



## Civil Service Staffside

2 October 2019

Dear Senator Moore

### Civil Service Staffside submission to Scrutiny re: review of the Government Plan

Civil servants work for the government with the aim of providing the best possible services to the people of Jersey. Our members have chosen to work within the public service and are the people that will deliver the actions outlined within the government plan. Without the work of the civil servants that our unions represent, the ambitions laid out within the government plan are simply unachievable.

We support the overarching ambitions of the plan, and acknowledge that government services need to be provided in an efficient manner that provides value to the public. That said, we have serious concerns about how the actions laid out in the plan can be realistically achieved given the following:

- Unidentified efficiencies and the unknown impact on departmental budgets
- The impact of the organisational change programme on staff and workload
- The absence of any commitment to provide public sector workers with fair pay awards during the term of the plan
- The absence of any information that indicates that adequate resource planning has been undertaken to ensure that actions are achievable within the given timeframe

All of these issues have a direct impact on our members, and their ability to provide the quality of services that they want to provide. As well as helping to provide the services to the public we are all tax payers, and service users, as are our families and friends.

### Unidentified efficiencies and the unknown impact on departmental budgets

It is not possible to have confidence that the proposed efficiencies are achievable, or workable, given the absence of details within the proposed plan. Our members have seen, at first hand, how some departments have already been cut back to the bone, we fear that further cuts will be detrimental to services. Jersey is a small, discreet jurisdiction with very clear physical boundaries. If we lose services they will be lost for the whole community; we don't have the option of going to the next nearest town or city to access those services.

Given that the Government has had almost 15 months in office, it is not acceptable that the proposed budgets are essentially incomplete due to the lack of detail regarding the proposed

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efficiencies for 2020. Given the time taken to develop the Government Plan we are perplexed as to how it is that identifying the proposed efficiencies appears to be such a last minute scramble. We would urge the States Assembly not to accept a position that efficiencies can put in place without its approval of the detail.

The assumptions that savings can be made by 'bringing key back office support services together to streamline processes and reduce duplication' does not take into consideration the business knowledge acquired by people carrying out these 'back office' functions, which contributes to the efficient delivery of the departmental service they support. 'Back office' is often used as a term which implies that these are not somehow important; the overall function may well be very similar across many departments but the business knowledge means they are delivered efficiently and according to procedural/regulatory frameworks to the customer (whether internal or external).

The proposed efficiencies programme references gain-share. Our members have clearly rejected pay offers that include gain-share components. Further, we have been advised during our pay negotiations that efficiencies attributed to gain-share need to be above and beyond those already identified. We have also been asked to identify efficiencies within less than a three month period. The idea that union representatives can identify, in a matter of weeks, efficiencies above and beyond those that the highly paid transformation and senior management teams have managed to find over a period of two years, is unreasonable.

#### The impact of the organisational change programme on staff and workload

All departments are facing unprecedented periods of change as the organisation moves to implement its target operating model (TOM). All departments are currently in a state of flux and our members are feeling uncertain about how the current changes will impact them and the work that they do.

The impact of this organisational change and its impact upon staff morale and productivity should not be underestimated. Many employees are having to re-apply for their own jobs, some face redundancy, and others are facing the prospect of their jobs being downgraded. It is inconceivable to think that such a period of change will not have an impact on the delivery of actions outlined within the plan, and any subsequent departmental business and operational plans should duly take this into consideration.



Further, once TOMs have been implemented, there will be a period required for new organisational structures to embed. This will also have an impact on the timescale for delivery of projects outlined within the proposed plan.

We note that Ministerial portfolios do not align with the TOMs, as such, it is unclear how there will be sufficient political accountability for how services are delivered and associated budgets are managed.

The absence of any commitment to provide public sector workers with fair pay awards during the term of the plan

We welcome the inclusion of the following action:

Industrial relations: building capacity to plan and negotiate changes to pay, terms and conditions and develop trade union relations.

However, the proposed plan does not contain any details to enable us to establish what provision has been put in place for public sector pay awards throughout the period. It is incumbent on the Government to ensure the recent disputes are not repeated during its term of office. It is essential for staff to have some confidence they will be treated in a fair and equitable manner by their employer going forward, and that pay negotiations for the remainder of the period will be undertaken in good faith by the employer. Unless there is some form of financial commitment within the budgets for future years, the States Employment Board, will again be in the position of not having adequate funds approved to offer cost of living pay awards.

The ongoing dispute has eroded civil servants' trust in the SEB as an employer. Without the trust and support of Civil Servants, who provide the infrastructural support to all areas within the organisation, the delivery actions outlined within the proposed plan is at risk.

The absence of any information that indicates that adequate resource planning has been undertaken to ensure that actions are achievable within the given timeframe

Given the concerns outlined above, and in the absence of any detailed business cases outlining specific resource/operational requirements for the additional revenue expenditure, and capital and major projects, it is not possible to estimate whether the actions and deliverables outlined within the plan are achievable within the timeframe laid out. We are mindful that the quality of services can suffer due to time and cost pressures, and that this is a real risk to our public services given the issues outlined above.



Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide a written response. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Scrutiny Panel to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,

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