

STATES OF JERSEY



MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016 – 2019 (P.72/2015): COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 1st October 2015
by the Public Accounts Committee

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Committee considers that the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as lodged has not taken full account of 3 recommendations made by the Committee as previously constituted, and which were accepted by the Executive.¹ These recommendations were as follows –

Recommendation 1 – Car Parks Trading Fund (P.A.C.3/2013 refers)

The Treasurer of the States and the Chief Officer, Transport and Technical Services Department should revisit the aims and objectives of the Car Parks Trading Fund in conjunction with their respective Ministers and report back to the Committee within 3 months.

Recommendation 6 – Car Parks Trading Fund (P.A.C.3/2013 refers)

Subject to the outcome of Recommendation 1, the Treasurer of the States should include within the draft MTFP 2016 – 2019 a statement confirming the aims and objectives of the Car Parks Trading Fund and that the proposed financial returns to be paid from the Car Parks Trading Fund align with those aims and objectives.

Recommendation 6 – Health and Social Services Integrated Care Records Programme (P.A.C.2/2014 refers)

The Treasurer of the States must ensure that all project descriptions included within future MTFPs and Budget Statements provide a clear and accurate summary of the purpose of funding allocations and measurable outcomes to allow for departments to be held to account.

The recommendations concerning the Car Parks Trading Fund were made in November 2013. Departments were reportedly still reviewing the aims and objectives of the Fund in September 2014.²

The financial narrative on page 164 of the Annex to the draft MTFP 2016 – 2019 indicates that the review of the car parking operation will continue into 2016, with a view to reflecting the aims of the Sustainable Transport Policy. While the Committee is encouraged by the planned linking of the operation to the Sustainable Transport Policy, it is concerned that the delay in completing this review will in turn delay the identification of scope for positive impact on States finances.

Turning to Recommendation 6 of P.A.C.2/2014, the Committee has not detected a material change in the drafting of the capital programme section of the MTFP. Accepting that the proposition asks the States to agree only a total spending envelope available to allocate to capital projects in each of the years within the draft Plan, and that specific funding allocations for capital programme items will be determined as part of forthcoming Budget debates, the Committee maintains that the States would benefit from a clearer indication of the nature of anticipated capital projects before the spending envelope is fixed, particularly regarding the matter of whether new, replacement or upgraded items are being proposed, and regarding the high-level outcomes that programme items should deliver – and by when.

¹ [P.A.C.3/2013 Res.](#) and [P.A.C.2/2014 Res.](#) refer

² [P.129/2014 Amd.\(5\)Com.Com.](#) refers

The Committee will be looking to confirm that Recommendation 6 of P.A.C.2/2014 has been implemented when the draft Budget Statement is lodged later in 2015. If the Committee remains concerned that the level of detail provided is insufficient, it may propose that the Budget debate be preceded by a specific 'in committee' debate concerning the capital programme. The Committee recalls that capital programmes have tended to generate limited discussion in the States Assembly during both MTFP and Budget debates. An 'in committee' debate of proportionate duration should allow for greater programme detail to be placed on record, thereby assisting the States Assembly with the process of holding Ministers and their departments to account in future years.