

Sent: 28 March 2013 16:33

To: Sarah Ferguson

Subject: States of Jersey (Minister for External Relations) (Jersey) Regulations 201-

Dear Sarah

States of Jersey (Minister for External Relations) (Jersey) Regulations 201-

Thank you for your letter of 11th March regarding the above draft Regulations and enclosing the Panel's Terms of Reference for the review. Your letter posed a number of questions, which I have addressed below.

1. What is your overall view of the proposals?

The Council of Ministers first considered this matter in May 2011 and along with my fellow Ministers at the time, I supported the proposal to establish an office of Minister with responsibility for UK and International Relations. This was further endorsed by the Council of Ministers in December 2012 when they reaffirmed their commitment to establish a post of a Minister for External Relations.

I continue to support the creation of a new post of Minister for External Relations and believe that this is an essential change which will improve the ability of government to represent the best interests of the Island overseas.

The draft regulations themselves set out the functions of the Minister for External Relations and I do not see any issue with the regulations as presented.

2. What consultation, if any, was undertaken with you during the development of the draft Regulations?

As a member of the Council of Ministers, I was provided with an opportunity to consider this matter in May 2011 and again in December 2012. I have therefore participated in two Council discussions on this topic with fellow Ministers and senior officers, which have provided ample opportunity for me to understand the proposal and to convey my views.

3. What role do you currently play in the undertaking of Jersey's external relations?

As Treasury Minister I play an active role in managing the Island's external relations. I work in close partnership the Chief Minister's Department and the Economic Development Department. The Council of Ministers agreed a Common Policy for External Relations in October 2012. As Minister for Treasury & Resources I have a responsibility to contribute to the success of that policy, particularly in relation to protecting Jersey's fiscal autonomy, promoting Jersey's international identity and good reputation, and in promoting growth and safeguarding our competitive position.

Specific examples of the recent external relations work undertaken I have undertaken in the role of Minister for Treasury & Resources include enhanced cooperative working with Guernsey counter-parts, engaging positively with Ministers at Her Majesty's Treasury and members of the Treasury Select Committee, contributing towards an active programme of tax information exchange agreements with G20, OECD and EU member states, participating in meetings of Commonwealth finance ministers as part of the annual IMF/World Bank meeting, and assisting in the identification, monitoring and reduction of risks to the Jersey economy.

4. What impact, if any, will the proposals have on that role?

The creation of a new post of Minister for External Relations should assist me in my role as Minister for Treasury & Resources. There is an expectation overseas that, along with a Head of Government (Chief Minister), Finance Minister (Minister for Treasury & Resources) and Trade Minister (Minister for Economic Development), the government will include within its Cabinet (Council of Ministers) the important role of Minister for Foreign Affairs. The lack of this office in Jersey makes it more difficult to engage with other governments around the world because of this gap in officers representing the Island.

5. What impact would such an appointment have more generally?

The creation of a Minister for External Relations fills this gap within the Council of Ministers and helps Jersey achieve an international norm for the conduct of foreign affairs. This is essential if Jersey is to achieve the best possible outcomes in protecting and promoting our interests overseas.

The creation of a Minister for External Relations would also increase accountability to the States Assembly for external relations policy and would assist islanders in holding their government to account in the increasingly important area of UK and international relations.

The States of Jersey Law 2005 allows for the Chief Minister to bring forward proposals to establish new ministerial offices. These provisions are included so that Jersey can respond to changes within and outside the Island. The establishment of a Minister for External Relations is a positive change and one I am pleased to note means that we are taking the lead amongst the Crown Dependencies.

Creating this role has no direct resource implications, as a post of Assistant Minister would simply be replaced by a post of Minister, but such a change would deliver an essential improvement to the ability of the government to represent the best interest of the island overseas.

I hope that the Panel are able to support this important proposal from the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers.

Regards, Philip

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