

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE
AND FISHERIES**

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QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 5th OCTOBER 2026
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 12th OCTOBER 2026**

Question

“In relation to the Asian Hornet population in Jersey, will the Minister advise –

- (a) the Government strategy regarding Asian Hornets;
- (b) how much has been spent on work to eradicate or control the population thus far, broken down by year;
- (c) whether any assessment has been made of the continuing impact of the invasive species on the environment, agriculture and local producers, tourism, and public safety, including children; and
- (d) the estimated cost to completely eradicate hornets from Jersey?”

Answer

(A) Government strategy regarding Asian Hornets

The Government of Jersey operates a long-standing Asian Hornet surveillance, detection and response programme designed to **suppress populations**, minimise impacts and support long-term management of this invasive species, delivered through a partnership between Government officers, the Jersey Asian Hornet Group (JAHG), contractors, beekeepers and members of the public.

It has never been the intention of the programme to eradicate Asian Hornets. From the outset, eradication was considered technically impossible. The programme has instead focused on slowing the establishment of the species, suppressing populations through nest destruction, and reducing impacts on biodiversity, businesses and public safety. Success should therefore be measured by the impacts avoided and the reduction in hornet numbers that would otherwise have occurred in the absence of intervention.

The current strategy is based on six complementary pillars of public awareness and engagement, report coordination, spring queen trapping, nest tracking, nest destruction, and research and collaboration.

In 2026 a 7th Pillar has been introduced

7 - Public Wellbeing and Cross-Agency Working

To date, the Asian Hornet response has been led and coordinated by the Biological Security team, supported by contractors and other Government departments where required. However, as hornet numbers increase and resources don't, a more risk-based approach to management is becoming necessary.

Sting incidents are recorded each year. During 2025, 50 sting incidents were reported, including one confirmed anaphylactic reaction and a number of hospital attendances. Most incidents resulted from the accidental disturbance of nests rather than encounters with individual hornets away from a nest. Officers are also aware of a number of near-miss events where members of the

public, contractors or children narrowly avoided significant nest disturbance and potential injury.

With around 1,000 nests forecast for 2026 and potentially 2,000 as a maximum capacity for our island, the likelihood of serious sting incidents, including life-threatening reactions, is expected to increase. While Asian Hornets remain a biological security issue, they are increasingly becoming a broader public safety and public service challenge, requiring a coordinated cross-government response.

Current Status

As at early October 2026, more than 800 nests had been identified during the year, the majority of which have been successfully destroyed. **This represents a 50% increase on the nest numbers this time last year.** While Asian Hornet numbers continue to increase, officers consider that the programme has significantly slowed the establishment of the species and reduced impacts on biodiversity, businesses and public safety. Without continued intervention, hornet populations and associated risks would be expected to increase more rapidly, placing greater pressure on public services, communities and the wider environment.

(B) how much has been spent on work to eradicate or control the population thus far, broken down by year;

The Asian Hornet programme cost approximately £71k in 2024 and £74k in 2025. These costs are made up from £25k and £36k respectively in operational and equipment costs of contractor nest-destruction services, equipment, consumables and volunteer support costs with the significant remainder being Biosecurity Officer time to coordinate the spring trapping, receive, triage and act upon reports, coordinate nest tracking and nest destruction activities. Biosecurity Officers carry out a significant proportion of the nest destructions themselves. Officer time is likely to be under recorded due to the exceptional dedication of the officers involved.

In 2026 the operational costs are likely to be in the region of £45k: an increase mainly due to the number of nests requiring destruction. Despite efficiencies in the public reporting process, the sheer numbers of reports and nests continue to demand a significant proportion of Biosecurity officer time, with a final cost for 2026 estimated at £90k.

These costs do not reflect the extraordinary and substantial contribution made by trained volunteers within the Jersey Asian Hornet Group, whose support remains a vitally important component of the Island's response. Over many years, its volunteers have donated literally thousands of hours of their time to spring trapping, monitoring, tracking, public engagement as well as being trained up to carry out nest destructions. Their commitment, expertise and willingness to respond at short notice have been fundamental to the success of the programme, and the Minister wishes to place on record her sincere thanks for their continued dedication.

(C) whether any assessment has been made of the continuing impact of the invasive species on the environment, agriculture and local producers, tourism, and public safety, including children;

While no single formal economic impact assessment has been undertaken, Government and delivery partners continue to monitor and record a range of impacts including sting incidents, nest locations, disruption to public spaces, effects on beekeeping activities and operational demands associated with managing the species.

Pollinator impact – Asian Hornets are known to prey on a wide range of pollinating insects. However, the overall impact on wild pollinator populations in Jersey is difficult to quantify. As in many jurisdictions, comprehensive baseline data on pollinator abundance and distribution was not available prior to the arrival of the species. Research undertaken in collaboration with the University of Exeter has improved understanding of the species being preyed upon and seasonal feeding patterns, but it remains difficult to determine the extent to which Asian Hornets are affecting pollinator populations at an Island-wide level.

Agriculture impact – There have been no reported impacts on crop pollination in Jersey. Jersey Royal potatoes do not require insect pollination, cereal crops are wind-pollinated, and local orchard producers have not reported pollination failures. While the potential for ecological impacts on pollinators remains a concern, the absence of historical baseline data means that the scale of any effects on Jersey's pollinator populations cannot currently be determined.

