Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Government of Jersey
Union Street | St Helier | Jersey | JE2 3DN

Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Panel

<u>Via email</u>

21 March 2025

Dear Chair

<u>Risk management and communication regarding recent security incidents</u>

Thank you for your correspondence dated 13 March 2025 regarding recent security incidents in Jersey schools and the airport. I am pleased to provide you with the following information in response to the queries you have raised.

Update on risk management procedures and security monitoring measures

The Emergency Planning team work with all responding agencies, in assessing risk, preparing for response arrangements, and assisting with recovery. Under the Jersey Resilience Forum (JRF), there is an established mechanism for debriefing incidents, to ensure that any lessons identified are captured. The JRF has an established 'Training, Exercising and Learning Working Group' to ensure that these lessons identified are triaged, and where appropriate turned into lessons learned.

A hot debrief of the Airport incident was carried out on the evening of the incident, the 5 March. A structured multi-agency debrief was held on the 13 March, including Ports of Jersey, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service, States of Jersey Police, and Emergency Planning. Recommendations from this report are pending, and the Emergency Planning team will work with relevant agencies to ensure that any lessons identified are embedded, so that there are clear procedures understood by all put in place for the management of future incidents of this type.

The safe and secure operation of Jersey Airport is regulated by the Office of the Director of Civil Aviation (ODCA). The ODCA uses the Channel Islands Civil Aviation Security Programme (CICASP) to regulate the secure operation of Jersey Airport. The CICASP is derived from the regulatory frameworks used in the EU and UK to ensure aviation security. Ports of Jersey (POJ) as the Airport operator is responsible for compliance with the CICASP regulatory framework, supported by UK Department for Transport (DfT) Contingency Planning guidance and utilisation of the Joint Emergency Interoperability Programme (JESIP) for maintaining contingency and crisis plans, in collaboration with the Jersey Resilience Forum.

Assessing and responding to security threats

Whilst more common in other jurisdictions, Jersey does from time to time, receive hoax threats. All such hoaxes are crimes, and the investigations remain ongoing in respect to the events this year.

The States of Jersey Police (SOJP) continue to work closely with all relevant partners both in the UK, further abroad as required, and here in the Island. This security partnership and network allows SOJP to appropriately support any local organisation or department as and when such a hoax is received, with robust threat assessment procedures that are regularly tried and tested.

Related to these complementary threat assessment processes, it is important to recognise that the decision to evacuate either a school or indeed the airport rests with the responsible department, in these cases, the Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills, and the Ports of Jersey.

Security threats to the airport

In the event of a security incident at Jersey Airport, the threat is evaluated by a certified DfT Threat Assessor to determine its credibility and the associated risks. The threat assessment is provided to the ODCA, DFT and Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), using the UK DfT threat assessment guidelines.

In the case of the recent security incident, a threat assessment was completed by POJ's qualified assessors, who determined that it would be appropriate to evacuate the airport. The decision has subsequently been reviewed by the ODCA as the aviation regulator, which has confirmed the appropriate response was taken.

POJ leads a Risk Advisory Group (RAG), that evaluates Airport security threats quarterly and provides recommendations to the biannual POJ Security Executive Group (SEG). The RAG comprises representatives from key agencies including: the POJ as the airport operator, States of Jersey Police, Customs, Special Branch, and Cargo operators.

In conjunction with the Jersey Resilience Forum, Jersey Airport conducts a comprehensive full-scale exercise at least every four years.

Incidents in schools

All schools have a Critical Incident Management Plan, which is enacted during a critical incident. Schools will follow key steps outlined in their plan when managing an incident. This will include contacting emergency services for immediate response, and also the Department for information and possible support (depending on the nature of the incident). Once the emergency services arrive at the place of the incident they will take control from school staff.

The Department follows similar procedures to those in schools during an incident. This includes standing up the critical incident management team to support the incident. In the case of an incident in schools, Officers are given responsibilities for different aspects of supporting an incident. For example, this includes liaising directly with emergency services, providing support on site and managing communications.

Throughout an incident the critical incident management lead (this is most often the Chief Officer or a Director of the Department) updates the Minister as appropriate. Once the incident is over a 'lessons learnt' is collated and incorporated into future procedures.

All school are invited to critical incident training delivered by the Department. This training centres on what steps need to be taken once an incident occurs and the different priorities and actions, which will need to be considered by the critical incident management team at the school. The Department is currently in the process of finalising a package of training to be delivered in schools in relation to the steps to be taken in the event of a lockdown.

Communication with States Members and the public
The recent evacuation on the airport was an extremely rare event and the multi-agency response was led by Ports of Jersey with support from the States of Jersey Police.

Given the number of islanders involved, the airport evacuation was a particularly visible event and received considerable coverage. This was due, in part, to members of the media being on the scene. However, it has been convention not to give publicity to bomb hoaxes in order to discourage copycat actions.

When incidents occur, there are procedures, relevant to the type of incident, in place to inform the Council of Ministers. In relation to this, the Chief Minister has stated that he will always endeavour to ensure States Members are updated in a prompt and informative way. To follow up on the airport incident specifically, the Ports of Jersey and the Chief of Police have offered to brief States Members, and the Chief Minister has asked officers to make the necessary arrangements.

In a major incident, the Communications Service operates like an emergency service and have provided clear, concise, and timely information over the past two years to the public and relevant stakeholders on all major incidents through the media and on social media channels. They attend all lessons learned sessions after each major incident and work closely with the Emergency Planning team to regularly review communication plans.

The full crisis communications plan is reviewed and updated by the team twice annually and they attend regular training and table-top sessions organised by the Jersey Resilience Forum and Emergency Planning team.

The Communications Service also regularly communicates and engages with all impacted families of major incidents to support them and to ensure they are fully aware of latest developments.

I hope this information assists the Panel. If there are any outstanding questions, or anything the Panel wish to understand in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Mary Le Hegarat
Minister for Justice and Home Affairs