GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Office of the Deputy Governor Advances Governance Reforms to Strengthen Transparency and Accountability

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Since 2023, the Office of the Deputy Governor, working with the Governor's Group and Constitutionally Established Departments, has advanced a series of governance reform initiatives aimed at increasing transparency and accountability throughout the Public Service.

These initiatives include the Public Service Management Act, 2024; the Service Commissions (Amendment) Act, 2024; the Register of Interests (Amendment) Act, 2024; the Audit (Amendment) Act, 2022; the Police (Amendment) Regulations, 2024; the updated Criminal Procedure Rules; and the Emergency Disaster Management Fund Policy.

At the centre of this work is the Public Service Management Act, 2024, which came into force on 1 January 2025. The Act modernises the way the Public Service is managed, bringing together long-standing rules on discipline and performance management into a single legal framework. It also formally establishes systems of accountability by requiring senior public officers, including heads of department and deputy secretaries, to declare their interests with the Registrar of Interests. In addition, the Act provides for the establishment of the Virgin Islands Public Service Learning Institute, which now supports the continued professional development of public officers.

Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Deputy Governor, Mrs. Sharleen DaBreo-Lettsome, MBE, said the work forms part of a coordinated approach to strengthening the systems of governance in the Public Service, with a particular focus on expanding the avenues for transparency and accountability.

Mrs. DaBreo-Lettsome said, "Our legislative and policy work over the last few years has been deliberately focused on building systems that can sustain the ongoing growth of the Public Service. In particular, we have sought to put in place frameworks that give the public greater confidence in how decisions are made and how public resources are managed, while streamlining the operations of the wider Public Service. We are grateful to all of the officers and partners who have contributed to this work, and we remain committed to building on it."

Ahead of the Public Service Management Act coming into force, more than 400 public officers attended a detailed presentation on its provisions and on their role in ensuring a smooth transition. The Office of the Deputy Governor has continued to engage officers across the Public Service, ensuring that every level of the Public Service understands and meets the standards set out within the Act.

The Office of the Deputy Governor also recognised the contributions of more than 2,600 public officers who have supported the wider governance reform effort. Since the process began, officers have helped to introduce new legislation and policies and to raise the standard of operations, in keeping with the need for greater transparency, accountability and efficiency.

For members of the public, these reforms mean clearer rules on how public officers conduct themselves, stronger safeguards around conflicts of interest, and greater confidence that public resources are being managed responsibly.

For Additional Information Contact:

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