



Inspiring business
Jersey

24 April, 2020

Members of the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Dear Member

Re: Government's response to the outbreak of COVID-19

Thank you to the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel for inviting the Institute of Directors Jersey ("IoD Jersey") to provide its feedback, views and comments on how the outbreak of COVID-19 is affecting its Members.

Before doing so, I would like to convey my sincere thanks on behalf of our Committee, Sub-Committees and Members to the Government of Jersey, Jersey Finance and Jersey Business for everything which they have done on the Island's behalf, following the onset of COVID-19 in Jersey. All of the hard work by those concerned has been very much appreciated, as have the financial steps and measures which have been introduced.

It is reassuring to see that the focus is now on what must happen post-crisis to recover the economy and to ensure that Jersey is well-placed to replenish its financial reserves.

1. Approach

As I have said from the outset of Covid-19, these are exceptional and challenging times for all concerned.

On the one hand, the Government of Jersey is doing everything it can to support all businesses and to provide continued employment across our economy. On the other hand, it is also having to ensure that the measures which are being implemented, enable us to maintain a stable and economic infrastructure going forward.

There has been some concern expressed by some of the Institute of Director ("IoD") Members, regarding the overall strategic plan for the island's economy and the timely release of communications, over the course of the last few weeks. However, the fact remains that none of us have ever experienced an ever-changing situation and global pandemic on this unprecedented scale before.

Whilst therefore the IoD has always been known worldwide, as being at the forefront of promoting businesses, by lobbying government on behalf of its members for over a century, the present situation is different, in that we are all in uncharted waters.



A different response to this particular crisis is therefore required.

For this reason, the IoD Board, our members and I agreed at a very early stage that it is imperative that now, more than ever, all of the stakeholders should work together and collaborate for the benefit of Jersey Plc going forward. Furthermore, to focus our energies on providing measured and constructive feedback, as well as looking at ways to help and support local businesses.

To this end, I have been liaising closely with the various sub-committees of IoD Jersey as well as the IoD in the UK, over the course of the last few weeks.

A dedicated coronavirus link was set up on at an early stage on our IoD Jersey website (www.iod.je), where we collated the useful information provided by IoD UK, as well as the Government of Jersey, Jersey Finance and Jersey Business.

In addition, I have been working with the Government of Jersey, Jersey Finance (in my day time role as Head of the Legal & Technical Team) and Jersey Business, in respect of some of the measures which have been implemented to assist all businesses.

Over the course of the last few weeks, I have regularly updated our Members and informed them that a significant amount of work has been and continues to be undertaken behind the scenes, in conjunction with the latest medical advice, by the Government of Jersey, business leaders and industry bodies, to ensure a regular dialogue is maintained and agreed initiatives are consistent with the requirements of all parties.

2.Feedback to-date

As difficult and uncertain as this new era is for everyone, it has been very encouraging to see and hear the speed and efficiency with which I had heard many of our IoD Jersey Members have implemented business continuity schemes and remote-working solutions for all of their staff.

Also, the fact that notwithstanding the physical and mental impact which Covid-19 is inevitably having on everyone, the support which everyone is providing to each other not only with the initiatives within individual businesses but with the positive ones across the community as well.

A significant proportion of our membership is made up of the financial services industry. As I anticipate that you will have also approached the CEO of Jersey Finance, Joe Moynihan, to provide comment on behalf of the finance industry, I do not wish to duplicate this exercise or take up the Scrutiny Panel's time unnecessarily and I propose to leave it with Jersey Finance to provide its comments in this regard.

Overall, the feedback which I have received from those members of IoD Jersey who are in the Financial Services sector is that Jersey has been very operationally resilient with its overall infrastructure/connectivity, compared to some other offshore jurisdictions. In addition, that we need to continue to promote this as much as possible, to ensure that we continue to be regarded as a leading international financial centre of excellence.



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However, there is a concern that the Finance sector is not taken for granted. For instance, some of the smaller law firms and accountancy firms have been affected significantly more than some of the larger firms, by reason of the nature of the work which they undertake.

Our members (both finance and non-finance) are grateful to the Government of Jersey for doing everything it can to support all businesses, including sole traders and the smaller businesses. I have sent out a further letter to our members yesterday, in respect of the update on Phase 2 of the Co-Funded Payroll Scheme, further to the announcement by Senator Farnham.

The majority of queries and concerns which have been raised by our members have been dealt with therein, save that in the case of the message from local consultancies to the Government, there is a request that the government keeps any local consultants currently under their employment in positions, rather than putting people out of work at this time. If they are closing projects down, or putting them on hold, the request is that could they please re-utilise these people on other projects.

Save for the above, the majority of our members appreciate that the Government has been looking at this range of short and long-term arrangements being implemented, against a backdrop of maintaining a stable, economic infrastructure going forward for the Island.

IoD Jersey very much welcomes therefore these measures which it hopes will support continued employment across our economy and maintain key economic infrastructure through a period of unprecedented challenge.

From both a finance and non-finance perspective, I am also hearing that the private sector very much wishes to be involved in the exit strategy with the Government of Jersey, as well as determining how best to replenish the financial reserves and the timescale for doing so. This way, businesses can also therefore plan effectively too and Jersey can harness all of its intellectual capital, from the different sectors of industry.

3. Assistance to local businesses

It has been encouraging to see the assistance which members of IoD Jersey as well as our members generally have provided to each other during these times. By way of example, one of our Committee members recently shared their virtual working practices with other members and set a great example.

Being a tech savvy business, they had a significant virtual set up in place before the COVID-19 outbreak using Office 365 and also virtual accounting and IT services through Yzobi.

The team has since built on this over the last month to enhance the lives of the team working from home. They now have a team WhatsApp group for staying in touch, have created COVID-19 advisory videos to circulate to clients and have introduced the Soulgenic Health App.

A further example, is the support and advice which has been provided by our IoD Jersey Technology and Innovation Sub-Committee, to local businesses and the community. Some



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readers may have seen the tips which this Sub-Committee recently kindly shared for remote working, security and staying connected.

We have also been recently sharing via social media, how our members have taken new approaches to the way they serve their clients through this pandemic.

In addition, we are presently focusing, inter alia, on a newsletter and some webinars, the content of which we very much hope will assist local businesses, during these difficult and challenging times, with the topics which we are proposing to cover.

IoD Jersey remains committed to helping the entire community and will continue to provide guidance, expertise, and collaboration to all our partners as we move together through these uncertain times. We look forward to playing a vital role in building a future for our Island where everyone can mutually benefit.

I hope that the above details are helpful but please do not hesitate to let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely

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