

STATES OF JERSEY



JERSEY CONSUMER COUNCIL: RE- APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Lodged au Greffe on 23rd April 2024
by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development
Earliest date for debate: 21st May 2024

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to refer to their Act dated 2nd February 2011 regarding the Jersey Consumer Council and, in accordance with paragraph (b)(ii) of ‘Jersey Consumer Council – future mandate’ (P.182/2010), to approve the re-appointment of Mr. Carl Walker as Chairman of the Jersey Consumer Council for a further term of 3 years with effect from 14th April 2024.

MINISTER FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

REPORT

The Jersey Consumer Council (“JCC”) was originally established by Act of the States in 1995. In February 2011 the Assembly adopted P.182/2010, which set out a new mandate for the Consumer Council. This included a fundamental change to the previous position, in that the role of Chairman was no longer restricted to being undertaken only by a Member of the States. The decision was also taken to provide an honorarium payment of £10,000 per annum to the new Chairman for a minimum of 10 hours per week spent on JCC business.

Following a recruitment process overseen by the Jersey Appointments Commission, the then Minister requested that the States approve the appointment of Mr. Carl Walker as Chair of the Jersey Consumer Council (P.67/2018). That approval was given and Mr Walker took on the role with effect from 14th April 2018.

Following amendments to the JCC constitution outlined in [R.61/2024](#), the Minister has decided to put forward Mr Walker for a final re-appointment as Chair. Since 2018 consumers in Jersey have faced an unprecedented set of challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant rise in inflation and the cost of living crisis. A three-year extension will allow the Chair and Council to progress a number of projects which had been delayed by the need to urgently respond to these challenges.

Amongst these pieces of work are: a consumer fair, youth council member representation and promotion of younger consumer concerns as well as additional work on on-going issues including; ATOL protection, insurance for Islanders and businesses, and an improved price-comparison product.

Biography

A former radio and broadcast journalist of some 22 years in both Jersey and the UK, Mr Carl Walker settled in the Island in January 2000 to take up a position with the Jersey Evening Post. Mr Walker served as Deputy Editor for three years before being appointed as Chair of the Consumer Council in 2018. Consumer journalism featured heavily in his work, most notably the prominent ‘Fair Play’ consumer column. Fair Play had previously been cited in the States Assembly as having helped drive down the price of petrol and other consumables.

Since moving on from journalism, and alongside his role with the Jersey Consumer Council, Mr Walker has established his own media training and communications consultancy business. He also came to the Consumer Council having demonstrated significant commitment to the community and charitable sector.

The Minister considers that Mr. Walker committed himself wholeheartedly to the role during his first and second terms and was effective in ensuring that consumers’ voices were heard across a range of issues and cases, particularly during the unprecedented early months of the COVID pandemic, which included working with the Island's major supermarkets to calm panic-buying behaviours, the establishment of the 'Bag of Basics' scheme for those Islanders unable to attend supermarkets, and the price comparison website and app. The JCC was particularly affected during the pandemic, with a lack of officer support and a significant increase in consumer engagement. The council is now in a much more stable position, with two part-time officers and a robust business plan for this year, to include a consumer fair. In the current cost-of-living crisis, the JCC still faces significant challenges in offering support to Islanders and the demand on

this small organisation is significant. That said, they are now able to meet these challenges and help support the Jersey consumers in new ways, with changes made to their constitution, which include the ability to investigate all consumer drivers, beyond just the financial.

On that basis, the Minister considers that it would be appropriate for Mr Walker to continue in the role for an additional three-year term to work hand in hand with officers to deliver on their new business plan and the deliverables.

Children's rights impact assessment

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

Financial and staffing implications

There are no specific financial and staffing implications arising from this proposition. Jersey Consumer Council currently receives grant funding in the sum of £137,000 per annum to fund the cost of delivering its Business Plan objectives, which in turn align with the terms of the Council's constitution