

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE CHAIR OF THE  
CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND HOME AFFAIRS SCRUTINY PANEL  
ON TUESDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2021**

**Review of the Government Plan**

First and foremost, I would like to express my disappointment at having to make this statement today and that it is not something which has been taken lightly. The Children, Education and Home Affairs Panel, as with all other Scrutiny Panels, has been undertaking a review of the proposed Government Plan 2022-25 with the intention of providing its report for the consideration of States Members ahead of the debate on 14th December.

One of the key areas being assessed by the Panel during this review is that of the funding for Education and the Education Reform Programme. By way of background, the education reform programme arose from the independent school funding review and intends to make substantial changes to the operation of the education system over the next four years. Two of the key aspects of this programme of reform relate to development of a new school funding formula – which is the formula by which funding per student is allocated – and development of Special Educational Needs (SEN) services for children and young people. These two areas are vital to the Education Reform Programme and, as such, the Panel deem them critical components of any review into the programme.

In order to inform its review of this aspect of the Government Plan, the Panel made a request to the Minister for Children and Education on 13th October requesting, in confidence, the final Inclusion Review report, which was understood to have been in a final draft for the Minister to consider, and details of the revised funding formula for schools, whether completed or in draft form. Despite repeated requests to have this information shared with the Panel, including during a public hearing on 1st November, over 30 days later the information had yet to be provided, despite the Code of Engagement between the Executive and Scrutiny Panels and the P.A.C. setting out a 5-day response time for requests for information. The Panel received a response from the Minister on Monday 22nd November which explained that it was intended for the inclusion review report to be taken to Council of Ministers on 30th November. Furthermore, only information previously provided to the Panel in relation to the funding formula was shared. I must be clear; the Panel's request was for sight of the inclusion review report itself and the details of the actual funding formula. Whilst the Panel thanks the Minister for his response, neither of the pieces of information specifically requested have been provided to the Panel.

The reason for making this statement today is that we as a Panel need to highlight the difficult task we have been presented with undertaking scrutiny of the Government Plan, especially the funding of education, which is one of the most important areas of investment within the Government Plan. The Panel deems the information requested vital to its review and without it, it cannot deliver an objective assessment and fulfil its role. The reality of education funding cannot be assessed without this information and given further demographics and revenue funding are likely to be allocated using the new formula, the Panel cannot state whether the funding allocated is sufficient without sight of the new formula. The Panel would also note the importance of the fact that the current formula is nearly 30 years old.

The Panel has taken evidence from the board of Governors of Haute Vallée school that there is a £23 million deficit within education funding. Whilst the Minister initially rebutted this figure publicly during a hearing, he went on to state that a figure was being quality assured as part of the

school funding formula process. The Panel has been informed that a quality assurance process is being undertaken, however, there have been very few details shared with it as to what this process entails other than those involved in the process. In order for the new formula to be in place for 2022, there is little time left for this to be completed to allow time for examination by the Panel should this information not be available to the Panel.

Regarding the Inclusion Review report, the Panel notes that under the Education (Jersey) Law 1999, the Minister has a duty to provide SEN provision for every child that requires it (Article 29(2)). This report is clearly a very important part of enabling the Minister to fulfil that duty by identifying the manner in which SEN provision is allocated, and of course how it is funded to achieve its aims. Again, this is a fundamental part of the Education Reform Programme and, in order to provide a full and objective assessment of funding being allocated to SEN provision, the Panel must have sight of this report to ascertain the direction of travel.

As outlined at the beginning of this statement, the Panel has not taken the decision to make this statement lightly but given the situation it finds itself in with regards to this information, it has had no further choice than to raise it in the States Assembly. Whilst the Minister has responded to the Panel and it is thankful for the response, it would raise the point that the specific information requested has yet to be provided to it. The Panel feels it has been clear in this regard and, as such, it is concerned that this information has yet to be shared with it. The Panel would reiterate that this is a disappointing situation, and it would request that the Minister provides the information to it prior to the end of today's sitting.