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Deputy Miles
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
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31 May 2023

Dear Deputy Miles

**Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
Draft Statistics and Census (Jersey) Amendment Law 202-**

1 - Introduction

The Head of Governance and Communities Policy within SPPP and I briefed the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel on the Draft Statistics and Census (Jersey) Amendment Law on 15 April.

As an independent office holder whose statutory role is subject to potential changes under the draft Law, I thought that it might be useful to provide you with additional information now that the [Draft Statistics and Census \(Jersey\) Amendment Law 202- \(gov.je\)](#) has been lodged with the States Assembly. I am supportive of the amendments and believe that they improve both the independence and accountability of the Chief Statistician.

2 - Statistics Legislation Steering Group

The Steering Group was established in March 2021 and was chaired by Deputy Morel. Its Terms of Reference are here [Statistics Legislation Steering Group \(gov.je\)](#). Both I and the Chair of the Statistics Users Group have been members of the Steering Group from the start.

3 – International guidance

The Steering Group has, in line with its terms of reference, been guided by international guidance including:

- The UN Generic Law on Official Statistics [Generic Law on Official Statistics | UNECE](#) , and
- The UN Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems [Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems — Capacity Development // UNSD](#)

Both of the above are long and detailed documents, which have been carefully considered in preparing the amendments to the Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law.

4 - Amendments development timeline

Consideration of amendments to the Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law started in 2020. Annex 1 lists the Statistics Legislation Steering Group and other meetings on this topic between February 2020 and February 2024.

5 – Review of National Statistics Offices

A summary of the arrangements in different statistical systems which the Group considered, including smaller jurisdictions of comparable complexity and size to Jersey, is included in Appendix 2 (page 30) of [Draft Statistics and Census \(Jersey\) Amendment Law 202- \(gov.je\)](#) .

I wrote the report on which Appendix 2 is based. This summarises information from 16 National Statistics Offices (NSO) covering large and smaller jurisdictions, as well as centralised (e.g. Canada; Australia) vs decentralised (e.g. UK, France, and the USA) statistics systems. Jersey has a decentralised system, with Statistics Jersey plus producers of statistics and analytics in many other departments. The table includes the name of the NSO; their legal basis; where ministerial responsibility lies; the number of other producers of statistics within the jurisdiction; and whether or not they have an advance release calendar.

The statistics system in the UK is particularly complex. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the executive office of the UK Statistics Authority and the largest producer of official statistics in the UK, alongside 60 other producers of official statistics. The UK Statistics Authority was established under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. The Authority is an independent statutory body. It operates at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department and reports directly to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Parliament, and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Of the countries reviewed, Malta was the only other country identified to have a Statistics Authority. The NSO of Malta reports to the Minister of Finance through the Malta Statistics Authority Board which dates from 2000.

Although there were differing views, the Statistics Legislation Steering Group concluded that such Statistics Authorities are the exception rather than the norm; are not included in the international guidance; and the costs would be disproportionate for a small jurisdiction such as Jersey.

Yours Sincerely,



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Annex 1 – Statistics Legislation Steering Group and other relevant meeting dates

Date	Meeting	Notes
2024		
24/02/2024	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Chief Statistician update on Statistics Law – lodging and date for consideration by the States Assembly
09/02/2024	Statistics Users Group Meeting	The Head of Governance and Communities Policy provided a presentation and briefing on the draft law during this meeting
2023		
15/12/2023	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Chief Statistician gave an update given on law progress. Draft complete and offer of further briefing for SUG given
11/08/2023	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Chief Statistician gave an update on Statistics Law drafting progress
26/07/2023	Briefing for Statistics Users Group on the draft Amendment Law	The Head of Governance and Communities Policy provided a briefing and took part in a Q&A
02/06/2023	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Chief Statistician outlined Statistics Jersey's priorities for 2023, which included "Continue to engage in process to amend the statistics law to strengthen the independence of the Chief Statistician and overall statistical system including a strengthening of SUG's oversight and statistics users' engagement roles."
24/03/2023	Statistics Users Group Briefing with law officers	Law officer briefed SUG members on the existing Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018, and the proposed amendments
06/03/2023	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	SUG comments on draft law discussed
06/03/2023		SUG comments on draft law circulated to SG members
2022		
07/12/2022	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Discussed draft consolidated law and comments from Statistics Jersey, which had been shared with SUG
11/11/2022	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Statistics Jersey briefing for SUG on SJ's comments on the draft law
09/11/2022	Meeting between Deputy CM and Chair of Statistics Users Group	Stats Law workshop to discuss SUG's views on the draft Law and process
27/10/2022	Response to consultation published	
25/10/2022	Statistics Jersey comments on consolidated stats law shared with Statistics Users Group	Comments and example consolidated law shared.
07/10/2022	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Discussed draft law amendments

31/08/2022	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Discussed draft consultation response prior to publication
22/07/2022	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Discussion around law drafting instructions / ministerial decision
06/05/2022	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Statistics law consultation report discussed
2021		
10/12/2021	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Discussion around law drafting and consultation
25/10/2021	Vision paper and consultation published	
20/08/2021	Vision paper finalised	This was concluded via correspondence
16/07/2021	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Discussed meeting with Chair of steering group
14/07/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Discussed latest version of vision paper – This did not include a Governance Board, but proposed, in line with UN guidance, the creation of a Statistical Advisory Council to replace the Statistics Users Group.
02/07/2021	Chair of steering group and Senator Vallois met with Statistics Users Group in camera	Discussed SUG's view on vision paper
27/05/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Discussed draft vision paper
26/05/2021	Statistics Users Group Comments on vision paper received	SUG proposed "Statistics Governance Board" which was a substantial change to the draft vision paper
27/05/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Meeting 7
19/05/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Meeting 6 - Covered Governance of SJ / CS. Agreed corporation sole model - GL expressed view that oversight body for SJ required
28/04/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Meeting 5
13/04/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Meeting 4
31/03/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Meeting 3
17/03/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Meeting 2
09/03/2021	Statistics Legislation Steering Group Meeting	Meeting 1
19/02/2021	Statistics Users Group Meeting	Discussed setting up of steering group and draft terms of reference
2020		
10/07/2020	Meeting with Interim Chair of Statistics Users Group	Discussed possible amendments to the Stats Law with the interim Chair of the SUG and the then Chief Statistician

15/03/2020		Meeting with SUG cancelled on 16 March due to Covid-19
01/03/2020		Comments on law drafting instructions received from interim Chair of SUG
27/02/2020		Law drafting instructions sent to interim Chair of SUG for discussion at proposed SUG meeting on 16th March
04/02/2020	Meeting with Interim Chair of Statistics Users Group	Policy discussion on possible changes to the Stats Law