

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

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th JANUARY 2005

Question

As the President has stated, during the 2004 Budget debate, that once the existing funding for mains drains is exhausted no additional mains drains extension can be put in place, would he inform members what action, if any, the Committee intends to take to obtain additional funds for this area of work, and what areas of the Island are still not served by mains drains?

Answer

The Environment and Public Services Committee's policy on the extension of the foul sewer network is to continue to extend the system to serve as many areas of the Island that remain unconnected to the network as can practicably and affordably be connected, subject to the availability of funds.

The Committee originally requested £5.14 million for the 2005 sewers capital programme, but this was reduced to £3 million as a result of the FSR process. This was confirmed by the States in the Resource Plan and in the Budget Debate.

When considering how best to utilise the available funding, the Committee's first priority must be given to its programme for the maintenance of the existing sewerage network. This entails the replacement or upgrading of various sections of the existing sewerage system to ensure that the structural condition and required hydraulic capacity within the system is maintained.

Having identified the required funding for these high priority reconstruction schemes, any remaining available funds will then be utilised for schemes to extend the foul sewers. The funding voted for the sewers programme in 2005 is sufficient to enable one major foul sewer extension scheme to be undertaken.

In the period 2006 to 2009, early indications are that the funding for the sewers capital programme could be further reduced to approximately £2 million per year. With this level of funding, virtually all of the available funds will be required for the reconstruction programme, and hence it is unlikely that any funds will be available to undertake sewer extension schemes in any of these years.

In view of this, the Committee intends to press hard during the Capital Funding Review process later this year, to gain agreement to increase the amount voted to the sewers programme, so that work on the sewer extension programme may continue, albeit, at a much slower pace than in the past.

If this is unsuccessful, the Committee will consider alternative funding sources. Options could include an annual sewerage charge or a supplement on water rates. It should be stated that in most countries, finance for their sewerage networks is provided not by taxation, but by some form of direct charge. Indeed, water and sewerage charges in the UK have risen this year because of the need for the Water Companies to invest in their networks. These challenges are not unique to Jersey.

As regards the areas of the Island still not served by mains drains, I would confirm that approximately 5000 properties (14%) remain unconnected, these properties being predominantly in the rural areas throughout the Island.

The Committee believes that more properties should be connected, and the Committee is determined to put in place a strategy to meet the short and long term requirements for the disposal of sewage on the Island.