

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. MARY
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st FEBRUARY 2011**

Question

Can the Minister explain to members the current rules regarding the use of consultants by States Departments, specifically the rules governing bias in overall approach, selection of evidence and arguments, and the writing of reports?

Answer

The engagement of external consultants is the subject of Financial Direction 5.1. This direction specifies when external consultants may be used, how they should be selected and engaged and how they should be managed. Consultants can be used when

- specialist skills are not available in-house; or
- departmental resources are fully committed for the required timescale (a situation which should not be allowed to arise with sufficient forward planning); or
- an independent opinion, advice or investigation is required

Departments control the consultancy which should be subject to an engagement brief which should clearly specify amongst other things

- the purpose of the engagement (including details of the background to the engagement and the final objectives to be met);
- the outcomes required and the potential for further supplementary work;
- requirements in terms of quality, public consultation, presentation to officers and/or members;
- the skill sets and resources necessary to complete the task;
- the criteria against which the performance of the consultant will be assessed on completion of the engagement.

The management process is undertaken by a responsible officer from the Department to ensure as far as possible that any opinions are well researched, balanced with the appropriate evidence and impartial.