

The role of the Chief Secretary in the Isle of Man

Written by PAG
Friday, 10 April 2009 12:59

[The following was written by a P A G member. It poses some fundamental questions about the business of government]

Have a look at the [Summary of Proceedings of the Council of Ministers March 2009 and check out the minutes for March 2009](#)

The phrase '*a paper submitted by the Chief Secretary*' occurs no less than 13 times for the March minutes alone. The CSO's office is small and I assume they don't have time to write 3 papers a week! As a matter of principle I would like to know:

- a. Who instigates these papers in the first place?

- b. How many papers submitted by the CSO are rejected by COMIN or are subsequently rejected by Tynwald?

- c. Why aren't the CSO's 'papers' in the public domain?

- d. Who generates the papers in respect of UK matters? The Ministry of Justice on behalf of other Whitehall departments?

All this seems very opaque to me. I know P A G is concerned about the ['Block Vote'](#) but consider, that the Tynwald members are being asked to vote on legislation that is regularly emerging out of the ether! In the case of the March 2009 minutes the CSO submitted a paper on the Terrorism Finance Bill the minutes stated:

'given the urgency for introducing the Bill the requirement to consult under the Code of Practice on Consultation be waived.'

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Who made the risk assessment of this? The CSO, COMIN or someone in Whitehall?

My overall point is that the CSO presents as being the key political influence in generating actual legislation. I would like to know, for example, when she is going to submit a 'paper' on expediting the Access to Information legislation so that we can read all her other papers!