

19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
Jersey | JE2 4WE

Deputy Inna Gardner
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
By Email

16th March 2021

Dear Deputy Gardner

Thank you for your letter dated 15th March 2021, the content and tone of which I find somewhat surprising and disappointing.

Firstly, I have never not accommodated a PAC request for a meeting unless there is a very good and unavoidable reason not to do so. Indeed, you will recall when the last PAC Quarterly hearing was changed a short notice, I moved my diary in order to meet your date of 8th February 2021. Can I also remind you that at that meeting you clearly referenced it was my last in front of the Committee and at the end of the hearing you closed the meeting with the words and I quote. "I wish you well in the future whatever you decide to do".

Secondly, my office was initially provided with two dates for a meeting that had not been scheduled or previously notified the 19th and or 29th of March. Unfortunately, I am on Annual Leave on both of those dates. Leave that was booked some weeks ago taking account of the timetable to ensure an orderly handover for the new Interim CEO and before your request was received. Are you suggesting that officers should not be allowed to take pre-booked annual leave?

Thirdly, your officials came back last week to suggest a further date of the 17th of March. I explained that regrettably at such short notice I was unable to change some key diary appointments either then or during this week. Such appointments include a full meeting of COM, an Emergencies Council meeting, my own Executive Leadership Team meeting, numerous handover sessions involving the incoming CEX, including with the Attorney General and Solicitor General, plus a major civil claims session, a meeting with Guernsey politicians and senior officials and a handover session with His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor. None of which includes key meetings on the budget, Covid, various final 1:1 sessions with officers. Which of these would you suggest are not important?

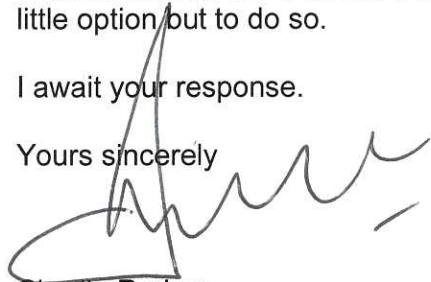
Finally, I was somewhat taken aback at the tone of the final paragraph of your letter. In the week when we have published progress on dealing with the bullying culture within the public service, I was shocked that you as Chair of PAC would threaten to go to the press on this matter should I not respond by an arbitrary date and time that had been set by yourself, which was less than twenty four hours after receipt of your original letter.

Is this the behaviour that you as Chair of PAC would condone in any other context? Does such a threat and potential intimidation fully accord with the code of conduct that you as a States Assembly Member have signed up to?

Should you decide to take such a course of action then, I will be forced to publish this letter outlining why unfortunately I am unable to meet with the PAC on the 29th of March. In addition, I will also have no choice but to refer you to both PPC and the Commissioner for Standards, in order that they could examine whether you have breached the Code of Conduct for an Assembly Member. A course of action I would rather not professionally have to undertake but, such is my concern at both the tone and the threatening nature contained within your letter, it leaves me with little option but to do so.

I await your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Parker', written over a large, light-colored scribble or watermark.

Charlie Parker
Chief Executive and Head of the Public Service

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