

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

30th January, 2019

Proposition No. P.2018/140

Scrutiny Management Committee

In-Work Poverty Review

AMENDMENT

Proposed by: Deputy G A St Pier
Seconded by: Deputy T J Stephens

To replace propositions 1-5 with:

- “1. To note the findings and recommendations set out at sections 13.2-13.6 of the Scrutiny Management Committee’s policy letter titled ‘In-Work Poverty Review’; and
2. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to review and report on work streams and measures in the Policy & Resource Plan with regard to the reduction of in-work poverty in its policy letter to be debated on 25th June 2019, with particular regard to the issues referred to at sections 13.2-13.6 of the In-Work Poverty Review.”

Explanatory Note

The Policy & Resources Committee acknowledges the work of the Review Panel and the Scrutiny Management Committee in bringing this policy letter to the States on the important matter of In-Work Poverty. As the Review sets out, *‘the achievement of the key objectives of the Policy & Resource Plan depend on ensuring that economic prosperity is effectively shared across the whole community within what is widely perceived to be an otherwise prosperous society’*.

States’ Committees have engaged throughout the process, understanding that the terms of reference were to *‘review current policies and strategies of the States regarding in-work poverty and the effectiveness of their implementation’* as set out at section 1.1 in the Review.

Indeed the mandate of the Scrutiny Management Committee is *'to lead and co-ordinate the scrutiny of committees of the States and those organisations which are in receipt of public funds, or which have been established by legislation, by reviewing and examining legislation, policies, services and the use of monies and other resources'*. The Policy & Resources Committee believes that the States' approved procedure for determining policy direction and prioritisation is through the Policy & Resource Plan rather than through directing Principal Committees to prioritise particular policy initiatives.

The Policy & Resources Committee has been approached formally by the Committee for Health & Social Care with concerns given the direction already resolved by the Assembly to support unanimously its 'Partnership of Purpose' Programme which sets out to address the concerns referenced in this Review's recommendations. Policy & Resources agrees; does not consider this to be good governance; and given the extant resolutions in place believes the Assembly should agree that it is not appropriate for the Scrutiny Management Committee to submit Propositions.

Therefore the Committee cannot support the propositions. However it does support the ambition of the Review. It recommends to the Assembly that in the absence of a dedicated programme focusing on in-work poverty that it review and report on work streams and measures in the Policy & Resource Plan. It would place emphasis on the reduction of in-work poverty in its policy letter to be debated on 25th June 2019, with particular regard to the issues referred to at sections 13.2-13.6 in the In-Work Poverty Review.

The Assembly will note that the 2016 Household Income Report was available shortly after the Review was published. The Committee would therefore bring to the States at the time when they are considering its prioritisation of policy proposals, a summary of the appropriate analysis of that data and the impact of the new Income Support policy together with consideration of areas not brought forward by the Scrutiny Management Committee from its Interim Report, such as:

- The 'disregard' within the Island's benefit system (already subject of work by the Committee for Employment & Social Security);
- The rent induced poverty factor – fear of losing social housing if income or savings exceed threshold values and impact of private rental costs;
- Utilisation of the medical assistance scheme available to those not receiving benefits on a means tested basis.