

Chief Minister



19-21 Broad Street | St Helier  
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Deputy Sam Mézec  
Chair  
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel

**By Email**

06 April 2023

Dear Chair

**Re: Resignation of the Government's Chief Executive Officer**

Thank you for your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> March.

Following the announcement of the Chief Executive Officers' resignation, I welcome the opportunity to provide the information requested and to set out the approach to recruiting the next Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

**Resignation of the Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive provided her resignation to me by hand at the end of the working day on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The Vice-Chair of the States Employment Board was also present. The Deputy Chief Minister was notified by me, in confidence, on 14<sup>th</sup> March.

In the interests of transparency, the CEO's resignation letter, and my response, have been published, with the consent of the CEO. This sets out clearly the reason for the CEO's resignation.

The States Employment Board were notified by the CEO on 22<sup>nd</sup> March as part of a cascade of communications which included the Council of Ministers, States Members, and employees and partner organisations.

The CEO had agreed the communications plan which included a press statement from me, on which the CEO was consulted. The CEO has chosen not to be interviewed further on what is an employment matter, and there has been no correspondence on this issue.

In the period between 14<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March, discussions took place regarding the CEO's notice period and handover. The CEO had indicated she was prepared to work her full notice period, although required certainty about the possibility of an earlier start date in her new role. We have agreed that her last contracted day of service will be 31<sup>st</sup> July, which I confirmed in writing to her in my letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The CEO will continue to perform all of her responsibilities during this time and will handover to an Interim in the lead up to July so that all workstreams can be taken forward. The workstreams that the CEO is working on are those which the role demands, but also includes the development of the next government plan, the next stages of the Cabinet Office refinement (which could be impacted by any changes in the support structure below a CEO), establishing the HCS Change Team and

setting their work programme, and overseeing the recovery programmes from our recent tragedies, to name but a few.

### **The role of the Chief Executive Officer and the Cabinet Office**

The role and functions of the Chief Executive Officer has been subject to regular discussions within the States of Jersey. [The Clothier Review \(2000\)](#) made recommendations about the administration of government, including the role of a 'Chief Secretary' as the Head of the Civil Service.

Since then, both legislative and organisational reviews have included and altered the role of the Chief Executive in a number of respects.

The role of the Chief Executive is set out in the [Employment of States of Jersey Employees \(Jersey\) Law 2005](#) as being the Chief Executive Officer who is the Chief Executive to the Council of Ministers and Head of the Public Service with the responsibility to lead Chief Officers in (a) the administration and general management of the public service and (b) the implementation of corporate and strategic policies.

The [Public Finances \(Jersey\) Law 2019](#) established the role of the Chief Executive as the Principal Accountable Officer with specific duties for public administration.

More recently, the [Democratic Accountability and Governance Sub-Committee \(2022\)](#) (R.23/2022) made further recommendations about the administration of government, followed by [P.52/2022 by Deputy Young](#), which sought increased clarity of the responsibilities of Ministers for Departments, which also has implications for the administration of government, and the interface with the paid service.

When the States Assembly appointed me as Chief Minister, I set out that in my first 100-days we would establish a Cabinet Office. This was to ensure greater coordination of Government policy development and delivery, thus improving the support provided by officials to the Council of Ministers.

The Chief Executive role, as it stands currently, is broad and deep. A great breadth of knowledge and judgement is required in advising on policy development and implementation throughout a variety of public services. At the same time, the role has a significant aspect of operational leadership across the public service.

The Chief Executive leads the Cabinet Office, which incorporates the Policy, Digital, People Services, Communications, Ministerial and CEO Support and the Delivery Unit. The leadership structures have been put in place and new delivery models are now being rolled out under the senior team.

Before we consider recruiting permanently, it is right that we review the structures for leading our public services to ensure that the role is properly framed and supported to effectively deliver on its remit. To assist me in my review, I have convened an advisory group with experience of governance and administration to provide insights and options for the type of role, its functions, and the type of person we will need in the future. The advisory panel has met twice to date. For transparency, I have included the list of those advising me, which includes the current CEO (Appendix One). The CEOs reflections on the role are being fed into the advisory group to support considerations on any re-shaping that needs to happen.

The work of the advisory group will allow me to make formal proposals for the States Employment Board and the Council of Ministers to consider, and although there is a tight time frame, I will ensure that Scrutiny, the Public Accounts Committee and PPC, have an

opportunity to contribute to the process. I envisage this work will be completed by the end of April, with recruitment to the permanent role starting at the earliest opportunity, subject to any legislative approvals required for consideration by the States Assembly.

You have asked (point 13) for records of political conversations into the scope and role of the CEO. Beyond the initial discussions of the advisory panel, conversations have not taken place in relation to our policy on the role of the Chief Executive Officer. I have, of course, discussed this issue with the CEO to seek her views and to understand her experience of the past 13 months in role. The CEO has kindly taken the time to speak informally to CoM to share these views.

### **Recruitment to the Chief Executive Officer**

With the review into the role of the Chief Executive being undertaken, there will be a requirement for interim leadership arrangements.

A plan and handover is being developed with the CEO to ensure a managed transition to the interim Chief Executive. At the same time, the Executive Leadership Team of Chief Officers continues to operate as usual, and it is expected that they will support the interim CEO to maintain a focus on service delivery and the Government's policy agenda.

