**States of Jersey Fire & Rescue Service Association**

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Deputy Victoria Li
Chair, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Office
Morier House
St. Helier
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29 October 2026

Dear Deputy Li,

**Proposed Budget 2027–2030 Review – FRSA response**

Thank you for your letter of 15 October 2026 inviting the States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service Association (FRSA) to contribute to the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel's review of the Proposed Budget 2027–2030.

The Association welcomes the opportunity to represent its members' interests, particularly in relation to their health, safety and wellbeing and their terms and conditions of service, and the resources required to deliver a safe and resilient fire and rescue service. Our responses to the Panel's questions are set out below, including our views on the proposed funding for the new Fire and Rescue Headquarters.

**1. Do you consider that the proposed Budget 2027–2030 provides sufficient funding and resources to maintain current fire and rescue service standards and meet anticipated future demand?**

The FRSA's principal concern is protecting its members' health, safety and wellbeing and safeguarding their terms and conditions of service. The Association considers that current arrangements do not adequately protect members' health, safety and wellbeing and therefore welcomes the proposed additional Fire and Rescue Service funding as necessary investment to address existing shortcomings, rather than simply maintain current provision.

Future operational risks and the safe systems of work needed to manage them cannot all be anticipated. Funding must therefore be sustained and regularly reviewed so that staffing, training, equipment and working arrangements can adapt as risks emerge.

The Association cannot yet conclude that the proposed investment is sufficient to address existing shortcomings and meet future demand. Its adequacy should be assessed against demonstrable improvements in members' safety and wellbeing and the resources needed to sustain them.

**2. What are the most significant operational, workforce, or financial challenges facing the Fire and Rescue Service over the next four years, and does the proposed Budget adequately address them?**

For the Association, the most significant challenges are maintaining safe staffing levels, manageable workloads and specialist competence, while ensuring suitable facilities and protecting members from immediate and long-term occupational health risks. Recruitment, retention and access to essential training must be supported alongside improvements to ageing facilities, effective contaminant controls and appropriate preventative health monitoring. The proposed Budget should address these requirements together, without placing excessive pressure on existing staff or compromising their safety and wellbeing.

The proposed workforce funding is welcomed, but growth must be matched by equipment, training and personal protective equipment (PPE) so that additional staff can work safely without increasing pressure on existing staff.

The condition of the current building is a further significant concern, with implications for staff safety, wellbeing and morale. Essential repairs and improvements must be addressed during the Budget period rather than deferred pending delivery of the new Headquarters.

Protecting firefighters from the immediate and long-term health risks of exposure to fire contaminants, including cancer, is also a significant challenge. The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified occupational exposure as a firefighter as carcinogenic to humans (Group 1). Robust measures to prevent and minimise exposure are therefore essential, including effective post-incident decontamination of personnel, PPE and equipment, suitable washing, showering and changing facilities, and arrangements to prevent contamination spreading into vehicles and clean station areas. The Association considers that these measures must be adequately funded and implemented within the existing estate, rather than deferred until a new Headquarters is delivered.

Alongside measures to prevent and minimise exposure, firefighters need appropriate health monitoring. However, there is no obvious funding allocated in the proposed Budget 2027–2030 to developing a dedicated programme. Under Article 3 of the Health and Safety at Work (Jersey) Law 1989, the employer must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees. Part 8 of Jersey's Management of Health and Safety at Work Approved Code of Practice (ACoP 14) addresses health surveillance as part of managing occupational health risks. Against this existing framework and firefighters' recognised exposure to contaminants and other health hazards, the Association considers appropriate, risk-based health surveillance an essential element of protecting members, not an optional enhancement.

The UK Government's announced Firefighters Concordat on Health and Wellbeing, including consistent, regular health checks, further reinforces the need for action locally. The Budget should therefore explicitly fund a programme developed with competent occupational health advice, complementing, not replacing, measures to prevent and minimise exposure.

**3. What impact, if any, could proposed public-sector efficiencies and savings have on firefighter recruitment, retention, training, and operational resilience?**

The Association recognises the need for public money to be used effectively. However, savings should not be targeted at the Fire and Rescue Service, as this would undermine the additional funding provided to address existing shortcomings and increase risks to FRSA members. This investment must deliver improvements in safety, staffing, training and operational resilience, rather than be offset by reductions elsewhere in the Service's budget.

The wider Justice and Home Affairs budget includes role-related savings, but the published tables do not show what proportion, if any, relates to the Fire and Rescue Service or whether these savings would affect its operational resources.

