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Council of Ministers

(1st Meeting)

13th July 2022Part A (Non-Exempt)

All members were present.

Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, Chief Minister
 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville and St. Martin, Minister for International Development
 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture
 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North, Minister for Children and Education
 Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, Minister for Treasury and Resources
 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour, Minister for External Relations and Financial Services
 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South, Minister for Housing and Communities
 Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade, Minister for Home Affairs
 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade, Minister for the Environment
 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, Minister for Social Security
 Deputy T.J.A. Binet of St. Saviour, Minister for Infrastructure
 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement, Minister for Health and Social Services

In attendance -

Connétable A.N. Jéhan of St. John, Assistant Chief Minister, designate
 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, designate
 M.H. Temple, Q.C., H.M. Attorney General (for items A1-A3 and B1-B2 only)
 L.-M. Hart, Greffier of the States (for items A1-A3 and B1-B2 only)
 S. Wylie, OBE, Chief Executive and Head of the Public Service, Government of Jersey
 R. Bell, Treasurer of the States (for item B3 only)
 T. Walker, Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department
 K. Nutt, Director General, External Relations Department
 Professor P. Bradley, Director of Public Health (for item B4 only)
 D. Danino-Forsyth, Director of Communications, Office of the Chief Executive
 A. Hacquoil, Group Director, Strategic Finance, Treasury and Exchequer (for item B3 only)
 S. Skelton, Director of Strategy and Innovation, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department
 P. Bradbury, Head of Ministerial Office

A. Metcalfe, Head of Strategic Planning and Accountability, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department (for items A1-A2 and B1 only)

J. Lynch, Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department (for item B4 only)

Dr. L. Daniels, Senior Informatics Analyst, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department (for item B4 only)

N. Hughes, Leapwise Limited, Consultant

M. Egan, Consultant (for items A1-A2 and B1 only)

Note: The Minutes of this meeting comprise Part A and Part B.

Welcome and introductions.

A1 Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, Chief Minister, welcomed the members of the newly constituted Council of Ministers to their inaugural meeting and congratulated them on their election. She indicated that it was an exciting moment and that she was delighted that she had been able to form a team with the requisite experience, talent and passion to lead the Island and to deliver the change that Islanders sought.

She reminded Ministers that, when the States Assembly had appointed her as Chief Minister, she had indicated a desire to unite the Island and to progress matters appropriately and that responsibility for this rested with the Council and that it could achieve this with decisiveness and integrity and by working collaboratively with the States Assembly and speaking directly to Islanders. The first 100 days of action, which had been set out in her vision statement and which culminated on 19th October, focused on the principal issues that were affecting people, which included the housing crisis, the uplift in the cost of living, growing waiting lists for Hospital treatment, people having insufficient funds with which to feed their families and businesses finding it increasingly difficult to operate.

She informed Ministers that they would be expected to identify and implement solutions to the foregoing as soon as practicable and that the Council had a mission to rebuild the trust of Islanders through openness and transparency, with the aim of leaving Jersey in a more prosperous position after its 4 years in Government. It would be incumbent upon Ministers to work together and take decisions that would enable Islanders to realise their potential and would lead to change and she commended the proactive approach that had been adopted by Deputies I. Gardiner of St. Helier North, Minister for Children and Education and T.J.A. Binet of St. Saviour, Minister for Infrastructure, in attending Les Quennevais School on 12th July 2022 to ascertain the position with respect to the lack of air conditioning in the warm weather.

Mrs. S. Wylie, OBE, Chief Executive and Head of the Public Service, Government of Jersey, also extended a welcome to the new members of the Council and emphasised the intention of the Executive Leadership Team to work in tandem with and support them to achieve the best outcome for Islanders and value for money. She stressed the importance of clarity around the lines of accountability and indicated that Governments performed best when that existed.

The Council of Ministers subsequently received briefings on the Government Programme 2023 – 2026, the Code of Conduct and Practice for Ministers and Assistant Ministers, an overview of public finances and the current situation with regard to COVID-19.

Government

A2. The Council of Ministers received and noted a paper, dated 13th July 2022,

Programme
2023-2026: an
introduction.

entitled 'Introduction to the Government Programme 2023-26' and a PowerPoint presentation of the same name, which had been prepared by Mr. A. Metcalfe, Head of Strategic Planning and Accountability, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department and heard from him in connexion therewith.

