



| States Assembly

States Greffe

Deputy Kristina Moore
Chief Minister

Deputy Ian Gorst
Minister for Treasury and Resources

19-21 Broad Street
St Helier
Jersey
JE2 3RR

BY E-MAIL

15th February 2023

Dear Chief Minister and Minister for Treasury and Resources,

Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel

Government Plan 2023-26 Scrutiny Review – Corporate Services (S.R.20/2022): Joint Response of the Chief Minister and the Minister for Treasury and Resources

Thank you for your Ministerial Response in relation to our Government Plan 2023-26 Review Report. The Panel has agreed to request further information and clarity as detailed below.

As a matter of importance, the Panel wishes to highlight that **Recommendation 18** has been accepted with the comment that it is “already in place”. However, the Panel would dispute this, and notes that the comment provided states that only £7m of the £10m Value for Money savings have been identified. Thus, the remaining £3m savings as well as the inclusion of £10m savings for 2024, 2025, and 2026 respectively are speculative and do not fulfil the Fiscal Policy Panel’s (FPP) recommendation. The Panel is disappointed that Ministers have provided a contradictory statement. It is the Panel’s view that if the Ministerial position does not adapt to align with FPP’s recommendation, then in reality Recommendation 18 has actually been rejected and the Ministerial response should be amended to reflect this. Furthermore, if this is not adequately fulfilled the Panel will be inclined to consider bringing forth a proposition to ensure that all future Value for Money savings within future Government Plans align with the FPP’s recommendation.

Additionally, the Panel would be grateful to receive responses in relation to its queries on the following recommendations:

Our RECOMMENDATION 6 proposes that - A mid-year review update report must be published in future years prior to the lodging of the Government Plan by the deadline of 31st August each year. The report must include progress updates on all projects and programmes, detail on how the funding has been allocated to date, whether the delivery is on track and to be delivered by the identified timescale and within the budget allocated.

The Ministerial Response comments that a mid-year update report will **not** be published as has been in previous years. Therefore, by replacing a publicly available mid-year update report with progress papers shared with Scrutiny, the Government will be reducing its transparency and accountability on the delivery of the Government Plan. Given the Chief Minister's commitment *to operate in a transparent and open environment and welcome that opportunity to share information*, can you clarify how the aspects highlighted within our recommendation will be made transparently available (namely the spend to date and delivery)?

Additionally, the Ministerial Response comments that a mid-year update will focus only on funding. Does this mean that there will be no update provided on the spend of the 2023 Government Plan prior to the lodging of the 2024 Plan, and how will the Government be held to account if it will not publish progress update reports on spend and instead only on funding?

Our RECOMMENDATION 7 proposes that *the Council of Ministers must clearly evidence how the economic, social, environmental, and cultural sustainability and wellbeing requirements of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 are demonstrably outlined and linked throughout the components of the Government Programme and in future Government Plans.*

In the Ministerial Response it is accepted that this area requires improvement, and that further attention will be given to how sustainable wellbeing will be demonstrated in the Government Plan 'as a whole'. Please can you clarify what is meant by that statement – 'as a whole', and provide some examples of how this might be accomplished?

Our RECOMMENDATION 18 proposes that *In line with the recommendations of the Fiscal Policy Panel, the Government Plan should only include Value for Money savings where there is clear evidence of how they will be achieved.*

The Ministerial Response notes that of the outlined £10m target spend that £7m has already been identified. This leaves departments to identify a remaining £3m. Can you briefly explain how departments will go about identifying the remaining £3m – are you able to provide any examples of where the savings might be identified?

Our RECOMMENDATION 20 proposes that *the Council of Ministers must ensure the monitoring process for the Value for Money Programme is included in future Government Plans to provide further transparency and accountability.*

This recommendation has been rejected and it has been commented that the details will be shared as part of the 'corporate reporting framework' as opposed to within the Government Plan. Can you please briefly explain what the 'corporate reporting framework' is?

Our RECOMMENDATION 22 proposes further clarity be provided with regard to how ITS Release 4 will be funded and the roll-out schedule for Release 3. In your response, it was noted *that ITS Release 3 (Connect Assets, Connect Estates and Connect Health & Safety) is due to complete the Build phase of the Project before Christmas 2022 and ITS Release 4 is due to be contracted by the end of 2022.*

Given that the Ministerial Response was presented on 30th January 2023, please may you provide confirmation that the relevant phases of ITS Releases 3 & 4 were delivered by the end 2022?

Finally, the Panel notes that **RECOMMENDATION 4 and RECOMMENDATION 12** have not been accepted nor rejected and **RECOMMENDATION 23** appears to contain an unfinished

sentence. Please may confirmation be provided on whether Recommendations 4 and 12 have been accepted or rejected and provide the complete sentence for Recommendation 23. Additionally, please provide an explanation of what quality assurances are in place within the Cabinet Office as the lack of oversight raises concerns in the Panel.

The Panel look forward to receiving this information via a formal written response no later than **22nd February 2023**. Please be advised that it is the intention of the Panel to publish any response received on the States Assembly Website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Mézec', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

Deputy Sam Mézec
Chair
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel