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Deputy I Gardiner
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee

Via Email

14th February 2022

Dear Deputy Gardiner

Re: PAC COVID-19 Response Review

Thank you for your kind wishes on my appointment, I also look forward to developing a productive working relationship with your committee.

In regard to your letter of 2 February outlining the Public Accounts Committee's review of the Government of Jersey's response to COVID-19, please see below responses to your questions.

1. Please could you provide a list of individuals (remunerated and non-remunerated) who were engaged under contract by the Government of Jersey in 2020 and 2021 to assist with the response to Covid-19. Please could this list also include a breakdown of their respective responsibilities?

The table below sets out those individuals who were, according to our records and recollection, contracted by the Government of Jersey to assist with the Covid-19 response in 2020 and 2021. It does not include the significant number of staff who were engaged on fixed term contracts and zero-hours contracts to deliver Testing, Tracing and Vaccine operations.

Individual	Remunerated or non-remunerated?	Dates	Responsibilities
Mark James	Remunerated	March 2020 – June 2020	One Gov Covid Response Team (1GCT)
		June 2020 - September 2020	Testing Programme – Head of Operations, Covid 19 Testing
		December 2020 – March 2021	Tracing Programme – Strategic Manager

Karen Grey	Remunerated	August 2020	Monitoring and Enforcement Team, Project Manager for set up of team
Charles Boleat	Remunerated	June 2020 - February 2021	Project Manager, including for on-island laboratory and Contact Tracing
Alistair Le Ruez	Remunerated	September 2020- February 2022	Vaccine Programme – Project Management
Tony Moretta	Not remunerated	March – June 2020	Testing and Tracing Programme Director
Malcolm Ferey	Not remunerated	March – June 2020	Community Taskforce Volunteering Lead
Tricia Caldeira	Remunerated	May – August 2020	Project Manager, Testing
Marc Hurst	Remunerated	November 2020 – March 2022	Covid Safe Expert; Environmental Health Officer – leading assessments and advice on infection control and Covid safety for business and public sector

2. Please could you provide details of how the Day 1 No-Deal Brexit Contingency Planning was used in the response to Covid-19, including how it assisted in designing the response to the pandemic, assisted with corporate learning, identified and made available necessary resources, and improved stakeholder engagement.

Brexit planning commenced in 2016 before the referendum, with the establishment of objectives for Government in the event of a remain vote and of a leave vote. The Brexit Working Group established under External Relations Chair managed the cross-government co-ordination of political contingency planning, including the establishment of contingency customs and trading arrangements for the Island.

Day 1 No-Deal Brexit Contingency Planning (“D1ND”) commenced in earnest in 2018 under guidance from the UK Ministry of Justice working with External Relations Department, coinciding with the start of the main period of Brexit negotiations. This involved cross-Government working, through the overarching Brexit Working Group and Emergency Planning. A desk-top D1ND exercise was held in January 2019 in Jersey with the Ministry of Justice, Cabinet Office, military and other UK officials present, using the Strategic, Tactical and Operational Group structure. One of the conclusions from this exercise was the need to form a specific emergency planning group,

and this was chaired by Julian Blazeby, the then Director General of Justice and Home Affairs. This group planned for many contingencies which proved valuable for handling Covid-19. In addition, the One Gov Brexit Team was established to deal with emergency planning preparations for D1ND, and these included the establishment of emergency plans for fuel, food and medicines the running of a community risk register. For a short while this group was based in Parade Gardens. In particular, the stockpiling facilities that were put in place for D1ND proved invaluable for Covid. This D1ND group was not needed following the conclusion of the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement concluded on 24th December 2019.

In March 2020, the decision was taken to form the One Gov Covid Response Team (1GCT), also under the strategic oversight of Julian Blazeby, then Director General of Home Affairs, and Chair of the Strategic Coordinating Group, and led by Kate Briden, then Group Director for Public Protection and Law Enforcement in Justice and Home Affairs. The Covid 1GCT was formed of representatives from each Government department, some of whom had been on the Brexit D1ND Group previously, so were able to bring their experience and learning to the formation and initial activities of the Covid team. At the time, it was observed that because Day 1 No Deal had not occurred, whilst the D1ND team had prepared for it, they hadn't put into place the necessary actions and done it 'live', and therefore the transfer of learning and approach to the Covid task, which by mid-March 2020 was clearly already 'live', was limited.

3. Please could you detail how Decisions Logs were used and recorded by the Office of the Chief Executive and senior officers (including Director Generals) during the Pandemic?

The One Government Covid 19 Response Team (1GCT) was stood up on 12 March 2020 in response to the emerging concerns about Covid-19 and the formulation of a cross-Government approach to the pandemic. It formed the operational response team, working in conjunction with the Executive Leadership Team, Strategic Coordination Group, and Tactical Coordination Group (see appendix 1).

