



## States Greffe

Deputy Lyndon Farnham  
Chief Minister

### **BY EMAIL**

12<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Dear Chief Minister,

### **Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel**

#### **Government Plan 2025-2028**

Thank you for your letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> July to update Scrutiny on your preparations in relation to the Government Plan 2025-2028 (Government Plan). The Panel discussed your letter at a meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and agreed to formally seek further clarification on the preparations underway. Moreover, to request definitive detail on the timeline for the lodging and presentation of key documentation to assist the Scrutiny process as well as to raise areas of concern, which have come to our attention as a result of your letter.

By way of an update, the Panel also shared your letter with the Scrutiny Liaison Committee (SLC) for discussion at their meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and the SLC has subsequently shared its feedback with the Panel, which is also reflected within this letter.

#### **Areas of Concern**

The Panel understands from your letter that the Government Plan Proposition is due to be lodged in the absence of the accompanying Annex to the Government Plan, in late July 2024. You also note within your letter that the Annex will be presented *several weeks* later; therefore, the Panel wishes to highlight that in the absence of receiving the Annex at the same time as the Government Plan Proposition, it would be challenging to commence Scrutiny of the proposals following the lodging of the Proposition. Despite Government's intention to secure earlier lodging of the proposals than in previous years and an earlier States Assembly debate on the Proposition on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

Furthermore, you also note that the Ministerial Plans and Delivery Plans will be replaced by the departments' Business Plans, which will include key objectives and service performance measures. The Panel understands that the respective Chief Officers of each department will produce these, in consultation with their Ministers. As such, the Panel is uncertain regarding the oversight that this approach will provide and, in particular, raises concern as to how progress will be monitored, measured and reported, also in the absence of progress reports or updates being provided to Scrutiny and published. The Panel notes that previously mid-year review progress reports were provided and that these were subsequently replaced by Delivery Plan progress reports. These outlined the progress for the various workstreams and where delays or cancellations of projects had occurred or were likely.

However, in the absence of this information, the Panel seeks clarity on how progress will now be monitored, measured and reported. Particularly, in respect of Scrutiny undertaking its role in

holding Ministers to account on their Ministerial priorities and portfolios and also the delivery thereof.

The Panel is also concerned that it appears that there is no framework for Chief Officers to follow for producing the departmental Business Plans, as the letter notes that outside of the inclusion of key objectives and services performance measures that Chief Officers, in consultation with Ministers, will determine what other information should be included. The Panel is uncertain as to Ministers' roles in deciding what information is included within these plans, considering they would be consulted with by their respective Chief Officers. Any provision of information or detail published would not be consistent across departments and Ministerial portfolios.

Moreover, considering that departmental Business Plans will be updated following the approval of the Government Plan by the States Assembly, the Panel questions the value of the publication of the departments' Business Plans to the Scrutiny process of the Government Plan Proposition, as it would only address an interim period from July to December 2024.

The Panel is concerned that the approach being undertaken whereby all the key information relating to the Government Plan workstream will not be available at the time of the lodging of the Proposition, will defeat the aims of securing an earlier lodging timeline and an earlier States' debate on the Proposition. In particular, Scrutiny finds itself in a position whereby it would only be able to commence its review process once all the key information has been received, which could be *several weeks* after the lodging of the Proposition.

Considering the uncertain timings, it is not possible for Scrutiny Panels to commence scheduling of review hearings at this stage. It is the Panel's view that in line with the broad indications of when key information will be made available, that review hearings will only be possible in September to October 2024.

### **Timeline and Information Request**

Although your letter provides an overly broad indication of timings, to further assist Scrutiny in its preparations for reviewing the Government Plan, the Panel requests definitive timings for the following:

1. Final meeting of the Council of Ministers to approve the Government Plan
2. Lodging of the Government Plan Proposition
3. Presentation of the Government Plan Annex
4. When the All States Members briefing on the Proposition will be held
5. Publication of the departments' Business Plans
6. Publication/sharing of the Youth Friendly version of the Government Plan
7. When Scrutiny Members can receive a technical briefing on the Government Plan and accompanying Annex

To further support the Scrutiny process, the Panel requests the following information:

1. A progress update in respect of the previous year's progress and spends
2. Detail on any new revenue growth bids (growth tables) and related business cases
3. A spreadsheet outlining the capital and other projects, which identifies continuing and new allocated projects by Ministerial department
4. The latest Financial Report

The Panel notes that [Article 9 \(1\) Public Finances \(Jersey\) Law 2019](#) states that each financial year, the Council of Ministers must prepare a Government Plan and lodge it in sufficient time for the States to debate and approve it before the start of the next financial year. Moreover, that Standing Orders of the States of Jersey states that a minimum lodging period of 12 weeks applies to a Government Plan except in any year where there is an ordinary election, in which case a

minimum lodging period of 10 weeks applies. Therefore, the Panel emphasises the necessity to receive the Government Plan and the accompanying Government Plan Annex within that minimum lodging period of 12 weeks.

In order for Scrutiny to progress its work, the Panel would appreciate a formal written response detailing this information by no later than **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024**. Please be aware that it is the Panel's intention to publish the response it receives on the States Assembly Website.

Yours Sincerely,



Deputy Helen Miles

**Chair  
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel  
Vice President SLC**

**CC: Deputy Inna Gardiner  
President SLC**