



Deputy Sam Mézec, Chair
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
States Greffe
Morier House
St Helier
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By email

27th July 2023

Dear Chair

Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Hearing
- Residual Questions

Can you provide an update of the benefits and successes achieved through the Community Helpdesk programme to date and highlight any issues that have been identified so far?

a) Have the community outreach programmes impacted the staff of Revenue Jersey in any way and what level of volunteering has there been amongst staff to participate?

The Tax Community Helpdesk was trialled in 2022 and early 2023 to test the value of offering a service aimed at people who did not feel comfortable engaging with Revenue Jersey digitally; or by 'phone; or by travelling into its St Helier help desk. They have mainly been held in Parish Halls.

We have tended to see retired parishioners and a smaller group of parents with younger children. Attendees have given the events a 92% rating overall. December and January events saw lower attendee numbers. There were several potential reasons for this, from payment deadlines having passed, success of advertising promoting the availability of a drop-in face to face service at La Motte Street, and the festive season.

A 2023 programme is now running, due to the overall success of the pilot, satisfaction ratings remain extremely high for the customers using the Community Helpdesk.

The majority of customers use the service because traveling to the St Helier help desk, for a variety of reasons is genuinely challenging or not possible for them. For most, the more familiar, quieter and more spacious location also contributes to their positive experience.

Enquiries at the Helpdesks have been across a broad range of topics, from confirming balances, understanding allowances, to changes of circumstances, options for repaying 2019 frozen Prior Year Basis Debt and decisions around opting for Independent Taxation.

We will continue to keep the need for and cost of the Community Helpdesk under review as, on the days it operates, resourcing levels for other support channels (telephone helplines and online form responses, for example) are commensurately reduced.

In a letter following the previous hearing, it was informed the June's Retail Price Index would have an impact on personal tax allowances. Can you provide an update on how this morning's published rate will impact Islanders?

In my letter of 22 May I alluded to the relevance of June RPI in my annual decision about the uprating factor for personal tax allowances which is an important aspect of my annual Budget within the Proposed Government Plan.

It is longstanding policy to uprate the next year's personal tax allowances by the lower of June RPI and annual average earnings. June RPI was 10.9% and we will know annual average earnings later in August.

In the Budget, I shall remain focused on providing as much financial support as I can in the short term to those who need it most while doing as much as possible to foster growth and innovation.

A recent media article covered many of the main areas discussed in the recently published 'Debt Framework' (R.104/2023) which discussed the Government's policy in relation to loans and issuance of bonds. Can you update us on any borrowing proposals within the pipeline, how any borrowing will be assessed under the current conditions and how this will impact the Island if conditions do not improve in the coming years?

The Debt Framework [r.104-2023.pdf \(gov.je\)](#) already clearly sets out in Appendices A to C the States' current debt and potential future debt issuance. Since the Report was published on 12th June 2023 I can confirm that the Revolving Credit Facility referenced in Appendix B is now formally in place. Other than utilising this revolving credit facility in accordance with future Government Plan approvals, I am not currently proposing any further debt issuance or borrowing during this administrative term.

Yours sincerely



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