

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 7th NOVEMBER 2006

Question

Notwithstanding the Minister's commitment to a wide-ranging review of pension provision as outlined in the States Strategic plan, item 2.1.2, to start in 2008 for implementation in 2010, as given in responses to previous questions, will the Minister consider separately, in advance of the above review, the introduction of legislation relating to pension schemes similar to the 1997 and 2004 U.K. Pension Acts to address, in particular –

- (a) the statutory right for trustees of company pension schemes to award cost of living increases;
- (b) the right of beneficiaries to elect representatives to the boards of trustees of pension schemes;
- (c) the introduction of a pensions regulator

and, if not, why not?

Answer

As Members are fully aware the Social Security Department is exceptionally busy developing the new Income Support Scheme for implementation in 2007, whilst at the same time administering existing benefits. This initiative represents a fundamental change to the social protection benefit schemes in the Island, the amount of work for which cannot be underestimated. In addition, amongst other initiatives, the Department is working towards the introduction of the next phases of the Employment Law and developing proposals for the Winter Fuel payment which it will also be asked to introduce next year.

The initiative which Deputy Southern is asking the Department to pursue is a significant proposal demanding resources in terms of funds and manpower which the Department does not have for 2007 unless it is to drop an initiative agreed by the States in the Business Plan 2007.

I have already committed to reviewing pension regulation within the wider review of pension reform once the Income Support Scheme is bedded in and indeed the States have agreed that the Department do so in the Strategic Plan, as well as endorsing the timescale for delivery.

The correct time to amend the Department's initiatives for 2007 was in debating and agreeing the States Business Plan for that year.