

Meeting of the Access to Justice Review Expert Group

held on Tuesday 30th September 2014
at 11:00 in the Meeting Room, 9th Floor, Cyril Le Marquand House, St Helier

Attendees

Mr T. Walker, Chief Minister's Department (Chair)
Mr A. Metcalfe, Chief Minister's Department
Ms. K. Guegan, Statistics Unit
Mr T. Le Cocq, Attorney General
Advocate V. Dempsey, Law Officers' Department
Mr P. Matthews, Judicial Greffe
Ms A. King, Jersey Consumer Council
Advocate J. Speck, President, Law Society of Jersey
Mr N. Benbow, Law Society of Jersey
Mr D. Cadin, Bâtonnier

Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed the Group to the fourth meeting.

Update from Advisory Panel meeting of 15th September 2014

2. The Chair updated the Group on the Advisory Panel meeting of 15th September 2014.
3. The Group noted that the Panel was of the view that further public hearings should take place, but that this would be a matter for the Panel as constituted following the forthcoming Elections.
4. The Group also noted that the Panel had been updated on progress with some other projects which are also dealing with matters relating to access to justice. The Group agreed that the interaction between those projects would need to be considered. These projects include, for example:
 - a. the Royal Court Rules Review Group – the Group noted that the Panel Chairman had received from the Deputy Bailiff an anonymised summary of submissions received by the Royal Court Rules Review Group. It was understood that a public consultation will be issued in the coming weeks.
 - b. The Jersey Law Commission will be carrying out work on divorce reform and also on administrative justice in Jersey.

Legal Needs Survey

5. The Group discussed the need for a legal needs survey. The Group agreed that further work was required into what a legal needs survey would aim to achieve, the potential costs and benefits of such a survey, any statistical difficulties in carrying out such a survey in Jersey and whether any other statistics were available which may assist in providing objective evidence in respect of access to justice.

6. The Group agreed that this would be considered further at the next meeting.

Interim report (R.107/2014) and forthcoming Final Report in July 2015

7. The Group noted that the Interim Report was presented to the States Assembly on 23rd July by the Chief Minister. It was further noted that the Final Report is due within 12 months of the Interim Report, so should be presented to the States Assembly by July 2015. Given the forthcoming elections in October, subsequent elections for States Assembly positions in November and then the Christmas break, most of the final work will need to be undertaken in the 6 months between January and June 2015.
8. It was agreed that potential options for reforming the legal aid system would be considered at the next meeting in order that draft proposals can be developed for the panel to consider in due course.

Reconvening after the Elections

9. The Group noted that it would reconvene after the forthcoming Elections on 15th October. The Group also noted that if the Election results in changes to the position of the existing Panel members, then the Chief Minister may need to consider the membership of the Panel.

Any Other Business

10. No other business was raised.

ENDS