Covid-19 Daily Strategic Call Record and Actions COVID related ELT meetings Following the daily Covid-19 Daily Strategic Call fed into the ELT daily morning calls from the beginning of the pandemic. Daily decision logs recorded issues raised and subsequent decisions made as part of all cross-government activity to support and protect the Jersey community against the threat of Covid-19.

Decision Logs were underpinned by cross-government workstreams with a single responsible officer owning an issue across government together with agreed standard reporting methodology.

The Decisions/Action log provided real time information (advice and management information including associated risks). The link with the daily ELT calls was an invaluable two-way communication tool for all and informed future business planning and workforce planning. A centralised document storage facility was established to support the decision making and cross government workstreams.

a. How are these being used for internal reviews to identify lessons learned from the Government of Jersey's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic?

At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic some learnings from how the previous One Gov Brexit Team operated was considered and built upon.

An interim review was completed by the One Gov Covid Response Team (1GCT) after two months of operation. The survey enabled thoughts, reflections and ambitions to be captured whilst the work was still ongoing and forward plan for the next phase/workstreams.

A survey was also conducted at the end of June to get feedback and reflections from the Team.

The team regularly reflected on learning whilst it was in place which in turn informed their ongoing workforce planning and operational processes.

4. How is the Government of Jersey providing assistance on 'back to normal' recovery plans for States-Owned Entities and charities, including how it intends to support organisations receiving a reduction in funding for 2022?

State Owned Entities

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the States Owned Entities (SoEs) maintained their own operational and financial business arrangements in much the same way that they do in business-as-usual circumstances. The Minister for Treasury and Resources, as Shareholder, was regularly briefed on SoE activity and the potential impact to their respective balance sheets, but the pandemic has not created a need for any direct financial support from Government and it is similarly not anticipated that such support will be required in the "recovery phase".

Charitable Organisations

Every Department, through their Accountable Officer, has the ability to make grants to organisations which support the strategic objectives and purpose of those departments. Charitable bodies can approach those departments if their other income sources have suffered due to the pandemic. However, those departments are required by law to manage within funding approved in the Government Plan, which in turn includes rebalancing targets for savings. No "central" funding has been made available to support charitable bodies – that is a matter for each department and Accountable Officer. The Committee will be aware that the Arm's Length Bodies Oversight Board is working to improve the cross-departmental approach to relationships with external bodies. In time, this approach may include looking at grants to charitable bodies from a more corporate perspective. However, I am not aware that any charities have specifically been subject to reductions in funding from Government for 2022.

Support to charitable organisations was also made available through the Community Taskforce, which was established to provide input into, and oversight of, community support, working with Parishes, voluntary and community sector and local businesses to co-ordinate support for Islanders in a 'safe and sustainable' way.

Government supported the Lloyds Foundation-organised funders Group which sought to provide a central route to register charity applications and match to donors funding to ensure that funds reached charities whose work reduced or mitigated the impacts of Covid-19 and allowed essential services to be provided to those most in need. With the support of Government, funders

simplified application procedures and speeded up of decision-making to ensure that funds were received in a timely manner. An efficient channel of information-sharing between Jersey and donor and government and on community needs was established; and collective communication updates to charities were made on a regular basis on for example how to apply and what things funders will prioritise.

5. Please could you provide an overview of how personnel and office space were made available during the pandemic? For example, were officers seconded to other departments or functions during the pandemic?

a. How has this been recorded, tracked and monitored?

The Covid-19 Emergency Resourcing team was set-up in People & Corporate Services at the outset of the pandemic to coordinate the people response to Covid. This included redeploying non-critical staff into new roles, the preferred option, prior to recruiting staff from agencies.

Table 1 – Summary of people moved into new roles in response to the pandemic – As at 31st July 2020

Department	Approved Requests	Approved Vacancies	Candidates Placed	Live Vacancies
Chief Operating Office	17	29	27	
Children, Young People, Education and Skills	5	28	1	
Customer and Local Services	8	37	17	
Growth, Housing and Environment	25	104	91	6
Health and Community Services	30	165	132	
Justice and Home Affairs	34	116	90	
Non-Ministerial Departments				
Office of the Chief Executive	5	6	6	
Strategic Policy, Performance and Population	39	111	86	
Treasury and Exchequer				
Total	163	596	450	6

Candidates were initially sourced from areas that resulted in no additional costs to GoJ:

- Internal redeployees
- States owned entities
- Talent link applications
- Agency workers

The 1GCT operated from the Team Jersey space on the 4th Floor of 28-30 The Parade initially, more office space was made available through Jersey Property Holdings with other teams occupying additional floors in the same building. Contact tracing teams, helpline teams and media briefings all occupied space in The Parade.

A small number of management and resourcing staff were based at The Parade initially but relocated to the Government offices in Broad Street in Summer 2020.