The Association would be concerned if savings resulted in:

- frontline vacancies being held open;
- reduced operational crewing or resilience;
- delays in recruitment or promotion;
- reduced access to essential training and development;
- greater reliance on overtime or recall arrangements;
- increased pressure on existing personnel; or
- reductions in prevention, protection or community safety activity.

Genuine improvements in efficiency should focus on removing duplication without reducing resources or transferring administrative or support work onto operational personnel. Wider public-sector savings targets should not erode the additional investment in the Service or compromise members' safety, operational availability or statutory and specialist capabilities.

**4. The proposed Budget includes funding for the new Fire and Rescue Headquarters. Do you consider the proposed investment and delivery timetable sufficient to provide the facilities, operational capability, and resilience required for the future needs of the Service?**

The Association recognises that investigative works are required to establish the feasibility, scope and cost of a new Fire and Rescue Headquarters. However, the proposed Budget does not include provision for construction. If construction funding is only approved in the next Budget period, there is a risk that reliance on the current facilities will extend well beyond the 2027–2030 Budget period. While the need for investigation is accepted, it is disappointing that there is still no firm, funded commitment and clear timetable to provide FRSA members with a suitable and safe working environment.

The FRSA shares the Service's view that the current facilities present an extreme risk. Continued occupation makes investment in the existing estate essential. Staff are already working in facilities affected by leaking roofs, ageing and failing infrastructure, and other deficiencies that fall below the standards the Association would reasonably expect. Essential repairs and risk-reduction measures must not be deferred pending the new building.

The health risks associated with exposure to fire contaminants, including cancer, make suitable facilities for post-incident decontamination particularly important. Although the increase in operational firefighter numbers is welcome, workforce growth will place further pressure on existing welfare facilities. The Association is concerned about the Service's ability to provide suitable and sufficient washing, showering and changing facilities to support effective decontamination of personnel, alongside arrangements for contaminated PPE and equipment

that prevent contamination spreading into clean areas, and appropriate areas for rest and recovery between operational duties. Robust interim measures must address these risks now and keep pace with recruitment throughout the period before the new Headquarters becomes available.

States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service (SJFRS) staff and their representatives should be meaningfully engaged from the earliest stages of development and throughout the design process. Their practical and professional experience should inform operational accommodation, welfare, hygiene and rest facilities, helping to ensure that the new building is fit for purpose and future-proofed as far as reasonably practicable, taking account of anticipated workforce growth and evolving operational needs.

The Association therefore seeks a firm, funded construction programme alongside immediate improvements to protect members during continued occupation. Both should be recognised as essential investment in members' health, safety and wellbeing, operational resilience and public safety.

**5. What benefits do you anticipate will arise from the new Fire and Rescue Headquarters, and are there any risks or concerns that the Panel should be aware of regarding the project?**

A purpose-built Headquarters should provide a safer, healthier and more resilient working environment. Key benefits include:

- safer operational accommodation and mobilisation arrangements;
- better access to suitable training facilities to maintain members' competence;
- suitable facilities for the safe storage, maintenance and handling of operational equipment;
- improved welfare facilities, including suitable washing, showering and changing facilities, effective decontamination arrangements for personnel and equipment, and appropriate areas for rest and recovery;
- more resilient critical Fire and Rescue functions to support personnel during operational incidents;
- improved working conditions that support recruitment and retention; and
- facilities capable of meeting members' needs as the workforce and operational requirements change.

The principal concern is continued delay without a firm, funded commitment to construction, prolonging reliance on facilities that do not adequately meet staff needs.

The Association would particularly welcome assurance that:

- existing facilities will be enhanced to improve decontamination of personnel, PPE and equipment and prevent contamination spreading into clean areas while awaiting the new Headquarters;
- firefighters, operational staff and the Association will be meaningfully consulted throughout the design process;
- operational continuity will be protected during construction, with any temporary facilities suitable and ready before functions are transferred;
- the design will accommodate future operational and workforce requirements; and

- any revised cost will be addressed transparently rather than through reductions in essential operational provision.

**6. Does the proposed Budget provide adequate investment to ensure preparedness for major incidents and emergencies, including severe weather events, large-scale fires, industrial incidents, maritime incidents, and other civil contingencies?**

The Association welcomes additional investment in major-incident preparedness but cannot confirm that the proposed Budget provides all the resources and safeguards members need across the incidents identified, given the unpredictable nature of emergency response and evolving operational risks.

Sustained investment must provide sufficient staffing, training, equipment, welfare arrangements and safe systems of work for members to maintain their competence and operate safely during prolonged or concurrent incidents, without excessive workload pressures. The Association seeks assurance that provision will be regularly reviewed as risks change.

