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Deputy Inna Gardiner  
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee

***By Email***

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

Dear Deputy Gardiner

**RE: PAC Review of the Government of Jersey's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Thank you for your letter of 5 November 2021, outlining the PAC's Review into the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and some initial questions for Government to consider.

Enclosed is my response to your preliminary questions regarding the Government's handling of the COVID pandemic outlined in your letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require more detail or clarification of the responses enclosed.

With kind regards

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**Response to PAC letter to Director General IHE – Covid response – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – response due 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021**

Question	Response
<p>1. How did your responsibilities as Director General of your department change during the COVID-19 Pandemic? What new responsibilities did you take on and what responsibilities did you hand over to other officers?</p> <p>a. How was this tracked?</p> <p>b. What new responsibilities did your department take on and what responsibilities did you hand over to other departments? How were these tracked?</p> <p>c. How did you work with other departments and key stakeholders to identify new areas of work to mitigate the impact of the pandemic?</p>	<p>There was no formal change to responsibilities to my role as DG during the pandemic. IHE took a lead role in leading and setting up contact tracing and the Integrated Public Health Record, these being transferred managerially into JHA as part of the emergency response.</p> <p>All other actions of IHE and myself as DG were within usual responsibilities.</p> <p>The government created a 1GCT function to coordinate across departments, and also the Strategic Coordination Group (Gold command) was called and met regularly, which I attended.</p> <p>At lower levels Silver command met both with and across government and the department.</p>
<p>2. We know there has been a huge impact of COVID-19 response measures on departmental business as usual activities, including the secondment of Government staff to other departments to aid the response effort. Do you have a 'back-to-normal' recovery plan for your department?</p> <p>a. In respect of the secondment of Government staff to other departments to aid the response effort, how did you ensure disruptions to certain workstreams were prioritised in an objective and consistent way?</p> <p>b. What would you do differently next time?</p>	<p>The departmental business plan for IHE provides the direction for the department and as assessment of what is normal.</p> <p>There is no separate back to normal recovery plan for the department.</p> <p>a) The department used its business continuity plans to assess critical services, and to identify which areas could release staff. The changing nature of the economy allowed certain regulatory staff to be released into contact tracing to support the contact tracing function which commenced within Environmental Health. It was clear within weeks that the usual CT approach deployed by this team would need further support and so other regulation staff were quickly released, in addition to staff from elsewhere within IHE and across government. Construction, food, parking and transport sectors were affected and so regulation in these areas was naturally reduced in anycase. This was the same principle in other areas of the IHE business in terms of property and certain environment services. In other areas such as waste and water, critical infrastructure needed to be maintained for the safe functioning of the island and so staff were not released from those areas.</p> <p>b) In future, the length of redeployments and the likely timescale for events to be managed, would need to be assessed, as work pressures built up in regulatory areas</p>

	<p>even those these sectors of the economy were anticipated to have slowed down. This would mean in future that less staff would be released for other duties, as backlogs in work are still present in the department.</p>
<p>3. How have you monitored the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on departmental business as usual activities and the disruptions to it?</p> <p>a. What tools were developed by your departments to monitor this?</p> <p>b. How do you minimise the impact on services and key deliveries?</p> <p>c. What decision making tools/approach did you use to decide on who should be seconded, and to where?</p> <p>d. How did you compensate for staff seconded to other departments to aid the response effort?</p>	<p>a. Monitoring of activities is undertaken using the usual reporting and monitoring functions. Financial via treasury, performance at team level reporting into the IHE officer of the director general, and then into corporate reporting systems (perform, CPMO, business plan monitoring etc.)</p> <p>b. It was hard to minimise impact on services. Repercussions of the pandemic are still being felt in operational areas where backlogs exist, and staff have been affected.</p> <p>c. This is answered in Section 2.</p> <p>d. Services were generally closed or reduced to reflect staffing deployments</p>
<p>4. Was any departmental authority changed during the Pandemic, including as a result of crisis management efforts, and if so, were they consistent with existing laws and regulations?</p>	<p>No departmental authority was changed in IHE</p>
<p>5. Who is responsible for monitoring the performance of services established in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic within your department?</p> <p>a. What and how have you documented lessons learnt?</p> <p>b. How do you intend to incorporate lessons learned from the performance of these services into the wider performance of your department?</p>	<p>The only specific services established to respond to Covid were contact tracing and the use of the IPHR.</p> <p>This was initially IHE led, but management and performance were undertaken as part of the government reponse via JHA</p> <p>Lessons learned are reflected in Question 2</p>
<p>6. How were self-assessment frameworks and Key Performance Indicators used to ensure that key services continued to operate?</p> <p>a. What worked well?</p> <p>b. What would you do differently?</p>	<p>This is answered in Questions 2 and 3</p>