Other spaces were occupied by the newly formed Contact Tracing teams, for example the Business Continuity suite at La Collette, a portacabin at Highlands College and (albeit briefly), a space at La Chasse.

The Testing Team were initially based at Five Oaks but relocated in June 2020 to the Airport Drive-through due to demand and space requirements. In July 2020 the Airport Arrivals and Harbour Arrivals facilities were opened, and Ports of Jersey provided space within and outside of their existing buildings, to host testing facilities and associated infrastructure including office space, packing space for samples, changing facilities, toilet and kitchen areas.

The on-island lab was located at the Aero Club from August 2020.

The Modernisation and Digital department were quick to improve the remote working capability meaning that the majority of colleagues were quickly able to work from home, freeing up office space for new pandemic-response functions that required it.

My predecessor's submission covers some of these points:

[submission - response to covid-19 - chief executive - 11 october 2021.pdf \(gov.je\)](#)

6. How did you monitor and support the wellbeing of staff during the pandemic, particularly those working on the frontline?

a. How has this been recorded, tracked, and monitored?

b. Were any new practices or techniques adopted by Government to assist with supporting staff wellbeing?

As part of the emergency response, during the planning phase we developed a plan for recording, monitoring and supporting the workforce during a pandemic. Assumptions were tested by the SCG in two scenarios, one dedicated to the health response (testing the pandemic plan that was in place) and one run alongside other critical infrastructure providers.

An all-employee data collection exercise was undertaken to ensure we had the most up-to-date information, emergency contact details, communication channels and workforce modelling. This also included those who may have been impacted by school closures as we collected details of children and young people in school who were cared for, along with those with vulnerable conditions and were carers for older relatives – all of which would have impacted their ability to attend work and may have impacted on their wellbeing, and the wellbeing of others who may have had greater pressure to deliver work.

A daily dashboard monitoring staff absence and the reasons for absences, including those set out above that were not necessarily related to health.

We also relaxed absence management policies and introduced interim temporary policies to reduce management overhead as well as provide assurance to colleagues that we were aware of the difficulties that some colleagues may face when restrictions were in place.

We also provided outwardly facing policy summaries and FAQ's (normally held within the Government's network) to ensure all colleagues had ease of access to information about absence, wellbeing, work impacts and communications.

Three systems tracked and monitored workforce wellbeing:

- PeopleLink: Core HR Management system to record absence,
- E-rostering: to monitor workforce absences in healthcare and shift-based services
- Cardinus: Health and safety management and logging system
- Daily impact dashboard
- AXA 'Thrive' application (wellbeing application for employees) and AXA reporting on use of helplines

Additionally, workforce impact was monitored through:

- Trade union engagement: regular meetings and briefings with trades unions.
- Business continuity network: daily calls to monitor the impact of absence on the workforce, key issues arising from the business areas, wellbeing and capacity. This allowed us to anticipate issues arising, including wellbeing.
- Headteacher meetings: particular focus on schools, capacity planning (for essential workers) and absences.

Business impact was reported to the SCG and Competent Authorities meetings regularly.

As part of our intelligence gathering set out above, we were able to provide targeted support and anticipated emerging issues, such as:

Office-based employees working from home: introduced risk assessments online (and monitored), along with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments that helped inform the equipment provided to employees working from home.

Front-line employees: guidance sought from public health about risk factors related to different front-facing employees with specific guidance. This included risk assessments where close proximity working was required.

Health-based colleagues: a specific response and wellbeing cell was established for health workers, particularly those working in the most intensive environments. This was enhanced by an award from the Bailiff's fund for a one-off investment in additional wellbeing activity.

Supporting managers and remote working: we created guidance and toolkits for managers who were working in a different way to support them in their management and support of colleagues working remotely. These were provided through the Team Jersey programme. This included online sessions covering:

- Leading in challenging times
- Communicating by phone
- We deliver during challenging times
- Helping the team stay focused
- Respectful under pressure
- Being an emotionally intelligent leader

We also provided 1:1 coaching support for front facing leaders and managers. This was offered to all leaders and managers at the frontline of the pandemic response. Over 60 managers working at the front line of COVID response took up this offer and were provided with ongoing coaching support for the six-month period.

Emergency accommodation: from time-to-time essential response workers may be required to be away from their usual home, either to provide resilience for services or to allow them to isolate following potential contact with COVID19 patients. To support them, we put in place an enhanced offer within hotels to ensure that had support, good quality nutrition and mental health support.

Workplace safety: regular workplace testing was introduced early to ensure a safe working environment. Enhanced cleaning procedures were in place on all sites.

