

STATES OF JERSEY



GOVERNMENT PLAN 2020–2023 (P.71/2019): FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 11th November 2019
by the Connétable of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (f)(i) –

After the words “Appendix 3 to the Report” insert the words “, except that decisions on disbursements from the Fund shall be decided by a Committee of States Members, elected by the States, whose composition and terms of reference shall be approved by the States, following a proposition to be presented by the Privileges and Procedures Committee”.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

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

to receive the Government Plan 2020–2023 specified in Article 9(1) of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (“the Law”) and specifically –

- (a) to approve the estimate of total States income to be paid into the Consolidated Fund in 2020 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 1 to the Report, which is inclusive of the proposed taxation and impôts duties changes outlined in the Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(a) of the Law; and
- (b) to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2020 and the total cost of each such project, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 2 to the Report; and
- (c) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2020, for each head of expenditure, being gross expenditure less estimated income (if any), in line with Articles 9(2)(g), 10(1) and 10(2) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 3(i) and (ii) of the Report; and
- (d) to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2020 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 4 to the Report; and
- (e) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation’s trading fund for 2020 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 5 to the Report; and

- (f) to approve –
 - (i) the establishment of a “Climate Emergency Fund”, in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 of the Law, as set out at Appendix 3 to the Report, except that decisions on disbursements from the Fund shall be decided by a Committee of States Members, elected by the States, whose composition and terms of reference shall be approved by the States, following a proposition to be presented by the Privileges and Procedures Committee; and
 - (ii) the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2020 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report; and
- (g) to approve the amounts to be transferred from one States fund to another for 2020 in line with Article 9(2)(b) as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report; and
- (h) to approve the estimated income and expenditure of the Social Security, Health Insurance and Long-Term Care Funds for 2020 set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 8(i), (ii) and (iii) to the Report, with –
 - (i) the estimated income to be raised from existing social security contributions defined in the Social Security Law and the proposed changes to contribution liability; and
 - (ii) the estimated expenditure to be paid to support the existing benefits and functions defined in the Social Security Law, the Health Insurance Law and the Long-Term Care Funds and new benefits, if any, to be paid from the Funds; and
- (i) to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2020–2023, as set out at Appendix 4 to the Report.

REPORT

Appendix 3 to [P.71/2019](#) sets out in some detail how the proposed Climate Emergency Fund (“CEF”) will operate; however, it does not address the important question of whether it is appropriate to vest the power to make disbursements from the Fund in a single Minister.

Paragraph 3 explains how this responsibility is intended to be managed, including the Minister being ‘answerable to the States Assembly and responding to questions’, the roles of the Principal Accounting Officer and the Comptroller and Auditor General, but I do not believe that these proposals go far enough.

In the first place, taxpayers are being asked, through the Government Plan, to accept above-cost-of-living increases in the cost of fuel, and they will rightly be concerned if the expenditure of this extra tax income is spent on initiatives which have not been fully scrutinised and justified. To take a recent example, Ministerial spending on promoting the e-bikes scheme was questioned by backbenchers for not being well-targeted and an *ad hoc* measure, when there is no States’ cycling strategy, but there is very little they or indeed Scrutiny could do about it.

Secondly, the Climate Change Emergency is too important a matter to be left in the hands of one Minister, or their Assistant Minister(s), when they are already dealing with a busy portfolio. What assurance do States Members or the Public have that disbursements out of the CEF will not be made under delegated powers following officer advice?

I would like to see a properly constituted and supported Committee of the States taking on this challenging role, whose membership would include backbenchers and members of Scrutiny, as well as members of the Executive. Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier, who proposed that the States declare a Climate Change Emergency, would be an obvious candidate for nomination to the Committee.

Given the States’ history of overspends, abortive spending and the like, a Climate Emergency Committee of the States would provide the accountability and transparency that taxpayers expect, and that all Islanders concerned about climate change would surely support.

Financial and manpower implications

The limited cost of supporting the Committee would be met out of existing administrative and communication budgets.