



Royal Court of Jersey
Judicial Greffe

Your Ref:
Our Ref: AJC/dmd

18th January 2022

Constable Shenton-Stone
Public Accounts Committee
Scrutiny Office
States Greffe
Morier House
St Helier
JE1 1DD

Dear Constable Shenton-Stone

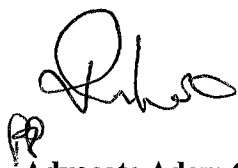
PAC COVID-19 Response Review

Please find below my answers to the general Questions on the Response to COVID-19 in relation to the Judicial Greffe.

1. As there was a requirement to continue to operate the courts and other services provided by the Judicial Greffe, the essential change was closer co-ordination with other judicial and legal departments (for example, in order to ensure that mitigation measures were in place to reduce the risk of spreading the virus). Initially, this led to weekly (as opposed to quarterly) meetings of the Criminal Justice Working Group. No new responsibilities were taken on and no responsibilities were handed over to other officers.
2. Due to the relatively small size of the Judicial Greffe and the requirement to maintain services at a near normal level, no staff were seconded to other departments. There was therefore no need for a recovery plan, other than to keep under constant review measures to control access to courts and physical distancing measures, in line with changes in Government policy and legislation.
3. The effects of the pandemic on business as usual activities have continued to be monitored through the normal business planning and performance management processes. For example, a minor reduction in stamp fee income from court activity has been measured. However, in the Public Registry, which has experienced a considerable rise in activity during the pandemic, stamp fee income has increased significantly.
4. No departmental authority was changed during the pandemic.
5. Responsibility for monitoring performance of services established in response to the pandemic falls to me. This has been a regular agenda item for SMT meetings where the objective has been to incorporate successful changes to behaviour or processes into mainstream activity, post-pandemic. Examples include reduction in hard copy transactions with Treasury and enhanced use of remote attendance at court hearings using video-conferencing.

6. Key Performance Indicators continued to be used as normal throughout the pandemic.
7. As previously referred to, no staff reallocations took place. As a non-ministerial department, communication with the Council of Ministers and the rest of the States of Jersey was limited to participation in the various business continuity fora (including the twice weekly business continuity leads update meeting).
8. There were no C&AG recommendations having an impact on the Judicial Greffe.
9. Much consideration has been given to future proofing of services. Considerable investment has been made in the Judicial Greffe's capacity for remote working, whether in relation to a member of staff working from home or conducting a court hearing remotely via video-conference. A considerable investment is currently being made in the Court Digital project which will increase and enhance the ability to make court appearances without physical presence in the courtroom, and eliminate the use of hard copy documentation. Another demonstration of the Court's ability to innovate and the Island's technical resource capacity was the successful creation at the RJA&HS of a facility to undertake jury trials.
10. No work was undertaken with Commercial Services (other than in the context of the ongoing Court Digital project). Most procurement issues related to the acquisition of low value items such as laptops, which was managed through M&D.
11. There has been no change (or need for change) in the way the Judicial Greffe has measured, monitored and reported on performance or financial management. Close co-ordination has taken place with Treasury (as it ordinarily does) throughout the pandemic to ensure that the Department has not come under undue financial pressure; it has been possible to absorb additional expenditure within existing cash limits.
12. Communication with the rest of the States of Jersey has been referred to above. Communication with external stakeholders was principally conducted through co-ordination with the Law Society of Jersey, mainly leading to an increase in the number of jointly drafted communications with the legal profession. In addition, a greater level of information on court cases was delivered through the Department's web pages, to provide for greater transparency when personal attendance in court had to be limited.

Yours sincerely



Advocate Adam Clarke
Judicial Greffier