Beekeeping impact – Beekeepers have played a central role in Jersey's Asian Hornet response, working with Government and volunteers to develop many of the surveillance, trapping and nest-tracking techniques used today.

Honeybees are a significant prey species for Asian Hornets and sustained predation can weaken colonies, reduce honey production and affect overwinter survival. While the overall impact on Jersey's beekeeping community is difficult to quantify, there is anecdotal evidence of increased colony losses in recent years and some beekeepers have reported reducing or ceasing their activities due in part to Asian Hornet pressure.

Many beekeepers now invest in protective measures such as traps, hive muzzles and electric harps, creating additional costs. The programme continues to promote spring trapping, nest tracking and volunteer surveillance as the most effective long-term means of protecting managed honeybee colonies and reducing wider impacts on pollinators.

Tourism and Public Space impact – While no formal assessment has been undertaken, increasing Asian Hornet activity has the potential to affect visitor experience and public use of outdoor spaces. Reports of disruption are increasing and have included temporary restrictions at schools, parks, visitor attractions and hospitality venues. As hornet numbers continue to rise, further disruption to public spaces, outdoor events, businesses and recreational facilities can be expected, together with increased demand on public services.

Public Safety impact – To date, the Asian Hornet response has been led and coordinated by the Biological Security team, supported by contractors, volunteers and other Government departments where required. However, as hornet numbers continue to increase, the consequences of Asian Hornet establishment are extending beyond biological security and biodiversity into wider public safety and public service considerations.

During 2025, 50 sting incidents were recorded, including one confirmed anaphylactic reaction and a number of hospital attendances. Most incidents resulted from the accidental disturbance of nests, although officers are also aware of a number of near-miss events involving members of the public, contractors and children who narrowly avoided injury.

Increasing hornet activity is already resulting in disruption to schools, parks, visitor attractions, businesses and other public spaces. As nest numbers continue to rise, the likelihood of serious

sting incidents, temporary closures, restricted access to public areas and demands on public services will also increase.

With more than 800 nests identified during 2026 and possibly a capacity of around 2,000 nests within a few years, the challenge is no longer solely one of managing an invasive species. Asian Hornets are increasingly becoming a broader public safety issue requiring a coordinated response across Government, public services, landowners, businesses, community organisations and volunteers. While Biological Security will continue to play a leading role, the long-term management of Asian Hornets is likely to become a shared responsibility across a number of sectors and stakeholders.

Resource and Service impact – The increasing cost and resource demands associated with Asian Hornet management present a growing challenge for the Biological Security service. Beyond the direct costs of surveillance, tracking and nest destruction, the response requires a substantial commitment of specialist staff time. A Grade 11 Senior Scientific Officer and a Grade 8 Scientific Officer are largely focused on Asian Hornet activities between April and October, often working additional hours to maintain response capacity.

As hornet numbers continue to rise, this level of commitment inevitably reduces the capacity available for other biological security priorities. To help maintain wider service delivery, seasonal interns are increasingly being used to support activities such as Japanese Knotweed management and other work programmes. While this has enabled services to continue, it also highlights the growing opportunity cost of the Asian Hornet response.

The challenge is not simply one of increasing nest numbers, but of increasing demand on public resources. As the Island moves towards an environment where significantly higher numbers of nests are expected each year, a response modelled primarily through Biological Security becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. The future management of Asian Hornets is therefore likely to require a greater degree of shared responsibility across Government departments, public services, contractors, landowners, volunteers and community organisations.

While Biological Security will continue to provide technical leadership and coordination, the long-term response is likely to require additional resources and a more integrated, cross-agency approach to surveillance, risk management, public communication, incident response and nest destruction activities.

(D) Estimated cost of complete eradication

No estimate has been produced for complete eradication. Given the established population in Jersey, the presence of large populations in neighbouring regions of France, and the continuing risk of natural reintroduction, complete eradication has never been considered a realistic or achievable management objective. The Island's strategy has therefore focused on surveillance, rapid response, nest destruction and population suppression to reduce impacts on biodiversity, businesses and public safety. Success should be measured not by eradication, but by the extent to which the programme reduces hornet numbers and limits the environmental, economic and public safety impacts that would otherwise be experienced across the Island.

Future Pressure (extra info)

Asian Hornet numbers are expected to continue increasing in Jersey over the coming years, resulting in growing pressures on biodiversity, public safety, businesses and public services. While the species remains an important biological security concern, its impacts are increasingly

being felt at the interface between the natural environment and the communities that live, work and recreate within it.

Jersey presents a particular challenge in this regard. Unlike many larger jurisdictions, the Island has a relatively high population living in close proximity to the countryside, parks, gardens, schools, visitor attractions and other green spaces. The distinction between urban and rural environments is often less pronounced, resulting in frequent interaction between people and the habitats in which Asian Hornets forage and nest.

As hornet populations increase, the focus of management is therefore likely to extend beyond nest destruction and population suppression alone. Greater attention will need to be given to managing risk where the natural environment and public life intersect, including schools, parks, public spaces, infrastructure, businesses and residential areas.

The challenge for Jersey is to maintain and enhance biodiversity, increase tree cover, support climate resilience and carbon sequestration, and manage invasive species, while continuing to provide safe and accessible public spaces. Achieving these objectives will require a coordinated, long-term approach that balances environmental stewardship with public safety and community wellbeing.