<p>7. What role did your respective Ministers play in deciding on resource and staff reallocations? What level of consultation was provided to them?</p> <p>a. What level of responsibility as the head of your department did you have on how staff should be reallocated and what resources could be taken from your departments and applied to the COVID-19 responses? How was this decision making formalised?</p>	<p>IHE has various ministers (Environment, Infrastructure, Housing, EDTSC)</p> <p>Ministers did not play a role in allocating resources and staff for operations within IHE, apart from those decisions which are needed at COM and CAM levels. For instance the nightingale hospital.</p> <p>As DG, I had full responsibility for assessing options and solutions for staff reallocation and resource allocation as per my normal role. Decision making would be formalised via the SCG and ELT routes.</p>
<p>8. Can you update us on how your department has responded to the recommendations made by the C&amp;AG on the response to the COVID-19 Pandemic? Have any recommendations been implemented?</p> <p>a. Have any changes made to the operations or working practices?</p>	<p>IHE is still assessing the recommendations made by the C&amp;AG more widely. In relation to the JNH, it is considered that the recommendations were adopted in the decommissioning of the facility.</p>
<p>9. What thought has been given to 'future proofing' services?</p>	<p>IHE services provide the base infrastructure and decision making for other services, organisations and the public to conduct their lives and business. As a result, future proofing is integral to the thinking of the department. Whether that be environmental pressures, societal pressures or changing business, public service and regulatory pressures.</p> <p>It is hard to future proof against future pandemic staffing or service interruptions, or to future proof against emergency situations. Workforce is a continuing pressure, and work is underway in developing a People and Workforce Plan. This will enable us to resource and capacity plan in the department for projects contained within the Department Operational Business Plan (DOBP). The Workforce Plan will also look to succession planning and consider where certain skills are in shorter supply and need to be developed in specific teams or individuals.</p>

<p>10. How did you work with Commercial Services to understand your department's procurement needs during the pandemic?</p>	<p>During the pandemic we worked closely with colleagues in Commercial Services to ensure that we were gaining their input into COVID business support schemes in line with the PFM.</p> <p>Of specific example, the commercial services team were embedded into the Nightingale Hospital project for which I was the delivery SRO.</p> <p>As Director General I ensure that I have a sound understanding of the responsibilities placed on me with regard to adhering to the PFM and the PFL in order to guide regularity and high level principles and requirements for financial management whilst ensuring propriety. My senior team are equally cognisant of my responsibilities and Senior Finance business partner, provide an additional layer of internal control to departmental processes.</p> <p>Where appropriate or necessary we also sought exemptions to procurement guidelines where required.</p>
<p>11. How have you measured, monitored, and reported on your performance, financial management (including value for money and cost benefit analyses) and impact on work programmes during the Covid-19 pandemic? What 3 things could be improved?</p>	<p>In its broadest sense, performance and financial management has been reported through the conventional corporate reporting methods of Annual Report &amp; Accounts and Department Operational Business Plan updates. Beyond this public reporting, corporate performance and usual 1:1s, team meetings and appraisal frameworks have been utilised.</p> <p>I don't have any suggestions for improvement at this time in terms of process. Reporting and monitoring can always be improved with more personnel undertaking roles for the department.</p>
<p>12. What would you do to improve how your department communicated with the rest of the Government of Jersey and external stakeholders?</p>	<p>I ensured that my senior team were available at various decision-making groups to support decisions and communicate to others as required.</p> <p>SCG, and ELT was attended by myself and or one of my SLT delegates, and when required I attended the Competent Authority Ministers, Emergencies Council and Council of Ministers</p>

	<p>meetings.</p> <p>IHE collaborates and communicates frequently with colleagues across Government. Internally, my department also communicates to the Corporate Project Management Office on project performance in Perform, progress against Departmental Business Plan targets covered as part of colleague My Conversation My Goals, my monthly 121 with the CEO and weekly Ministerial meetings.</p> <p>Any service specific announcements were made using the Government communications team</p>
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