

Chief Minister



19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
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Senator Kristina Moore
Chair, Scrutiny Liaison Committee

BY EMAIL

9 March 2021

Dear Chair,

I was somewhat surprised when I was informed that 'P.18/2021 Land Transaction Under Standing Order 168 (3) – Office Accommodation Project, Union Street, St Helier: Deferral Of Approval' had been lodged, given the significant volume of decision-making information that has been shared with Scrutiny and that the Government had received no notification from yourself that it should expect such a Proposition.

As you will be aware, contracts with the preferred Development Partner are ready to be signed on 15 March 2021, with a view to practical completion of a new office building by early 2024. The Proposition will mean that the Government cannot enter into contracts until such time as the situation is resolved. I think it is helpful to reiterate the fact that the case for a new office for public services is well-established – the project will allow us to make significant recurrent operational savings, provide an economic stimulus during the construction phase and release a number of sites to be used for other purposes, including housing.

As laid out in the Proposition, the additional costs to Islanders as a result of P.18/2021 will be in the region of an extra £1m per month to the taxpayer. I would therefore like to request that the Scrutiny Liaison Committee consider reducing the lodging period for the Proposition, with a view to an Assembly debate at the next States sitting commencing 23 March 2021. This will give certainty as early as possible, and dependent on the outcome of the debate, would either allow Scrutiny further time to undertake its proposed review, or the Government to enter into contracts with the preferred Development Partner in the least delay possible. Both of these outcomes would minimise the now inevitable delay and associated cost implications that will be borne by taxpayers.

I should be grateful if you could revert to me by 15 March 2021 with your response.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Senator John Le Fondré.

Senator John Le Fondré

Chief Minister