

STATES OF JERSEY



REPORTING ON MINISTERIAL ACTIVITIES

Lodged au Greffe on 11th October 2024
by Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Ouen, St. Mary and St. Peter
Earliest date for debate: 12th November 2024

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Chief Minister to update the Codes of Conduct and Practice for Ministers and Assistant Ministers, before 31st December 2024, to enable new practices to be implemented on 1st January 2025, to include the requirement for –

- (a) details of all external meetings attended by Ministers and Assistant Ministers to be published monthly in arrears on the Government website; and
- (b) details of all off-Island travel by Ministers and Assistant Ministers, including the costs incurred, to be published within 30 days of return to the Island on the Government website.

DEPUTY K.L. MOORE OF ST. MARY, ST. OUEN AND ST. PETER

REPORT

Introduction

Openness is one of [The Seven Principles of Public Life](#) for public life and constitutes an important part of building trust in government.

The [Better Life Index report 2023](#) ranked Jersey bottom for civic engagement based on voter turnout in the 2022 election which was unchanged since the previous report and election. Efforts should be made to turn this around and transparency can assist in raising levels of public trust and engagement.

There is a level of public interest in the activities and engagements of elected representatives, and the publication of Ministerial diaries would provide helpful insight in this area. The public should be able to see when and with whom meetings take place – this would allow a greater visibility of how Ministers spend their time, whilst also negating any perceived element of secrecy.

The diary information to be published further to part (a) of the Proposition relates to external meetings only – and even then, those solely for ministerial business and professional activities. Such information should include the date and purpose of the meeting and the attendees, identified by job title if not by name.

A copy of a completed Ministerial Diary Disclosure Form can be found at [Diary Disclosure – The Hon. Jacinta Allan MP](#) (Parliament of Victoria, Australia) with the attached diary summary of her meetings from April to June 2024 showing the type of content required.

Members of the media and the public often question the amount spent by Ministers on travel and it makes sense to share this information on a regular basis to again be more transparent.

Ministerial Codes

Jersey

The Jersey Codes of Conduct and Practice for Ministers and Assistant Ministers (Jersey Codes) ([R.31/2024](#)) very clearly outline the behaviour expected of Executive Members.

Currently there is no section in the Jersey Codes on the publication of ministerial diaries which part (a) of the proposition seeks to correct.

The Jersey Codes have a section on Travel and Expenses (point 8 page 4) which states that “*Travel and expenses will be published as soon as practical, delivering transparency, and enabling costs to be independently scrutinised*”. Part (b) of the proposition aims to “tighten” up the publication of these costs by stipulating that they are published within 30 days of the return from any trip as opposed to “as soon as is practicable” to ensure that it is done.

The UK

[The Ministerial Code - Cabinet Office](#) (UK Code) (December 2022) makes provision for publication of details of external meetings as is shown in the following extract under the section “Meeting with External Organisations” (point 8.14 p.30) –

“...Departments will publish quarterly, details of Ministers’ external meetings. Meetings with newspaper and other media proprietors, editors and senior executives will be published on a quarterly basis regardless of the purpose of the meeting”.

The [Ministers' Transparency Guidance](#) (“Guidance”) provides additional guidance to assist with the implementation of aspects of the UK Code. Annex C of the Guidance deals with Ministers’ Overseas Travel and Annex D with Ministers’ meetings with external organisations and individuals with both Annexes having a section on “How to format and present data”.

European Commission

The [Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission](#) provides rules to be followed regarding ethics and integrity. Transparency is specifically referred to on the above web page and states that –

“[The Commission]...leads by example by publishing information on the meetings held between Commissioners and interest representatives as well as the costs of Commissioners' individual business travel on the individual webpage of each Commissioner”. [[Calendar items - Commissioners - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)]

Public interest groups, such as Integrity Watch gather the information provided by the Commission and present it in a user-friendly way, providing league tables comparing the activities of different members - [Commission Meetings \(integritywatch.eu\)](#)

Isle of Man

[The Government Code](#) (Updated October 2022) has a section on travel. The expenses for ministerial off-island trips taken on behalf of the Cabinet Office are published ([Chief Minister's Off-Island Trips and Expenses](#)).

Conclusion

Publishing summaries/extracts from ministerial diaries reveals the role and/or extent of ministerial involvement with external organisations, stakeholders, individuals and possibly the media. It illustrates a willingness by Government to actively become more transparent and to enhance the culture of openness and to assist the public in understanding of a Minister’s work.

Additional Reading

- [Ministerial diaries full disclaimer | Beehive.govt.nz](#)

Financial and staffing implications

There are no financial and staffing implications arising from this proposition as there are sufficient resources in the Ministerial Support Unit to collate the information required and provide it to the Website team for publication. Each Minister has a Private Secretary who is responsible for their calendar and would be able to maintain a separate log of the relevant meetings for disclosure.

Children’s Rights Impact Assessment

A Children’s Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.