

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES
COMMITTEE BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 9th NOVEMBER 2004

Question

As the Committee has now encompassed the former Planning and Environment Committee and part of the Agriculture and Fisheries and Public Services Committees over the passed 21 months, would the President advise members –

- (a) of manpower savings that have been achieved by the rationalisation of these Committees?
- (b) the financial savings that have been achieved, in figures, across the entire area?
- (c) of the progress of the proposal to separate the planning function from the remaining functions of the department, and when this is likely to occur?

Answer

When the States approved P.70/2002, the decision to amalgamate the Public Services Committee and Planning and Environment Committee was taken on the basis that there were functions within the two Committees that needed to be reviewed and, where necessary, moved in order to provide clarity and clear distinction between regulation, policy and operations. The amalgamation was not made with a specific aim to reduce staff but, clearly with any initiative such as this, it is always the intention to seek out efficiencies and make savings where appropriate. One of the first tasks was to move the Water Resource section from Public Services to the Environment Section of the Committee in order to provide a clear distinction between the operations section and regulator.

In specific answer to the question raised, I can advise as follows –

- (a) since the beginning of 2003 to date, three posts have been saved within the combined Environment and Public Services Committee and the former Agriculture and Fisheries Committee. These are Chief Officer, Planning and Environment, Environmental Advisor to the States and a Finance Manager from Agriculture and Fisheries.

Members will be aware that early in 2004 the change programme was launched and the Fundamental Spending Review for 2005 commenced. These programmes identified a number of savings required for 2005 and in some cases, savings over a three and five year period have been identified for certain areas within the Committee. As a result of this programme, in 2005 there will be 32.80 posts saved, some of which have already been achieved as staff vacancies have occurred.

In the case of the ex Agriculture and Fisheries sections that have transferred to Environment and Public Services, the savings will be achieved over a three year period commencing in 2005. In the Parks and Gardens section, a five year change programme has been agreed commencing in 2005; however, as staff vacancies have occurred, these savings have already been taken.

In the Meteorological service, a saving of 6 posts has been identified for implementation by 2006;

- (b) the financial savings achieved from the three staff savings are £286,922. The budget cuts imposed throughout the combined departments in 2003/4 have resulted in savings in the order of £1.5 million being achieved although obviously the Committee received some growth in key service areas to be set against this. Throughout 2004, the Committee has been preparing for the implementation of the 2005 Fundamental Spending review that requires further savings to be achieved in the order of £1.85 million;

- (c) the proposal to split the planning function was highlighted in P.203/2002 – Strategy for the Future Resourcing of Planning and Building Core Services. The proposition indicated that the Committee would investigate the feasibility of setting up a separate planning and building agency. Previous Committee's have considered this option and decided to keep the service in-house as to separate the planning and building control process from planning policy would result in the loss of co-ordination between these two key elements of the planning process.

When the previous Chief Officer of the Planning and Environment Department retired, a single Chief Officer for the combined Environmental and Public Services Committee was appointed in September 2004. One of the key objectives for this post is to identify and implement the remaining changes that are required in the Department to ensure the organisational changes required for Ministerial Government are in place by December 2005. In the first two months a number of significant changes in the administration areas have been made to streamline the organisation and plans are being developed for further organisational changes that will be implemented in the first half of 2005. It is only through this appointment of a single Chief Officer having total control that it has been possible to thoroughly review all areas and produce plans that will deliver the effective services to the public in the future.

I do not anticipate any separation of the existing Committee structure until the end of 2005.”