

19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
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Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair – Children, Education and Home Affairs Panel

VIA EMAIL

11 January 2023

Dear Chair,

Major incident at Haut du Mont, Pier Road

Thank you for your letter in relation to the major incident at Haut du Mont.

My Assistant Ministers and I, and all in the Justice and Home Affairs family, join you in expressing the deepest condolences to those affected by the incident. They remain very much in our thoughts as the response continues. I am also grateful for your kind words about our emergency services, whose response has been, in my view, exemplary.

I note your requests for information in relation to the investigation of the incident, and about the cost of the response. I can provide the Panel with the following information in response to your questions, which I hope will assist.

- 1. Please could you provide the Panel with a written summary about the plans for the investigation into the major incident at Pier Road, including details about its governance and structure.**

Following the tragic events at Pier Road on 10 December 2022, a cross-Government Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) was established and chaired by the Chief Officer of the States of Jersey Police (SoJP). The SCG convened on 14 occasions throughout the following 11 days until 21 December, before passing co-ordination onto a newly formed cross-Government Recovery Co-ordination Group (RCG) chaired by Richard Bell, with Kate Briden as Deputy Chair.

As you would expect, a Major Crime Enquiry Team (code name Op Spire) has been established and is being led by Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) and Head of Crime Services at SoJP, Detective Superintendent Alison Fossey.

There are in the region of 45 Officers/Staff working on this investigation (including a small number on mutual aid from UK forces), which includes colleagues from the Health & Safety Inspectorate. As we approach the 1-month anniversary of this tragedy, good progress has already been made with over 400 separate lines of enquiry being pursued and 100 statements recorded.

A wide range of forensic experts are also assisting with this investigation and work at the scene is likely to take some weeks – which will include the detailed recovery of all personal effects.

Dedicated Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) are also supporting all 10 bereaved families, whilst Government have worked hard throughout, alongside Andium, with the 41 displaced residents.

The Panel would, I am sure, also wish to note the tragic events of 8 December involving the collision at sea resulting in the loss of life. A separate investigation has been established, led by SoJP in support of Ports of Jersey, code name Op Nectar. A UK based SIO has been employed to lead this investigation, supported by both SoJP Officers/Staff in addition to further UK mutual aid.

SoJP have also established their own internal Gold group chaired by the Deputy Chief Officer to oversee both investigations, as well as business as usual and calls for service.

Op Spire is a complex investigation that is likely to take months to progress. In terms of impact, probably the most significant critical incident in modern times.

Despite two very significant and challenging incidents, the Chief Officer is entirely confident SoJP can still maintain routine service that islanders expect.

- 2. Please could you confirm whether the cost of the response will be met by the emergency services existing budgets, or whether additional funding has been made available centrally from Government. Please provide details for each service impacted, where possible.**

All costs are being recorded and tracked by the Departments that were called upon to support the initial response to the Haut du Mont incident and the continued recovery efforts. Governance established through the Recovery Coordination Group, also includes a sub-group for Finance, Legal and Resources implications. This group will monitor and advise the RCG and Political Oversight Group in relation to relevant costs (including procurement, staffing resource) and funding (including budget allocations and insurance).

The SCG and subsequently RCG have considered the response in 3 stages, namely (i) response, (ii) recovery and (iii) investigation, the 2 latter stages of which are expected to take some time to complete.

In relation to budget planning considerations, Departments are first expected to look to existing budgets where possible. However, the Council of Ministers and the Minister for Treasury and Resources will be asked to support additional budget allocations where existing budgets cannot meet these needs without impact to agreed objectives and service deliverables. Officials are also in contact with the insurers in relation to potential claims to cover costs.

For costs incurred in 2022 that are unable to be covered from year end underspends, funding will be made available from the General Reserve. Treasury and Exchequer are now closing the 2022 accounts, so more information on this will be available once final outturn positions are known. Costs likely to be incurred during 2023 are currently being quantified, so estimates are at a high level pending further planning and decision making.

Funding has not and will not constrain the appropriate response, recovery or investigation. Value for money principles will be applied. As set out above, a governance structure has been established to ensure continued clarity in the recovery strategy and respective decision with Political Oversight.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen Miles". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Deputy Helen Miles
Minister for Home Affairs