

14th December 2020

Richard Corrigan
Acting Director General, Economy
Government of Jersey

Dear Richard

Attractions and Events Scheme – Formal Instruction

Thank you for your letter of 14th December 2020 regarding the Attractions and Events Scheme. I have carefully considered the points you raise as Accounting Officer and can confirm that I wish to proceed with implementation of the scheme as soon as possible.

I acknowledge the risks highlighted in your letter but I believe these risks are outweighed by the urgent need to provide additional support to this sector. As you are aware, it has been severely impacted by the original Stay At Home period from March to June and, subsequently, by the public health restrictions on gatherings that are now in place.

The rationale for moving ahead with this scheme is based on two key points: Firstly, I consider the larger attractions and events companies to be essential to underpin the Island's visitor economy. This, in turn, supports our air and sea transport links and brings significant additional benefits to Jersey's domestic economy and the quality of life of all islanders in terms of personal life events, education and wellbeing.

As you rightly say, 'the enemy of economic recovery will be larger, sector-critical businesses hitting a crossover point into non-viability' because the firms that will potentially benefit from this support will create a 'ripple effect' in the recovery phase as they consume the services of a range of other small businesses. The potential economic damage from Covid-19 continues to create a strong case for this scheme.

Secondly, checks and balances are in place, as for other Government financial support schemes, to ensure this is a scheme of last resort. Prospective applicants are required to show that they have exhausted all other avenues of funding before turning to the Attractions and Events Scheme, including approaching their banks and shareholders for support. This requirement gives me more confidence that the funds will go to those businesses that genuinely require assistance and not to those who do not need it.

We both agree that the economic support package already deployed by the Government has helped to protect the jobs and livelihoods of islanders across a range of sectors. You make the point that feedback from the business community has been particularly positive in terms of the value of the Co-Funded Payroll Scheme. It has been successful, at least in part, because we have been prepared to adapt and evolve it to react to the changing circumstances of Covid-19 in Jersey.

I would also reiterate, as mentioned in the Business Case, that the Attractions and Events Scheme was supported by the Council of Ministers in their meeting of 16th October.

I am prepared to support the introduction of this scheme as soon as practicable. I am therefore formally instructing you as Accounting Officer to take this forward with immediate effect.

I recognise that I am unable to direct you to contravene the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 and that implementation of the scheme is subject to the necessary funding being made available through underspends in other areas of the Office of the Chief Executive or via other mechanisms with the consent of the Treasury Minister.

I appreciate officers' diligence and advice in this matter and would formally instruct that, as Accounting Officer, you take the necessary actions to proceed with the introduction of the scheme as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lyndon Farnham', with a horizontal line drawn through it.

Senator Lyndon Farnham
Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture

CC: Charlie Parker, Principal Accounting Officer and Richard Bell, Treasurer of the States