A summary of other activity included

- We undertook lone worker assessments for anyone working on their home
- We launched a new app that staff could download (THRIVE) with health and wellbeing advice, mental health support and guidance
- We issued a regular wellbeing newsletter with advice and tips to keep staff safe and well
- We publicised the AXA helpline and encouraged managers to refer staff to this for support
- Additional counselling support was engaged
- We worked with Comms to ensure regular communication was issues (at least twice weekly) to support managers and staff to know what was happening, update any guidance and highlight any FAQ's that had been updated.

7. How are you working to review and revise the Emergency Planning Roles within the Government of Jersey?

The work of the emergency planning function is continually reviewed and so there is no specific review of roles at this time. At the strategic level, the Director-General for Justice and Home Affairs is accountable for the government's civil contingencies delivery and the Chief Fire Officer is responsible for the generation of expert advice to government and the leadership of the function. The Emergency Planning Officer and the Assistant EPO provide technical and specialist advice and coordinate the work and activities of a very wide range of specialists from across government and other organisations.

a. What lessons have been learnt by the Government of Jersey regarding its work on Emergency Planning and Preparedness?

At the most strategic level, valuable learning has been derived from the response to COVID-19 in relation to the intersection of 'local' response and 'national' crisis management strategy. In the UK, from where much good practice is derived to inform emergency planning in Jersey, there was a clear delineation between the two levels with central government setting policy on the major levers of public health protection and Local Resilience Forums, through Strategic Coordinating Groups, managing the consequences 'on the ground' in terms of demand and business continuity but also the consequences of the public health measures themselves. Particularly in the case of COVID-19, Jersey's authorities had to develop and refine a way to manage all of the same challenges, at both levels, but in a smaller, compressed way. The local context, given that some of the key officers were involved in and operating at both levels and that, necessarily, Competent

Authority Ministers' decisions were more detailed and operational than conventional planning assumed, presented a governance structure that was more interactively complex than would normally be expected. Jersey is used to operating nationally and locally and, the extant Channel Island's Strategic Pandemic Influenza Plan still contained the key strategic public health options for officials to draw on to manage the spread of the virus; the combination of the two, in the circumstances experienced has, regardless, provided useful insight to future planning.

Another valuable learning opportunity, for Jersey as it is in the case of the UK and other jurisdictions, relates to emergency powers legislation and the potential to introduce a more nuanced and refined approach to the classification and declaration of the stage or impact of a crisis and how this facilitates or inhibits the use of a wider range or the full range of emergency powers. In the context of existing legislation, this would apply at the sub-'state of emergency' threshold.

Officers look forward to contributing to and learning from the outcomes of the various reviews of the response to the pandemic locally and to carefully considering all the findings presented as opportunities to refine and improve resilience. More widely, officers will follow similar learning in the UK and elsewhere.

b. How are you implementing these lessons?

These learning opportunities are being addressed or will be addressed at, perhaps, four levels. First, is the design of legislation to replace the Emergency Powers and Planning (Jersey) Law 1990; this has been under way for some time, its progress slowed somewhat by Brexit planning and COVID-19 more recently but firmly back in development. Second, the re-establishment and refinement of the Jersey Resilience Forum which had existed prior to COVID-19 but has, following the public health emergency phase, been re-launched in a more focussed way. Third is the development of updated public health legislation, including emergency arrangements, the development of which included consultation with emergency planning officials. Fourth will be the revisit, review and renewal of the Strategic Pandemic Influenza Plan, acknowledging that COVID-19 is not influenza. Finally, further refinements to the Jersey Resilience Forum, its plans and activities following the various reviews of the COVID-19 response, the conclusion of work to replace the 1990 law and the publication of the revised pandemic plan is likely.

c. Has any consideration been given to the recreation of a full-time role within the Government of Jersey focusing on emergency planning and preparedness?

There is no plan, at this time, to change the resourcing or structure of the emergency planning function. There is a full-time post in the current Emergency Planning Unit structure, at Assistant Emergency Planning Officer level. This post reports into the Pan-Channel Island Emergency Planning Officer which, in turn, reports to Jersey's Chief Fire Officer for all matters relating to Jersey's civil contingencies framework and activity. The Director-General of Justice and Home Affairs is accountable for the overall provision of emergency planning activity and the team's support to the Emergencies Council. As the 'central' emergency planning unit, the team holds considerable expertise but, importantly, much of the capacity for emergency planning in Jersey is derived from the support of a wide range of resilience partner organisations, from the emergency services, critical infrastructure partners and more widely into the UK government and, in some instances, expert contractors. All these bodies, as key partners and responders, contribute the efforts of their people, many of whom are subject matter experts, their capacity and specialist capabilities to help understand risk and develop plans and other contingencies.

The COVID-19 response has, to some degree, obscured and certainly delayed more general emergency planning work, but a great deal has been achieved, especially in 2021. During this time some operational level benefits of working in a joined up way with Guernsey have been observed and so the intention is to drive further benefits from the partnership in future.

I look forward to meeting with you, in your role as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, on Friday 4 March.

Yours sincerely



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