

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2016**

Question

Further to the answer given to Written Question 8985 on 5th October 2015, will the Chief Minister list what formal correspondence, meetings and conversations have taken place with the BBC on behalf of Jersey; when specifically such interactions occurred and by whom they were undertaken; and state what was discussed?

Will the Chief Minister also confirm that it is his policy to pursue parity for Jersey's residents aged over 75 with those in the U.K. to have their licences provided free of charge by the BBC and, if not, explain why not?

Will he also state what formal discussions, if any, have taken place with Guernsey on the issue and, if none, will the Chief Minister undertake to engage jointly with Guernsey on this issue?

Answer

Since 2015, States of Jersey officers have been in regular discussions with the BBC and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

These meetings have covered various subjects within the wider context of BBC Charter renewal. However, States of Jersey officers were tasked specifically with ensuring that the BBC continues to treat the Island fairly with regard to funding for TV licence concessions, and that Jersey continues to receive a high level of service provision from the BBC in the future, in terms of radio, television and other services (such as live coverage of States sittings).¹

Where appropriate, these discussions have been conducted on a pan-Island basis with representatives of Guernsey and the Isle of Man, to ensure an equitable approach across the Crown Dependencies. In recent months, meetings between States of Jersey officers, the DCMS and the BBC took place on 16th December 2015 (with the BBC), 17th December 2015 (with the DCMS), 27th April 2016 (with the DCMS), 19th May 2016 (with the BBC), 16th August 2016 (with the BBC and the DCMS) and 04th November 2016 (with the DCMS).

Until a formal agreement has been finalised with the BBC, the full outcome of these discussions cannot be confirmed. However, it is worth noting that officers from the Digital Policy team and the London Office have developed a strong working relationship with their counterparts at both the BBC and DCMS over the course of the past year, and both parties have been receptive to Jersey's requests.

As mentioned briefly, these discussions have taken place within the broader context of agreeing an appropriate replacement to the Charter that forms the constitutional basis for the BBC, as well as an agreement that sits alongside it and adds a level of policy detail. Collectively, the two documents set out the public purposes of the BBC, they guarantee its independence, and they cover its various duties and funding. Both apply to Jersey, and both expire at the end of this year.

Further information will be provided once an agreement between the States of Jersey and the BBC has been finalised. This will be before the end of the year.

A brief statement will be made to the States Assembly that confirms the information contained within this written answer, in order to allow Members to ask questions on the matter.

¹ In early discussions it was established that the agreement between the UK Government and the BBC regarding age-related concessions to the TV licence only applies to people over the age of 75 in the UK and not to the Crown Dependencies. This is partly due to the fact that the social security systems of the jurisdictions are separate and distinct.