

**REPLY BY THE MINISTER OF
THE COMMERCE AND EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT
TO A QUESTION ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 6 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY LESTER QUERIPEL**

1. As you are aware, the purpose of the Financial Transformation Programme is to transform departmental delivery of services and identify efficiency savings. With this in mind:

a) Are there any areas within your department, that staff and Board members, consider to be 'no go areas'? In other words, areas that you would not consider amending, transforming or even attempting to identify where efficiency savings, in relation to the FTP, can be made?

Commerce and Employment Department is fully supportive of the Financial Transformation Programme and its aims. As such the only area where, collectively, we might consider something a 'no go area' would be if it compromised the delivery of essential client services or commercially focused activity. Clearly this could be counterproductive and potentially detrimental to effective, efficient and value for money government service, business needs as well as impacting on realistic expectations of the general public. In realistic terms this has not been an issue and all units and areas of the department budget have been scrutinised as part of the FTP process and continue to be so as part of best business practise.

b) If the answer to the question above is 'yes', then are you able to provide me with a list of these 'untouchable' areas and also provide me with the reasons why they are considered to be 'untouchable'?

Please see above

QU 2. Was WITHDRAWN and the questions resubmitted by Deputy Lester Queripel, therefore questions renumbered from this point forward.

2. In October 2009, the Scrutiny committee produced a report entitled 'Investigating Vandalism'. In this report, the committee set out recommendations for all States departments to consider. Can you give me an update on the progress your department has made regarding these recommendations?

Commerce and Employment Department recognises that one of the causes of vandalism committed by young people may be related to a lack of engagement in society and that workforce development policies could help young people to secure employment or further training. The Department has worked with colleagues in the Education Department, Social Security Department, training providers and the business community in order to develop policies that will help young people who are not in employment education or training (sometimes described as "NEETs").

These policies have been developed by Skills Guernsey through implementation of a "Manifesto for NEETs". This will be used by practitioners who are involved in supporting young people who are not in education, employment or training. The manifesto is comprehensive and clearly identifies how support for young people can be provided.

3. Commerce and Employment minister, Deputy Kevin Stewart, is reported to have stated in the media recently that 'the white van man' issue is not a priority for the department. Therefore I ask the following questions:

a) Did the minister actually say what he is reported to have said?

The Commerce and Employment Minister did, indeed, make this statement but it is important to note that he made this comment in relation to the prioritisation of the 2013 business plan and competing demands on limit resource and budget. The Commerce and Employment Board committed to this work stream but agreed that economic, finance and retail strategy development and associated work streams should take

precedent. Detail is provided in the 2013 Commerce and Employment business (C&E) plan. The 2014 business plan will realign prioritisation which includes the commitment to progress “white van man” workstream within Qs 1-2 2014.

b) Is the department continuing to carry out research into the 'white van man' issue and is information still being collated and compiled?

Please see above. This will assume a greater level of priority in Q1-2 2014. Collation of information with regard to this matter continues albeit that the issue is not being proactively worked on at this time.

c) Where does the 'white van man' issue sit on the list of the departments priorities and the Commerce and Employment Business Plan for 2014?

Please see above. The C&E 2014 Business plan will be published mid-January.

d) What is the estimated timeframe for completion of the work regarding the 'white van man' and when will the results of the research be released?

There needs to be careful analysis of the data and potentially consideration of the practicality of policy and potential legislative options. The project is not far enough advanced to be able to provide a timeframe – as this will depend on C&E Board decisions on the strength of evidence presented and the policy options available. This will also involve liaison and in-put from other States Departments.

4. We are all only too aware that tourism here in the island needs all the support it can get at the present time. It would be remiss of any politician to assume that staff from the Tourism Section of the Commerce and Employment department, are actively engaging with proprietors from all businesses within the tourist industry, to identify areas where marketing for tourism can be improved. Therefore I ask the following questions:

a) Are staff from the Tourism Section of the Commerce and Employment department actively engaging with proprietors and managers of hotels, restaurants, cafes, kiosks, catering outlets, guest houses, gift shops, shops in general, cycle and coach and car hire businesses, public houses, tourist attractions, night clubs, social clubs and all of the other businesses associated with tourism including taxi drivers?

The staff within the marketing and tourism section, as do a range of Departmental staff representative across all sectors, engage with a wide range of businesses on an on-going basis. The Department does work proactively to achieve a wide range of views as part of its work. In Tourism the team presents to the industry twice a year, organises a trade workshop for off and on island businesses, stages focus groups, issues regular newsletters, and holds meetings with stakeholder and sector representation on a one to one basis. This tends to be where business seeks guidance. Feedback and input is welcomed. Commerce and Employment are proactively working with industry on the initial stages of a visitor economy strategy – which is demonstrable of crafting a strategy that takes clear consideration of the aims and realistic ambition of the tourist and hospitality businesses related to this sector.

C&E is to help develop and facilitate the strategy, including the provision of effective promotions to help realise this ambition. Industry also has a responsibility to invest and work collaboratively and proactively to remain competitive and to achieve. The Department is pleased to say that this is increasingly evident in many quarters. The level of engagement has to be proportionate to the amount of available resource not only for engagement but to actively prepare and implement marketing strategy and campaigns for the visitor economy as well as develop policy for the long term sustainability of the visitor economy. Clearly this is a fundamental role of the unit. The team does meet businesses proactively but, as stated, that has to be relative to other deliverables that the unit has within its visitor economy business planning.

b) Do staff from the Tourism Section of the Commerce and Employment department actively engage with employees working within the tourist industry at ALL levels and not just at management level?

Commerce and Employment liaises with a range of businesses and stakeholders within the sector – please see above.

c) Do the department work closely with the Culture and Leisure department to identify where promotion and support for the tourist industry is needed, or can be improved?

Yes – there is collaboration between the Departments on visitor economy related matters.

d) If the answer is 'yes' can you give me an example of this 'joined up government' in action?

Commerce and Employment and Culture and Leisure work collaboratively in a number of areas. For 2014 this includes the development of a month long heritage festival, tasty walks shoulder months campaign to be launched early January. C&E has responsibility for the design, print and delivery of on-island tourist literature – of which stocks are utilised by Culture and Leisure. C&E works collaboratively on events group matters and of the “things to see and do” diary.

Date of Receipt of the Question: 16th December 2013

Date of Reply: 20th December 2013
