



| States Assembly

States Greffe

Andrew McLaughlin
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Government of Jersey

BY EMAIL

23rd January 2024

Dear Andrew,

PAC follow up requests

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has been reviewing a number of documents which have been provided to it over recent weeks and has a number of requests that it wishes to make for further information. Rather than send separate letters in relation to these requests, it was agreed that it would be efficient to compile them in to one letter. The areas relating to the requests are set out in the sections below.

Recommendation's Tracker

The PAC received a report on 22nd December 2023 on the status of the open recommendations within the recommendations tracker as of quarter three (Q3) 2023. The Comptroller and Auditor General is currently undertaking analysis of the open recommendations within this report and will be providing this feedback to the PAC at its upcoming meeting. The PAC notes the following within the report provided to it:

At a meeting of ELT on 11 October, it was proposed by the Interim Chief Executive, and agreed by ELT, that a full review of both C&AG and PAC reports and recommendations would be undertaken to determine whether it is feasible to close or stop progressing recommendations as:

- *the original recommendation was too broad in definition and requires greater clarity from the C&AG*
- *whilst agreed, it is no longer a priority or cannot be delivered due to lack of resources*
- *it is part of BAU although challenging to evidence in every context.*

Whilst this review is noted, the PAC has previously raised concerns about the recommendations contained within the tracker and was informed during a public hearing in the previous CEO's tenure that regular reviews were undertaken of the recommendations in the tracker by the Accountable Officers (AO's) responsible for their implementation. This hearing took place in October 2022. The PAC would question whether this has been undertaken as previously mentioned given the proposal to conduct a review during October 2023, a year after this information was provided to it. The PAC is concerned that regular review of the status of recommendations within the tracker is not being undertaken by AO's given this information received in the report. I would be grateful if you could confirm the processes in place in order to ensure AO's are regularly reviewing the status of recommendations within the tracker that they are responsible for.

Letters of Instruction

The PAC engaged in a series of letters with the Chief Officer for Economy in relation to payments made towards the Jersey Reds in 2023. As a result of this correspondence, the PAC was provided with the Letters of Instruction issued to the Chief Officer by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development in respect of these payments. It was informed that these letters would be published alongside other letters of instruction on the Government website, however, to date it notes that no letters have been published. The PAC would kindly request that these letters are published, or further details provided to it as to why they have yet to be published.

More broadly, the PAC notes that, within the Public Finances Manual, there is no requirement that letters of instruction should be published as a matter of course, however, it is understood that this is best practice to do so. The PAC would suggest that consideration is given during the next review of the Public Finances Manual to placing a requirement on the publication of letters of instruction. It is also noted that Letters of Instruction (as per the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019) are required to be sent to the C&AG for their information. The PAC would also suggest that consideration be given to sharing these letters with it at the same time as this takes place in the interest of openness and transparency. We would be happy to discuss this matter further with you in due course if required.

Reports to the Chief Minister

As per our previous correspondence, the PAC had requested copies of the reports that you had prepared for the Chief Minister. I would kindly ask for these to be shared with the PAC in response to this letter.

Programme underspends

The PAC has noted a recent Freedom of Information (FoI) [request](#) that has been published in relation to the Government's Free Period Products Community Scheme Pilot. Within the response, it was highlighted that £88,621.44 was spent in total for the scheme in 2023. When considering the documentation within the response, it was noted that £500,000 was estimated for the project in 2023, which is significantly more than was spent on the project. The PAC would like to request details as to why this underspend happened. Furthermore, the PAC would like to request details of all 2023 programmes that had an underspend with details as to why this was the case.

Continuation of work during sensitive political period

The PAC has received anecdotal reports that projects are being halted during the current sensitive political period following the vote of no confidence (VONC) in the Chief Minister. This is particularly concerning as the PAC has been informed that some of these projects/programmes would be considered business-as-usual. The PAC would, therefore, like to request where any direction has been given for business-as-usual items to be halted or stopped as a result of the VONC and the rationale for this if this is the case.

Noting the current political situation and the potential change within the Executive over the coming weeks, I would be grateful if you could provide a response to these queries by Friday 9th February 2023. It is the intention of the PAC to publish both this letter and the response on the States Assembly website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Feltham', written in a cursive style.

Deputy Lyndsay Feltham
Chair
Public Accounts Committee