He reminded the Council that it was required to lodge '*au Greffe*' its Common Strategic Policy and Government Plan by 4th October 2022 in order that they could be debated by the States Assembly during the week commencing 12th December and that the 100 days of action, which had been outlined by Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, Chief Minister, in her vision statement would end on 19th October 2022. It was possible that the Council would wish to align that date with the statutory one of 4th October, but that could be decided at a later juncture. Taken together and in conjunction with the individual Ministerial Plans that were to be drawn up, these would be collectively referred to as the 'Government Programme', which would be predicated upon a continuous improvement cycle, which would enable learning from the previous year and the driving through of improvements.

Ministers were informed that the timeline for the development and agreement of the Government Plan would be challenging and require focus in order to achieve the lodging deadline of 4th October. There would ensue a curtailed 10 week timeframe for Scrutiny to review the Government Plan, noting that it should normally be afforded a period of 12 weeks. The Council was reminded that it had a legal requirement under Article 9 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 ('the Public Finances Law') to lodge a Government Plan. It was required to set out specific financial information and could not show a negative balance in the Consolidated Fund at the end of any of the financial years that it covered. It would include how the proposals contained within it would take into account the medium and long term sustainability of the States' finances and the outlook for the economy in addition to the sustainable wellbeing of residents over successive generations in economic, social, environmental and cultural terms. As a consequence of decisions taken by the States Assembly in 2021, it was also required to include a common policy on population (P.116/2021 referred), details of all States' or States'-owned companies housing developments, where these would not provide 100 per cent of affordable homes, as required by Policy H5 of the Bridging Island Plan (P.36/2021, as amended, referred) and specific and achievable action points to improve the safety of women (Amendment No. 13 of P.90/2021, as amended, referred).

Officers were currently working on proposals, for consideration by Ministers, to implement the 18 actions for the first 100 days, as set out by the Chief Minister. A key element was a focus on delivery and making change for Islanders and Ministers were asked to ensure that any element included in the Government Programme was prioritised, affordable and deliverable, mindful of the extant financial pressures, any manifesto commitments, significant risks such as the war in Ukraine and existing projects that were in train. Indicative Government Programme themes were noted to be –

- cost of living
- economy and population
- education
- housing
- quality of life
- environment
- health
- Government and Parishes

- safety and security

It was mooted that reference should also be made to the arts and the potential for subsuming 'housing' and 'cost of living' under the heading 'quality of life'. It was noted that the Island's international profile had been omitted from the list and Ministers were referred to the Island Identity and Future Jersey documents. It was proposed that community safety should be included and 'safer and healthier communities' was suggested as a theme. The care programme, the disability strategy and older people were noted to fit under the latter, or 'quality of life' and it was suggested that direct reference should be made to children, as education was for all ages of Islanders.

Noting that one theme was to restore trust and accountability in the Government and Parishes, it was suggested that the latter were, in fact, the solution and should be included in a separate 'community' theme.

With respect to the duration of any financial planning, it was suggested that it would be preferable to introduce an alternative to the current situation under the Public Finances Law, whereby budgets were set for one year only and an indicative figure given for the second year. It was agreed that it would be challenging to amend the Law before the end of 2022, but that it merited consideration and that an agreed level of expenditure for at least 2 years would be welcomed, without overly constraining future Governments.

Having discussed the foregoing, it was agreed that officers would continue to work on the Programme and would include some priorities and deliverables for a forthcoming meeting of the Council. Ministers were of the opinion that it would not be overly onerous to adhere to the aforementioned timeframes, provided that they did not seek to be overly ambitious in the Programme.

Code of
Conduct and
Practice for
Ministers and
Assistant
Ministers.

A3. The Council of Ministers received and noted a copy of the Code of Conduct and Practice for Ministers and Assistant Ministers (R.116/2018 referred), which had been presented by the former Council of Ministers and heard from Mr. P. Bradbury, Head of Ministerial Office, in relation thereto.

He indicated that, in accordance with the provisions of Article 18(3A)(b) of the States of Jersey Law 2005 ('the 2005 Law'), the Chief Minister and Ministers were required to agree a Code of Conduct and Practice for Ministers and Assistant Ministers and to present it to the States Assembly within 3 months of being appointed to office, noting the deadline to be 12th October 2022. In practice, newly appointed Councils would adhere to their predecessors' Code until such time as they had prepared their own but the sooner this could be undertaken, the better.

It was suggested that the new Code should include those core values that the public service employees were expected to adhere to, viz we are respectful, we are better together, we are always improving, we are customer focused and we deliver.

The Council noted the position accordingly.