Naturally, the above work does take time and has an opportunity cost, but I am confident that government business continues to be driven forward. My focus is on ensuring stability for the workforce during this period of transition and identifying a new leadership that understands the island and the complexity and breadth of the work that is delivered by our public servants.

A statement of works is to be drawn up for the interim post holder to ensure a focus on key deliverables during their tenure. The focus will be to lead the public service as we continue to deliver the Government Programme and address our housing, cost of living, and recruitment and retention challenges in preparation for the arrival of the substantive post holder. I will provide a draft to the Panel shortly.

The recruitment to the interim position, as well as the permanent position, is overseen by the Jersey Appointments Commission. As an outline approach to the recruitment of the interim position:

#### April

- Agree the statement of works and the recruitment timetable (States Employment Board).
- Agree the timeline and approach to recruitment with the Jersey Appointments Commission.
- Advertise on Island for suitably qualified local candidates and invite agencies to submit candidates.
- Shortlist to a maximum of three candidates.

#### May

- Interviews and appointment

June/July

- Handover meetings
- Interim starts in post

In terms of the permanent appointment, I intend to seek to move to permanent recruitment towards the end of May, if not sooner. In saying that, if the review work concludes that legislative changes are needed, for example, to the Principal Accountable Officer functions, this may take longer.

Consideration will be given on how to construct the role to provide opportunities for candidates who live in Jersey. There is a benefit to understanding our unique Island, our governance and constitution, as well as respecting our culture, heritage and traditions. Alongside this, there is a need to consider lines of accountability and delegation, and any strengthening that is needed.

It is envisaged that interim arrangements will be required for 9 to 12 months. There will be communications to Islanders about the recruitment process, candidate requirements and how to apply when these details are finalised.

**Working relationships within the Government**

The States Employment Board (SEB) has restated its commitment to the values and behaviours set out within the People Strategy. This includes the Council of Ministers, the States Employment Board, and all employees. We also encourage others working with the Government to adopt similar statements.

The SEB has completed a long-awaited publication of [Codes of Practice](#), including stating the Standards in Public Service and Employee Rights at Work. Alongside these Codes, we have approved a new [Dignity and Respect at Work](#) 'whistleblowing' policy which is the channel that should be used for any allegations of bullying and harassment. The new policy,, builds on the improvements recognised by the HR Lounge and Comptroller and Auditor General in their respective views of the effectiveness of our response to long-held allegations of poor behaviour within the workplace. The policy specifically looks to establish a restorative approach to resolving disputes and allegations. Training for this has started and will be evaluated. I have asked that the HR Lounge are approached with a view to returning to the island to undertake a further follow up.

In terms of positive and constructive working relationships between Ministers and Civil Servants, this is an area I intend to address personally with Ministers and the senior leadership team within the government directly. Arrangements are being put in place for me and senior Ministers to meet with Civil Service leaders to hear their views and ensure we focus on a constructive working environment. I believe it is important to listen carefully to any concerns before we agree any further actions.

We had already begun workshops to explore how Ministers can apply the values and behaviours of the organisation. The States Employment Board recently participated in a workshop and agreed that the Council of Ministers and senior leaders take part in the same process. From this, we identified further areas to improve everyone's understanding of creating a safe, constructive work environment. I would invite all States Members to participate in the values workshops.

The first 8 months of this Government has been fast-paced and focussed on delivery. It seems right that before the end of our first year we review how we have worked well together and build on what we have learned from our first year in office.

There have been no formal grievances raised, or investigations undertaken, relating to unacceptable behaviour by Ministers or senior civil servants since we have come into office. With the comments of Deputy Binet in mind, I refer the Panel to a [statement I made](#) last week, which followed a constructive discussion I held with him.

I am aware that from time-to-time relationships can get strained, as they do in any organisation. These are usually resolved informally, often with the support of the Chief Executive or other senior officers. Should there be any formal complaint submitted, we will ensure that the policy and procedures are adhered to. Within the Codes of Practice, it is explicitly stated that no one will be subject to detrimental treatment for raising a genuine complaint and that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect.

It is important to take stock of the events of the past two weeks, including unattributed comments within the media. It is important that individuals feel safe to speak up within the right channels so that, should there be an issue, this is understood and hopefully resolved properly. The Council of Ministers remain focussed on the issues that Islanders have told us matter to them. As I have stated previously, the resignation of the Chief Executive Officer has been a shock, and news that we received with deep regret. It is a tribute to Suzanne that she has gained my respect and that of the many people who have worked with her or met her.

It is important that we take time to ensure that the role is well defined in order to attract a new, similarly high-calibre person. This means setting up the role, and the wider structures of government administration, to succeed and focus along with clear lines of accountability. I look forward to working with Scrutiny and the Public Accounts Committee to ensure we have a confident approach to securing the next head of the public service.

Yours sincerely



**Deputy Kristina Moore**  
**Chief Minister**

**APPENDIX ONE: List of Advisory Panel**

**States Members**

Deputy Kirsten Morel, Deputy Chief Minister

Connétable Andy Jehan, Assistant Chief Minister and Vice-Chair of the States Employment Board

Deputy Sir Philip Bailhache, States Assembly Member of the States Employment Board

Deputy Carolyn Labey, Minister for International Development

**Independent Advisors**

John Mills, former Chief Executive of the States of Jersey

**Officers**

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive officer and Head of the Public Service

Richard Bell, Treasurer of the States and Assistant Chief Executive

Mark Grimley, Chief People and Transformation Officer

Paul Bradbury, Head of the Ministerial Office