

Chief Minister



Deputy Helen Miles,
Chair, Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
By email

22nd March 2024

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter of Thursday, 7th March 2024, seeking an update on my ministerial and legislative priorities for 2024.

Ministerial priorities

As you will appreciate, the Council of Ministers is required to develop a new Common Strategic Policy setting out our high-level priorities within four months of taking office. We expect to do this sooner, lodging in early April for debate in May. This will set out the ministerial priorities of the Government.

Given that this Council of Ministers has only two years in office, the Common Strategic Policy will be focussed on specific deliverable actions to tackle the immediate challenges faced by Islanders, such as housing affordability and cost-of-living pressures, and I welcome scrutiny of these policies.

Legislative priorities

In terms of the immediate legislative priorities for my portfolio, I can confirm the below in relation to the legislation you have mentioned. I also provide an update on other legislative items in progress for completeness.

Draft Statistics and Census (Amendment) (Jersey) Law 202-

The draft Amendment Law has now been prepared and considered by the Council of Ministers, and I anticipate lodging in April.

I would be pleased to provide the Panel with a copy of the draft legislation and to provide a briefing. My office will contact the Panel's officers to arrange this.

Amendments to the States of Jersey Law 2025

Amendments to further define the role of the Deputy Chief Minister have been drafted and provided to the Panel. I look forward to receiving the Panel's feedback on these amendments before they are lodged 'au Greffe'.

Later this year, further amendments will be brought forward to ensure the Chief Minister is given the ability to suspend ministers in certain circumstances. This would address a current deficiency in the Law, which provides mechanisms to appoint and to dismiss ministers but not to suspend them.

Proposed Jersey Public Services Ombudsperson Law 202-

The Council of Ministers is considering how to proceed, including considering ways to improve existing complaints processes to ensure that all complaints are treated fairly and effectively, and that the outcome of decisions of the States Complaints Panel are systematically upheld by all public authorities. I would be pleased to offer a more detailed update in due course once this thinking is more advanced.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Report

Legislative and practice changes arising from the VAWAG report will relate to a number of departments, but this will be a high priority for the whole government.

Comptroller and Auditor General (Jersey) Law 2014

Further to the Comptroller and Auditor General's recommendations in her Mid-Term Reflections report, amendments to the Law are being developed. It is currently envisaged that these will be prepared by the end of this year. The Panel will continue to be updated on this timetable.

Inquests and Post-Mortem Examinations (Jersey) Law 1995 and Marriage and Civil Status (Jersey) Law 2001

Work progresses on the legislative drafting instructions required to amend the Inquests and Post-Mortem Examinations (Jersey) Law 1995 and the Marriage and Civil Status (Jersey) Law 2001 to improve Jersey's current coronial practices and procedures related to the investigation and registration of death. It is anticipated that these amendments will be prepared in time to be lodged in the Assembly in mid-2025.

Guardianship for Missing Persons

A key legislative priority is to address a gap in Jersey Law to enable the families of individuals who tragically go missing to be able to administer their property and other assets in their absence. This project is at an early stage, but I hope to be able to bring forward legislation in this area as soon as possible. I will update the Panel on the timetable for this project once developed.

Ministerial response (S.R.4/2024)

The previous Chief Minister and Treasury Minister committed to answering the findings (but not the recommendations) of S.R.4/2024 as they related to the Government Plan that they brought to the Assembly. The response to the findings were sent to the Panel on 23rd January.

As the recommendations relate to the next cycle of the Government Plan, it was considered appropriate for the new Chief Minister and Treasury Minister to respond to these. This is under way and I am keen to conclude.

States Employment Board minutes

The States Employment Board will be discussing this request for minutes relating to the People and Culture Follow Up Review at their next meeting on 27th March 2024. A response will be provided after that meeting.

Finally, I am perfectly content for our officials to liaise such that a briefing on the Cabinet Office can be provided.

Yours sincerely

With kind regards

Lyndon.

Deputy Lyndon Farnham

Chief Minister

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