

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2022– 2025 (P.90/2021): SECOND AMENDMENT – COVID-19 REVIEW

**Lodged au Greffe on 16th November 2021
by the Connétable of St. Brelade**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2022–2025 (P.90/2021): SECOND
AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (f) –

After the words “Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report” insert the words –

“, except that in Summary Table 5(i), £500,000 should be transferred from the General Reserve Head of Expenditure to fund the undertaking of an independent review of the Island’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic, deliverable by 30th April 2022, the Council of Ministers being requested to take such steps as are necessary to initiate a review that will deliver an objective and independent analysis of the actions undertaken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and provide recommendations and guidelines for the management of any future pandemic or similarly disruptive event”.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. BRELADE

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 2022 – 2025 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 2022 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;
- (b) to approve the Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2022, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 to the Report, which may be obtained by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as and when required, in line with Article 9 (2)(c) of the Law, of up to those revised approvals;
- (c) to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2022 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary table 2 to the Report, noting that the transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Technology Fund is subject to the Assembly’s approval of a proposition to create such a Fund in 2022, in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law;
- (d) to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2022 and the total cost of each such project and any amendments to the proposed total cost of a major project under a previously approved

Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 - Summary Table 4 to the Report;

- (e) to endorse the efficiencies and other re-balancing measures for 2022 contained in the Government Plan as set out in Appendix 2 Summary Table 6 and reflected within each gross head of expenditure in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 5(i);
- (f) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2022, 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 5(i) and (ii) of the Report, except that within Summary Table 5 (i), £500,000 should be transferred from the General Reserve Head of Expenditure to the Covid-19 Response Head of Expenditure to fund the undertaking of an independent review of the Island’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic, deliverable by 30th April 2022, the Council of Ministers being requested to take such steps as are necessary to initiate a review that will deliver an objective and independent analysis of the actions undertaken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and provide recommendations and guidelines for the management of any future pandemic or similarly disruptive event;
- (g) to approve up to £480 million to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for the Past Service Pension Liabilities Refinancing head of expenditure, subject to the availability of funding, which may include, in full or in part, use of the borrowing/financing referred in paragraph (b);
- (h) to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2022 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report;
- (i) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation’s trading fund for 2022 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report;
- (j) to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2022 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 9 to the Report;
- (k) to approve an amendment to the policy of the Strategic Reserve Fund to enable that Fund to be used as a holding Fund for any or all monies related to the repayment of debt raised through external financing, with the monies used to offset the repayment of debt, as and when required; and
- (l) to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2022-2025, as set out at Appendix 3 to the Report.

REPORT

Some jurisdictions have begun to establish their pandemic lessons learned inquiries. It is time now for Jersey to meet the widespread public expectation that we also need to harvest, analyse, learn, and apply our own lessons from the pandemic in order to safeguard our population. We must demonstrate that we can be agile when required. We can best protect Jersey by authorising a rapid, short, bespoke lessons learned inquiry so that urgent lessons can be learned and applied.

It is necessary to safeguard and protect Jersey in these more dangerous and globally interconnected times. The reasons why it is important that the lessons are captured now have been laid out by Professor Sir Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust, former member of UK's SAGE (Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies), and WHO (World Health Organisation) global level expert. In his recently published and widely acclaimed book *Spike: The Virus v The People*, he argues that public safety demands that this exercise should begin forthwith – ‘ a much more devastating virus could leap across from animals to humans tomorrow and with the young, not the old, dying in large numbers....we now live in a world ‘custom-built’ for pandemics’.

We are not considering here a full, expensive, public inquiry but a ‘safety first’ rapid lessons learned exercise. Following commercial and military best practice, this should start within weeks and it should be time- and cost-limited (see financial and manpower implications covered below). It should be noted that any inquiry held on the basis of ‘rapid lessons learned’ would not preclude a more substantial review at a later date.

In order to ensure that this rapid lesson learned exercise cannot be misinterpreted as a witch-hunt or blame game exercise, indemnity and anonymity safeguards can and should be designed so that witnesses giving evidence to the panel can speak freely and feel personally secure.

Financial and manpower implications

The key and timely first action necessary will be to appoint the Chair of the small - 4 or 5 persons maximum - inquiry panel. Selecting a high quality, distinguished, and independent person to be Chair can be fast-tracked and done outside of the usual procedures. States Members can either retain or delegate the authority to appoint the Chair.

Once appointed and with the support of Government of Jersey Human Resources, the Chair will be responsible for selecting up to 3-4 other members of the panel, to include medical and scientific experts who have not been directly involved with Jersey's pandemic response to date.

It is understood that given the appropriate support and backing that the selection and appointment of a suitable Chair and other panellists can be done at pace and in time for the panel to begin work in January. It is envisaged that the panel should conclude taking evidence by 31st March 2022 and present its report to the States Assembly by 30th April 2022.

It is proposed that given requisite Government of Jersey administration and clerical support to the panel, that the costs involved should be capped at a maximum of £500,000. It is considered likely that the final cost will be significantly lower. However, this will depend if some or all the other panel members live on island, and how many witnesses will be required to fly in to Jersey.