

27/08/2004

Ms C Le Quesne
Scrutiny Officer

Shadow Scrutiny Panels: Jersey Harbours – Trust Port proposal

Dear Ms Le Quesne

Thank you for your letter dated 6 May 2004 to our Chairman, Mr Peter Pitcher.

By way of background, the objectives of our Association can be summarised as seeking to ensure that owners of leisure craft using the St Helier harbours and marinas receive appropriate standards of service and facilities as cost effectively as possible. As such, we have had regular dealings with officers of the Harbours Dept. and have formed some opinions on aspects of the operation, which might be improved under a different structure.

Whilst we are pleased to assist the Panel, our knowledge of the background consultation and deliberations, which lead to the Trust Port decision and more recently to the Jersey limited liability company alternative, is incomplete. We do not know precisely how either alternative is intended to operate. If we are to have a positive and useful input we require more information as to what is proposed in both cases, how both alternatives will operate, how and by whom will they be financed and the controls, if any, which will be placed on them by the States of Jersey.

Our response to the Panel's terms of reference is therefore rather limited:

1. We do not believe that the Association was involved in any formal consultation prior to the decision to become a Trust Port, although we were given a presentation on the subject by the Chief Executive and have received periodic progress reports.

A delegation from our committee attended a meeting with consultants from Deloitte last autumn, who we understand were commissioned by the Finance & Economics committee to review the Trust Port decision. In answer to their questions, we identified what we saw as weaknesses under the current structure, but expressed some concern that the Trust Port model might be too independent of government and unaccountable, to the detriment of cost effective services. Unlike in the UK, our members cannot move to another harbour along the coast! We did suggest that the JEC might be a more appropriate model, as it appears to be efficiently run, to have successfully faced up to restrictive practices and to provide value both to the customer and the taxpayer.

We have not seen Deloitte's report, but would be interested to receive a copy.

2. Not applicable.

3. We submitted no evidence on this subject.
4. Not applicable – we gave our time freely.
5. Beyond a ‘gut feeling’ that a Trust Port might prove less efficient, resulting in higher costs for our members and the whole community, we have no evidence either way.

I hope this is of some use and if we can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

P G Donne Davis
Hon. Secretary