

## **2.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of St. Saviour of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the delay in presenting the New Directions Report:**

Would the Minister explain the delay in presenting the *New Directions Report* which Members were assured would be available in early February 2007?

### **The Bailiff:**

Assistant Minister.

### **Deputy C.J. Scott Warren of St. Saviour (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services):**

Members will know that Senator Stuart Syvret, Minister for Health and Social Services, is currently indisposed following a short period of hospitalisation. In early January 2007 officers completed the first draft of *New Directions* and then this was submitted to the Minister for comments. In response the Minister proposed a significant number of changes which officers agree have strengthened the document considerably. These comments from the Minister have then to be discussed with the stakeholders who work with a small team of officers to ensure that there was no discordance between themselves and a Minister on any of the issues raised. This process has now been completed and a more robust draft is currently with the Minister. The Minister has advised officers that he intends to make one or 2 minor amendments as soon as he is able to. It is anticipated that this will be within the next few weeks. When the Minister has signed off the *New Directions* draft it is the intention to put this document in the public domain as quickly as due process allows.

### **2.2.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:**

As the Assistant Minister knows, this has been - as with the *Overdale Report* - a matter of intense frustration and while we have great sympathy with the Minister, and if she could convey our best wishes to him, would the Assistant Minister acknowledge that she is running the Ministry and that this matter could be resolved at this very point in time?

### **Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

No, Sir, I do not accept that it can be resolved when, as I have explained, the Minister has one or 2 tweaks to make. He is the person who is reviewing the draft. He is the person who, as Minister, has the responsibility for this draft and therefore, Sir, to wait one or 2 more weeks until the Minister is recovered sufficiently seems more than reasonable to me.

### **2.2.2 Deputy S.C. Ferguson of St. Brelade:**

Would the Deputy Minister not acknowledge that this is outside the general ethos of Scrutiny where the Health Scrutiny Panel should have been brought into the discussion at an earlier stage so that they might make a positive contribution? Would the Assistant Minister like to comment on this?

### **Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

I am aware that this document, when the Minister has reviewed it, is going to go to Scrutiny. I believe that many people have worked and been involved with the initial draft but it first has to go to the Council of Ministers, to States Members; and when it has been through the relevant stakeholders the Health Scrutiny Panel will be involved in the consultation process.

### **2.2.3 Deputy S.C. Ferguson:**

Looking at the success of looking at draft policies shown by the panels dealing with the Treasury Minister and the Minister for Social Security, does the Assistant Minister not understand that it would have been a great deal more helpful if they had brought Scrutiny in at an earlier stage?

### **Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

I believe that Scrutiny is being brought in at a stage where it can contribute. This is not set in stone, that is why this is going to be out for public consultation. It has to be approved and, as I said, go to

Council of Ministers, States Members and the Scrutiny Panel. I understand what the Member is saying but I do feel that Scrutiny still will have a very relevant role in this process.

**2.2.4 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:**

To follow on from Deputy Ferguson, being a member of the H.S.S. Scrutiny Panel, we have asked for this document, and being the Chair of the Sub-Panel on income support, it is not frustration I have felt over the last few weeks, it is total embarrassment when we are interviewing people in organisations who are telling us about *New Directions* and what it contains. They are also telling us the timescale. It is out for public consultation between June and September and this is draft 2 of the main document. Now, Scrutiny has asked, Sir, for an 'in confidence' draft weeks and weeks ago and could the Assistant Minister not try and get Scrutiny this document, because, as I say, there are more people out there who know what is going on *New Directions* than the Panel that is supposed to be looking at it and scrutinising it. Thank you, Sir.

**Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

As I said in my original answer, the Minister has asked for significant changes and this is why this document has not yet come to the Scrutiny Panel. As soon as the Minister is happy with this document it will go to all the stakeholders, but obviously the Scrutiny Panel will have their opportunity to review it.

**2.2.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Assistant Minister not accept the delay in publication of such an important document is causing consequent delays on discussing other serious issues, not least a population review which is ongoing as we speak?

**Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

I accept that no delay is what we would wish but as I have said in my original answer, the Minister is currently indisposed. He has to be able to complete the final draft version before it goes to the Council of Ministers, the Scrutiny Panel and States Members. So I would ask that under these circumstances Members do understand that the Minister is going to complete this at his earliest opportunity, as I said in my answer, Sir, certainly within the next few weeks.

**2.2.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Would the Assistant Minister, notwithstanding the excellent job she is doing in holding the fort, accept that a 3 month delay on replying to a Scrutiny report which was called the worst report the Minister had ever seen - notwithstanding the Minister's understandable delay from the indisposition aspect - is utterly unacceptable and can she promise she will use her good offices to ensure that the Health Department starts responding much more professionally to these matters than has been the case?

**Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

The answer to the question of the Overdale response has been tabled and the Deputy does have that response and has been assured in that response he will hear at the earliest opportunity that is available.

**2.2.7 Senator F.H. Walker:**

It may be asking the Assistant Minister to double confirm but could I ask her to do so? Could I ask her to confirm that the *New Directions* policy has not yet gone to the Council of Ministers, that it will go to Scrutiny at the same time as it goes to the Council of Ministers and it will then be subject to an extended period of consultation?

**Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

That is my understanding.

**2.2.8 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin:**

Deputy Le Hérisssier mentioned about the Overdale report. Could the Assistant Minister give the House some idea as to when the G.P. (General Practitioners) Out of Hours response will be coming to the Education Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel?

**Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

I would think, for the same reason, there has been a delay on this but I will certainly give the answer to the Deputy during the day.

**The Bailiff:**

Final supplementary, I think, Deputy.

**2.2.9 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

I totally appreciate the Assistant Minister's frustration that we have been waiting an extra 3 months for a document because the Minister is not very well and is incapacitated. Could the Assistant Minister explain to the House why, given the extent of the time that the Minister is off, she has not been given full power? I am not having a go at the Assistant Minister, but is she not frustrated that she had not been given full power to step into the Minister's shoes and get on with the job that she has been appointed for. Thank you, Sir.

**Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

Firstly, Sir, I have not said that I am frustrated. **[Laughter]** I am assuming full power that an Assistant Minister can fulfil while a Minister is out of action or away. I am doing that. But as I think Members understand the Minister is in the middle of his detailed work on this. You cannot pass over one person's work - the Minister's work - to an Assistant Minister halfway through. It has to be his work. This is a very important document, Sir, and I would think Members would understand that.

**2.2.10 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:**

Could I have the final supplementary? We were originally told it was a couple of tweaks that were awaited, now it has become a detailed revision.

**Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:**

Maybe I did not make myself clear. In the first draft the Minister proposed a significant number of changes and this has strengthened, as I believe I said, the document considerably. Now, it is basically waiting for him to just look at this again. It has to be his work. He is the person who wanted these changes and you cannot just have someone else step in to do that. I think anyone would agree that that is totally reasonable and we are, as I said, talking about a matter of 2 or 3 weeks. Thank you, Sir.