

Media Release

Date: 18 May 2020

Media enquiry: statement on behalf of the Policy & Resources Committee and Committee for Economic Development regarding off-island travel

The nature of this COVID19 crisis makes it difficult to know what the situation will be in the coming months. We've set out our plan for exiting lockdown. It is not a timetable, but it does make clear what 'triggers' are needed to move forward through the phases or indeed what could send us backwards. So far our strategy of 'test, trace and quarantine' is working very well, and we've been able to trigger the move from phase 2 to phase 3 earlier than expected. We're hopeful we'll be able to do the same for phase 4.

We have been very clear that the opening of our borders will be one of the last stages in our phased 'Exit from Lockdown'. Any decision to lift travel restrictions to a particular jurisdiction will depend on the situation there, and the risk it presents to the health and lives of Islanders. This approach is being taken with the Island's economy in mind too, as the risk of new clusters of cases of COVID-19, or even a 'second wave' could set us back to the very first phase of 'lockdown', which has serious implications for all sectors.

Clearly this strategy, which has been based on data and the best available evidence, will need to be flexible and may change if and when the evidence changes. But for the time being, our border controls will remain in place, and anyone coming in, who is not exempted as a critical worker, must self-isolate by law for 14 days upon arrival.

It is important we support our tourism sector as much as we can without compromising our overall response to this pandemic. With that in mind, VisitGuernsey have been working on plans for a 'staycation' campaign, encouraging Islanders to holiday within the Bailiwick and make use of the excellent restaurants and hotels we have here on Island, as soon as that's possible. The quicker we can re-open our economy, within the Bailiwick's borders, there's a lot of potential for Islanders to enjoy what our local tourism sector has to offer.

We're keeping an open mind to 'bubbling' with other jurisdictions in the future, but they will need to be in a similar position to us with similar controls over their borders.

The Committee *for* Economic Development, through VisitGuernsey, is also looking ahead to the 2021 season and already making preparations for how it will return to the wider European and global market. All of this is something VisitGuernsey intends to develop in

partnership with the industry, and a 'tourism taskforce' with industry representatives is meeting this week. There's no escaping the fact this pandemic is having a very serious impact on our tourism sector, and even jurisdictions that intend to open their borders sooner rather than later, will see a significant drop in travel and will do far less business. We must continue to support local businesses through the support measures that were introduced early in our response and have since been expanded. All of these steps are to ensure our businesses are in the best possible position to bounce back as soon as it's safe to do so.

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Notes to Media

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