

STATES OF JERSEY



REPORTING ON MINISTERIAL AFFAIRS (P.71/2024) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 6th December 2024
by the Council of Ministers

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

While the Council of Ministers accept the principle, the practicalities of implementing [P.71/2024](#) would benefit from further consideration, especially in relation to the publication of external meetings. The timescales in the proposition does not afford sufficient time to do this.

As such, Ministers would like to work with the Privileges and Procedures Committee and the Machinery of Government sub-Committee, with a view to delivering proposals for consideration in 2025.

Part (a): Details of External Meetings

The accessibility and proximity of 49 elected members to their electorate is one of the strengths of our political system. It allows constituents and citizens direct and regular access should they wish, and we believe this is valued.

Jersey's Assembly also provides considerable opportunity to question and challenge Ministers on their decisions and actions.

This is not an argument against further transparency, but rather an argument in favour of preserving the accessibility and proximity of our existing political system, which is valued by Islanders, and to be wary about importing practices developed in larger jurisdictions.

We also need to be mindful of incurring additional administrative costs and impacting the conduct of ministerial business, including the preparedness of organisations to meet with Ministers formally, especially if that involves disclosing the attendees.

The proposition is also unclear on several points, for example:

- Whether external meetings are taken to include meetings external to the Minister's department, or the government more generally, or external to Jersey, and the treatment of meetings with constituents.
- Whether reporting should include "meetings" that were not pre-arranged, for example, calls from organisations, or public events where discussions touched upon official business.

Related to this are the obvious data protection considerations, for example, do Ministers need to disclose before every meeting that it is subject to publication, including who attended and the nature of the meeting.

Any member of the public may also at any time make a specific request under the Freedom of Information (Jersey) Law 2011 ("FOI Law") to be provided with a Minister or Assistant Minister's diary, at which point factors such as confidentiality can be considered with specific reference to the meetings that took place. For example, under the FOI Law the names of junior officials are not disclosed.

In the report accompanying the proposition, Deputy Moore also refers to publishing information related to professional activities, implying that this is distinct from ministerial business. If public servants produced information related to non-ministerial

business, this would be in contravention of the Ministerial Code as public servants should not support Ministers with any business not related to executive matters.¹

Deputy Moore also states that “there is a level of public interest in the activities and engagements of elected representatives.” However, the proposition restricts the scope of the proposition to the Executive, which numbers only 21 of the 49 Members of the States.

The activity of other States Members, both in an executive and non-executive capacity, for example, Scrutiny Chairs, is, assumedly, of similar importance and public interest. In the interests of transparency and openness, the public may want to know the activity of *all* their elected representatives.

The proposition does not provide sufficient time for all these matters to be considered. It requires Ministers to implement any new arrangements by 1st January 2025.

Considering all these matters, the Council of Ministers is of the view that working with the Privileges and Procedures Machinery of Government Sub-Committee would be beneficial, providing due consideration and an appropriate level of attention.

For the above reasons, the Council of Ministers do not support part (a) of the proposition at this time.

Part (b): Off-Island Travel

The government already publishes information relating to off-island travel, however not at the frequency that would be required by the proposition, if adopted.

Going forward, the Council of Ministers have agreed to publish their individual travel data on a quarterly basis, if not sooner, via the Ministerial Decision process.

Provisional travel data for 2024 available at time of writing is appended to this Comment. This will be published in January 2025 for the whole of 2024. The 2023 report, covering the period of the previous government, will also be published for good governance, openness, and transparency.

¹ See paragraph 10 of the 'The Codes of Conduct and Practice for Ministers and Assistant Ministers' (R.31/2024), presented by the Council of Ministers, 27 February 2024, States Assembly ([link](#)).

Travel Data: January to November 2024

Event	Traveller	Destination	Departure Date	Return Date	Total Cost
Engagements with UK Ministers, MPs, High Commissioners and Ambassadors	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	05/02/2024	05/02/2024	£239.38
Meetings with French Ministers	Deputy Kirsten Morel	Paris	12/02/2024	14/02/2024	£1,125.76
Engagements with UK Ministers, MPs, High Commissioners and Ambassadors	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	18/02/2024	19/02/2024	£521.37
Meeting with EU Commissioner for Justice to discuss data security	Deputy Moz Scott	Brussels	03/03/2024	05/03/2024	£707.91
Engagements with UK Ministers, MPs, High Commissioners and Ambassadors	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	12/03/2024	15/03/2024	£913.84
International Monetary Fund/World Bank Spring Meeting	Deputy Ian Gorst	United States	16/04/2024	23/04/2024	£5,366.32
Meeting with President of Brittany	Deputy Kirsten Morel	St Malo	19/04/2024	19/04/2024	£77.50
Engagements with UK Ministers, MPs, High Commissioners and Ambassadors	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	28/04/2024	29/04/2024	£538.68

