

Media Release

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Strategic Coordinating Group meets as coronavirus response continues

As part of the Bailiwick of Guernsey's ongoing preparations and response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) met yesterday (10 March) and later this week the Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) will also meet. These groups include representation from all areas of government, and a wide range of other key agencies who provide essential services or who can provide specialist advice. Both the SCG and TCG also include representation from Sark and Alderney.

These groups will meet regularly, and will broaden out the work already being done by other response groups including States of Guernsey's Pre-Event Assessment Team and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell, by involving yet more key agencies in our planning and response.

Paul Whitfield, Chief Executive of the States of Guernsey said:

'Many Islanders are naturally more interested in what the advice regarding coronavirus is for them, rather than the detail of how we in government and other agencies are coordinating ourselves. But we hope by providing updates on the governance we've put in place for this response, it gives reassurance to the community that we really are coordinating carefully with all of those areas which will have a key role as we go forward.'

The SCG and TCG model is a tried and tested one, and we know it is now being mobilised by public authorities across the UK. We have some experience of it already in Guernsey, including when we prepared for the possibility of a no-deal Brexit, and in the recent pandemic flu exercise that took place last year.'

To ensure that political members are also regularly updated with developments, and in particular of the possible need for any policy decisions in the near future, a dedicated COVID-19 Political Co-Ordinating Group has also been established and will soon hold its first meeting, with representation from each of the States' principal committees.

Deputy Gavin St Pier, President of the Policy & Resources Committee said:

‘The response from the Director of Public Health and officers across the public sector so far has been exemplary and should be commended, as should the support they have received from the community. But clearly this is a fast-changing situation and while plans have been put in place for a range of scenarios, there will also be a need to react quickly at times to unforeseen developments. Politically, we are well placed to do that and establishing a Co-ordinating Group will mean we can react even more quickly. We modelled using a Group like this in our Brexit planning and it is intended to provide a stepping stone between our normal Committee system of decision making and the use of the Civil Contingencies Authority, which can be deployed in an emergency.’

For all updates and guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19), we would continue to ask people to go to www.gov.gg/coronavirus.

Ends

Notes to Media

Strategic Co-Ordinating Groups are used for a variety of reasons, but in general terms their role is defined as follows:

The purpose of a Strategic Co-Ordinating Group (SCG) is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of an incident and establish a strategic framework within which lower levels of command and co-ordinating groups will work. Its guiding objectives are:

- Contain the incident: mitigate and minimise its impacts; maintain critical infrastructure and essential services
- Create conditions for returning to business as usual

Similarly, the role of the Tactical Co-Ordinating Group is defined in general terms as follows:

The purpose of a Tactical Co-Ordinating Group (TCG) is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency tactical co-ordination of the response to an event or situation by establishing a tactical framework that will:

- Incorporate and deliver the strategic direction
- Determine priorities for allocating available resources
- Plan and co-ordinate how and when tasks will be undertaken
- Obtain additional resources if required;
- Assess significant risks and use this to inform tasking of operational commanders to ensure health and safety of the public and responder

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