

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAIRMEN'S COMMITTEE
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th JUNE 2019**

Question

Will the President explain to members what changes, if any, her Committee proposes to make to the Scrutiny process to make it more effective, following the changes to the way in which the Government is organised and managed?

Answer

The Chairmen's Committee regularly considers this important matter. Broadly we continue to agree that given the flexibility of Scrutiny work provided by the topic based structure of Panel remits, the Target Operating Models and other changes to the operations of the Government do not directly impact the effectiveness of the Scrutiny process.

As a Committee we do, nevertheless, continue to have reservations about political accountability and marginalisation within the revised structure. One serious potential impact of this on Panels could be on our ability to access information either at all, in part or within timeframes and formats prescribed by the Code of Engagement between Scrutiny/PAC and the Government. We therefore continue to maintain a watching brief and are provided with updates and presentations about various aspects of the plans from Government officials. Furthermore, a Review Panel has been established to examine the One Government project in detail.

Irrespective of the impact or otherwise of Government re-organisation, the Committee will continue to work to constantly improve the effectiveness of the Scrutiny function. We monitor Panel remits and workloads and have shown our ability to quickly adapt to changing Ministerial portfolios where beneficial to do so. For example, the remits of the Corporate Services Panel and re-named Economic and International Affairs Panel were recently updated to improve scrutiny of financial services and international development matters. Similar consideration is being given to enhancing the structure for (non-education) matters relating to children and young people.

The Committee has also focused on developing a genuinely collaborative approach amongst its membership and that of the wider Panels, which has helped us to share ideas and innovations, avoid duplication and promote consistent good practice. The establishment of cross-cutting Review Panels has also increased, helping effective scrutiny of large issues and making efficient use of limited Member and staff/budget resources. We have also embraced technological innovations, for example the webcasting of scrutiny hearings, to promote engagement with and the transparency of scrutiny work.

It is worthy of note that the States Greffe, as a non-Government department supporting the work of the States Assembly (including its Panels and Committees), is not directly within the scope of Government re-organisation. However, it is undertaking its own project to modernise its structure and services to better reflect its current and future obligations and objectives. This should lead to significant enhancement of the support provided to Scrutiny Panels, in addition to individual members and the wider Assembly.