Event	Traveller	Destination	Departure Date	Return Date	Total Cost
Channel Islands Liberation Day Reception at Westminster	Deputy Kirsten Morel	London	08/05/2024	09/05/2024	£397.38
Channel Islands Liberation Day Event	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	08/05/2024	09/05/2024	£372.28
Channel Islands Liberation Day Event	Deputy Elaine Millar	London	08/05/2024	09/05/2024	£368.28
Qatar Economic Forum	Deputy Elaine Millar	Doha, State of Qatar	13/05/2024	16/05/2024	£3,599.68
Meetings with French Minister and European Commissioners, Delegations and Representatives	Deputy Ian Gorst	Brussels & Paris	13/05/2024	16/05/2024	£877.15
Meeting with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and a presentation at Jersey Society	Deputy Carolyn Labey	London	15/05/2024	19/05/2024	£817.76
D-Day 80 Commemorations	Deputy Ian Gorst	Normandy	04/06/2024	08/06/2024	£496.01
Guernsey's Violence Against Women and Girls Symposium	Deputy Mary Le Hagarat	Guernsey	12/06/2024	12/06/2024	£164.98
Health and Social Care - Guernsey Meeting	Deputy Tom Binet	Guernsey	17/06/2024	17/06/2024	£319.96
British Irish Council Summit	Deputy Lyndon Farnham	Isle of Man	19/06/2024	22/06/2024	£505.45
British Irish Council Summit	Deputy Ian Gorst	Isle of Man	20/06/2024	21/06/2024	£602.17
Engagements with High Commissioners and Ambassadors	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	23/06/2024	24/06/2024	£699.35

Event	Traveller	Destination	Departure Date	Return Date	Total Cost
Corporate Parenting Board Visit	Connétable Richard Vibert	Kent	26/06/2024	27/06/2024	£370.98
Attended Canada Day event	Deputy Carolyn Labey	London	27/06/2024	28/06/2024	£443.58
Signing of Memorandum of Understanding with Rennes Business School	Deputy Kirsten Morel	Rennes	01/07/2024	03/07/2024	£291.20
Memorandum of Understanding Signing	Connétable Richard Vibert	Rennes	01/07/2024	03/07/2024	£723.45
Minister to attend Bastille Day	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	11/07/2024	11/07/2024	£181.96
Minister to attend Mr Speakers' Reception for the State Opening of Parliament	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	16/07/2024	17/07/2024	£603.25
State Opening of Parliament	Deputy Lyndon Farnham	London	17/07/2024	17/07/2024	£218.04
Connectivity meeting with Alderney	Deputy Kirsten Morel	Alderney	15/08/2024	16/08/2024	£343.48
Engagements with UK Ministers, MPs, High Commissioners and Ambassadors	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	03/09/2024	05/09/2024	£943.18
Tax and Financial Services meetings in the United States	Deputy Ian Gorst	United States	07/09/2024	11/09/2024	£5,899.94
Brittany Economic Forum	Deputy Kirsten Morel	Saint Malo	11/09/2024	12/09/2024	£450.05

Event	Traveller	Destination	Departure Date	Return Date	Total Cost
Liberal Democrat Party Conference	Deputy Carolyn Labey	Brighton	14/09/2024	16/09/2024	£813.56
Meeting with the Guernsey Committee for Health and Social Care	Deputy Tom Binet	Guernsey	16/09/2024	16/09/2024	£319.96
British Irish Council Summit - Housing	Deputy Sam Mézec	Belfast	17/09/2024	21/09/2024	£1,748.94
Political discussions on ferry procurement	Deputy Kirsten Morel	Guernsey	18/09/2024	18/09/2024	£145.45
Labour Party Conference	Deputy Ian Gorst	Liverpool	20/09/2024	24/09/2024	£138.98
Labour Party Conference	Deputy Lyndon Farnham	Liverpool	23/09/2024	23/09/2024	£238.94
Normandy Peace Forum	Deputy Kirsten Morel	Caen	25/09/2024	28/09/2024	£511.25
Conservative Party Conference	Deputy Ian Gorst	Birmingham	29/09/2024	01/10/2024	£278.05
Minister to attend and support Jersey Finance Limited's Women in Leadership roadshow.	Deputy Elaine Millar	Gulf States	07/10/2024	11/10/2024	£3,276.96
The Geneva Conventions at 75 Conference	Deputy Carolyn Labey	London	08/10/2024	10/10/2024	£734.04
Normandy Summit	Deputy Ian Gorst	Normandy	09/10/2024	11/10/2024	£312.58
Normandy Summit	Deputy Kirsten Morel	St Malo	09/10/2024	11/10/2024	£320.70
Normandy Summit	Deputy Lyndon Farnham	Normandy	09/10/2024	11/10/2024	£322.50
Meeting with Lord Ponsonby, Ministry of Justice	Deputy Lyndon Farnham	London	15/10/2024	15/10/2024	£641.29

Event	Traveller	Destination	Departure Date	Return Date	Total Cost
IMF/WB Autumn Meeting	Deputy Ian Gorst	United States	23/10/2024	27/10/2024	£7,568.57
Climate Conference and Inter Island Meeting	Deputy Steve Luce	Guernsey	28/10/2024	29/10/2024	£247.98
The William The Conqueror Forum	Deputy Kirsten Morel	Caen	30/10/2024	01/10/2024	£494.64
Remembrance Day Service	Deputy Mary Le Hegarat	London	09/11/2024	10/11/2024	£157.00
Engagements with High Commissioners and Ambassadors	Deputy Ian Gorst	London	12/11/2024	18/11/2024	£1,167.75
League of Municipalities Conference	Deputy Carolyn Labey	New York	16/11/2024	25/11/2024	£4,159.44
TOTAL					£52,778.90

Note: At the time of drafting ministerial travel costs for 2023 are calculated as £68,864 based on travel booked via the HRG system. This excludes costs incurred through a direct booking. Further analysis is taking place on the 2023 figures and any publication of a detailed breakdown will be preceded by consulting with the travellers to confirm.

Comment under Standing Order 37A

The Council of Ministers finalised their position on the 3 December, and subsequently, the Comment was drafted and given to the States Greffe shortly in advance of the deadline under Standing Order 37A, immediately following which the final ministerial approval was recorded and provided.