

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES
COMMITTEE BY DEPUTY S. PITMAN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 7th JUNE 2011**

Question

Will the Chairman clarify what has been the approximate cost to the taxpayer in holding the five debates relating to the reduction of Senators and the related debates on rescindment and public referendum?

Answer

Members will undoubtedly appreciate that it is extremely difficult to give any accurate estimate of the costs involved in any particular debates in the Assembly. Nevertheless in an attempt to respond to the question as far as possible the following calculations have been undertaken.

In a written answer given on 12th September 2006 the then PPC was asked to calculate the approximate hourly cost of running States' meetings. The Committee's estimate in 2006 was that a States' meeting cost the taxpayer approximately £657.90 per hour which, uprated for inflation, gives an approximate 2011 cost of £756 per hour.

The various debates referred to in this question took place on 13th October 2010, 19th & 20th January 2011 and 3rd March 2011. They lasted for a total of 15 hours and 18 minutes so, using the estimate above, the cost would have been some £11,566. This figure does not, of course, take account of any time spent by members and officers in preparing for the debates or in drafting comments etc.

Although PPC has answered this question as requested, the Committee would re-iterate a comment made in its 12th September 2006 answer, namely that *"PPC does not believe that democracy, and in particular the ability of private members to bring forward propositions for debate, should be related to cost and would not wish the fact that it has responded to this question to be seen as an indication that the Committee believes debates could in future be 'costed' against a notional hourly rate."*