

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS  
BY SENATOR A. BRECKON  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 23rd MARCH 2010**

**Question**

“Following the announcement in the States by the then Minister for Home Affairs on 29th April 2008 that an Independent Advisory Group had been set up in relation to the Haut de la Garenne investigation and that the members at that time were Reverend Geoff Houghton, Mrs. Carol Canavan, Mr. Kevin Keen, Mr Stephen Regal and the Data Protection Commissioner, would the Minister inform members -

1. at whose instigation this Advisory Group was set up and why?
2. what their terms of reference were, who drew these up and on what basis?
3. how the initial members were selected and whether there were any changes of membership after April 2008?
4. how often did the Advisory Group meet and how were they resourced?
5. did the Group produce any reports and, if so, are these publicly available?”

**Answer**

Before answering the detailed question I need to explain what an Independent Advisory Group normally does and how it is made up. Independent Advisory Groups were introduced in the aftermath of the Macpherson Enquiry into the death of Steven Lawrence. The concept underlying such groups is that they can advise the police on any specific community issues and concerns.

An Independent Advisory Group does not normally have any function of oversight in relation to an investigation. Its normal functions are, as its name suggests, to advise the police in relation to issues such as how a particular investigation may be viewed or is being viewed by members of the public or by the members of any particular ethnic or other community. Independent Advisory Groups will normally be standing groups within a particular area with the relevant members to a particular investigation being consulted in relation thereto. For the reasons set out above the members are normally representative of individual communities rather than general representatives of the community.

I also want to pay tribute to the individual members of the Jersey group who undoubtedly endeavoured to faithfully serve the Island in this way.

I now move on to the individual questions:

1. In February 2008 the ACPO Homicide Working Group recommended the setting up of an Independent Advisory Group.
2. The terms of reference for the Advisory Group were drawn up by the States of Jersey Police and circulated to them by the Chief Officer.

The terms of reference were as follows:

1. to identify and address any risks or potential areas of criticism regarding the investigation, matters leading up to it or since it commenced.
2. to address any areas of risk with regards to the investigation.

3. to consider issues for victims and community.
4. to consider impact to or from any other agency or public body.
5. to consider media implications.

These terms of reference are wider than is normal for such a group.

3. Individual members were selected by the Senior Investigating Officer as representative of the local community. One member of the group resigned in October 2008; the remainder of the group resigned in January 2009.
4. The Independent Advisory Group met regularly, as and when suggested by the Senior Investigating Officer. The group was supported by Police staff.
5. The Independent Advisory Group did not produce reports, but they did raise questions and make comments.

Serious questions have arisen as to the setting up, terms of reference and support of the Independent Advisory Group but this is no reflection upon the individual members thereof.