**7. Are there any additional capital investment requirements, equipment upgrades, technological improvements, or specialist capabilities that you believe require further funding or prioritisation within the Budget period?**

The Association considers that further funding and prioritisation are required for training infrastructure, operational equipment, station facilities and specialist occupational health provision. Investment must support both the planned workforce increase and existing personnel's needs, while keeping pace with changing operational risks and protecting members' long-term health. Priorities are:

- suitable PPE for additional personnel, including ongoing cleaning, maintenance and replacement;
- initial and ongoing training costs, with sufficient instructor capacity, facilities and equipment to support recruitment without reducing existing personnel's access to essential training;
- additional or upgraded operational equipment to enable personnel to work safely as incident risks and operational requirements change;
- a dedicated, risk-based preventative health monitoring programme for firefighters, developed with competent occupational health advice, for which there is no obvious funding allocated in the proposed Budget;
- funding for a suitable on-Island live-fire training facility to support realistic training and the maintenance of operational competence; and
- improvements to existing stations to accommodate a growing workforce, including suitable and sufficient washing, showering, changing, decontamination and rest facilities.

**8. Does sufficient funding exist to support preventative and community safety initiatives, including fire safety education, home safety visits, and engagement with vulnerable groups?**

The Association is concerned that sufficient funding is not available to meet the growing demands on an already stretched fire safety department.

Legislative changes are likely to increase demand for technical fire safety work, placing further pressure on specialist capacity. At the same time, the Island's ageing population is likely to require a greater focus on risk-based prevention, including home safety visits, fire safety education and engagement with people at increased risk.

The Association seeks sustained funding for specialist staffing, training and dedicated capacity across prevention and protection. Members must be able to meet growing demands without excessive workloads or essential activity being reduced or deferred, protecting both the public and responding crews.

**9. In light of proposed housing and infrastructure development across the Island, what additional demands may be placed on the Fire and Rescue Service, and have these future demands been adequately reflected in the Budget?**

The increasing number of tall, complex and densely occupied buildings adds to operational complexity and the risks firefighters must manage. Housing and infrastructure development therefore has implications not only for emergency response capacity, but also for the training, equipment and safe systems of work needed to protect personnel.

Changes in building design, construction methods and materials may also give rise to fire behaviour that is not yet fully understood, requiring new or adapted firefighting tactics. These developments may affect the number of firefighters required to resolve incidents safely and should inform ongoing reviews of operational staffing, training, equipment and safe systems of work.

A building risk review is underway and its outcome remains unknown. It may identify concerns about the fire performance of existing building stock, but this is not a confirmed finding. Its conclusions should inform the operational risk assessment and the resources required to protect personnel.

As noted in our response to question 8, the fire safety department is already stretched. Growth in these building types will also increase the technical fire safety workload, placing further pressure on specialist capacity alongside the anticipated demands of legislative change.

The Association cannot confirm that the Budget adequately addresses these demands while the review remains incomplete. Its findings must be matched by funding for the necessary operational safeguards and specialist fire safety capacity.

**10. What changes or additional measures would you recommend to strengthen the Island's resilience, public safety, and emergency response capabilities over the period 2027–2030?**

The Association's priorities for protecting members and maintaining a safe public service during the Budget period are:

1. Address existing estate deficiencies without delay, including essential repairs and sufficient washing, showering, changing, decontamination and rest facilities to support the growing workforce.

2. Provide dedicated funding for a risk-based preventative health monitoring programme for firefighters, developed with competent occupational health advice, to protect members' long-term health alongside measures to prevent and minimise occupational exposure.
3. Commit to a clear, funded delivery timetable for the new Headquarters, involving SJFRS staff and their representatives from the outset and designing for future operational and welfare needs.
4. Fund the full costs of workforce growth, including PPE, training, instructor capacity, equipment and suitable station facilities.
5. Prioritise a suitable on-Island live-fire training facility to support realistic training and maintain operational competence.
6. Sustain investment in operational equipment and specialist capabilities through a long-term replacement and maintenance plan.
7. Strengthen technical fire safety and prevention capacity to meet legislative, building and community demands while reducing operational risks.
8. Protect Fire and Rescue investment from public-sector savings that would increase risks or workloads for members.
9. Regularly review major-incident resources, including capacity for sustained and concurrent operations and changing building risks.
10. Ensure the Emergency Services Control Centre has resilient staffing, systems, training and business continuity arrangements.

The Association would welcome meaningful consultation on proposals affecting members, helping to ensure that investment delivers practical improvements in their safety, wellbeing, working conditions and operational preparedness.

Thank you for considering the Association's submission. We would welcome the opportunity to clarify any of the points raised or provide further evidence to support the Panel's review.

Yours sincerely



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