? If the answer is in the affirmative, would the President advise the Assembly –

- (a) whether this post was advertised, and if so, where it was advertised and how many candidates applied?
- (b) who made the appointment?
- (c) of the terms and conditions of the post?

Question 2

Would the President inform members whether the Committee was advised of and considered any potential conflicts of interest that could arise in this appointment, given the professional background of the press officer appointed?

Answer

I can advise members that the Finance and Economics Committee has **not** recently appointed a press officer. Question 1 parts (a), (b) and (c) and question 2 are therefore not appropriate.

However, I would advise members that the Finance and Economics Committee does use the services of a public relations firm in relation to communicating to the public its tax and spending policies, its Fiscal Strategy, and related matters.

Whilst I regularly speak for the Committee in terms of press releases and answers to routine questions, (and could thus be deemed its 'press officer'), and will continue to do so, I am not a communications expert. The Committee requires specialist advice on the best way in which to make what are very complex issues regarding the Island's tax and spending challenges more easily understood by the wider public.

These fiscal issues, which are also inter-connected with the Fundamental Spending Review and the States Strategic Plan, are of crucial importance to the future of the Island and need to be explained carefully and clearly to the public.

It is for these reasons that the Committee has appointed, for a trial period ending in December 2003, a firm of communications specialists.

The public relations firm used by the Committee was appointed following a competitive tendering process and consideration of several submissions. The terms of its contract are necessarily confidential to the parties concerned, particularly as there could be further competitive tendering should the requirement extend into 2004.

The Committee does not consider that the employment of this firm of communications advisers represents any conflict of interest for the party concerned. The support has been conducted professionally and with integrity, and will I hope continue to be so.