

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28th MARCH 2006

Question 1

- (a) Would the Chief Minister inform members what involvement, if any, Scrutiny Officers had in the meeting of 35 senior and front line civil servants to discuss community involvement initiatives in January 2006 referred to under A1. of the Council of Ministers Minutes of 28th February 2006?
- (b) Following the adoption by the States of P.16/2006 (Establishment of a Citizens' Panel: Approval by States Assembly), will the Chief Minister indicate whether he still intends to establish an "Oversight Panel" or use expert witnesses to survey the opinions of Islanders and, if so, how will the appointments process operate independently and without duplication of the legitimate aims of scrutiny?

Answer

- (a) The minutes of 28th February 2006, relate to the half-day workshop on 11th January 2006, that was attended by officers from a range of States departments. Letters of invitation were sent to all Chief Officers, with a request for nominations of officers with an active involvement in community engagement. No nominations were received in respect of the Scrutiny Officers, but they would be welcome to participate in future events.
- (b) The Council of Ministers is indeed still considering the establishment of a Citizens' Panel, as noted in its comments on P.16/2006. Deputy Southern may recall that this subject was discussed on 9th March 2006, at a joint meeting of the Council of Ministers and the Scrutiny Chairmen's Committee, when it was agreed to explore the notion of a Citizens' Panel serving both the executive and scrutiny functions. As agreed at that meeting, this is something on which the Council of Ministers and Scrutiny Chairmen's Committee will need to work together, and I look forward to further discussions on this point. These discussions will, I am sure, address jointly the issue of how appointments would be made to the panel.

Question 2

Will the Chief Minister state whether the actions outlined in paragraph 5.2.8 of the draft Strategic Plan 2006-2011, namely "to meet, where possible, international standards set through the extension of international treaties and conventions" extends to include the International Labour Organisation conventions 87 (on freedom of association and protection of the right to organise) and 98 (on right to organise and to bargain collectively)?

Answer

The actions described in the draft Strategic Plan "*to meet, where possible, international standards set through the extension of international treaties and conventions*" includes all the international agreements and conventions which currently apply to Jersey or may be extended to the Island in future.

The Island Authorities have reported to the International Labour Organisation on conventions 87 (on freedom of association and protection of the right to organise) and 98 (on right to organise and to bargain collectively) as recently as August 2004, outlining the measures that have been taken to fulfil as fully as possible their obligations under these conventions. The report was copied to the TGWU and the Chamber of Commerce, and information on the report was also included in the periodic report on international conventions and agreements laid before the States on 21st December 2004.

Further information on these Conventions has also been presented to the States on 21st March 2006, by the Minister for Social Security ('Employment Legislation: Petition – comments', P.214/2006)

Question 3

What measures does the Chief Minister envisage to correct “the deficiency in the Teachers’ Pension scheme” as noted on page 11 of the draft Strategic Plan 2006-2011?

Answer

Following on from the Strategic Plan, the States will be asked in the Business Plan later this year to agree that additional funding should be made available to reduce the deficiency in the Teachers' Pension Scheme. This additional funding would consist of an increase of £1.3 million a year in the employer's contribution to the Pension scheme over the period 2007 to 2011, and would be added to the budget for Education, Sport and Culture.

In addition, a review of the teachers' pension scheme is currently under way, and this review will identify whether any further measures are needed. The States will, of course, be kept informed as to the outcome of that review.

Question 4

Based on the target for 2% economic growth over the 5 year period of the draft strategic Plan 2006-2011, how much revenue does the Chief Minister estimate being placed in the “Stabilisation Fund” proposed on page 11 of the Plan?

Answer

As noted in the Strategic Plan, it is envisaged that budget surpluses will be paid into the Stabilisation Fund at times of economic growth and that withdrawals will be made from the Fund at times of recession. The actual amounts to be paid into the Fund will, therefore, depend on the performance of the economy.

The Treasury and Resources Minister is currently working on more detailed proposals for the establishment of the Stabilisation Fund. This work will address such issues as when the fund should be established, what the size of the fund should be, how it should be financed initially, and what rules should apply in relation to contributions and withdrawals.