STATES OF JERSEY

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025): TWENTY-FIRST AMENDMENT (P.70/2025 AMD.(21)) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 4th December 2025
by the Council of Ministers

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

Introduction

This amendment proposes the creation of a separate head of expenditure for Parish of St Helier neighbourhood improvement schemes. While the intention behind the amendment is understood, it is administratively unnecessary and would in practice be detrimental to the effective delivery of public realm improvements.

Background

The revitalisation of St Helier is a shared priority for both the Minister for Infrastructure and the Parish of St Helier. The Public Realm programme, funded through the Infrastructure Rolling Vote (IRV), is the primary mechanism for delivering this ambition.

The entire forward programme, £2.5 million per annum, is committed to projects within St Helier, guided by the Island Plan's *Public Realm and Movement Strategy*. These include major schemes such as the Western Bus Gateway (2025/26), the Vibrant Core works in Broad Street, New Cut, York Street, Minden Place, and market crossings, and connectivity improvements to gateways such as the new Charles Street Car Park. The Public Realm and Movement Strategy also aims to create liveable neighbourhoods and ensure pedestrian connectivity across the ring road. A balanced approach between the town core key focus and a neighbourhood improvement element is recognised within the strategy.

In 2024, the Assembly agreed that up to £500,000 over 5 years within the IRV Public Realm allocation would support neighbourhood improvement schemes, subject to matching funding from the Parish of St Helier. A notional provision of £310,000 has already been made in the Long-Term Capital Plan, and this can rise to £500,000 as schemes progress.

(NB: It should be noted that the term *'up to £500,000'* originates from the wording of the original Amendment to the last Budget which sought funding of *"up to £500,000 from the SoJDC"*. The words "up to" were part of the original amendment to the last Budget, not the Council of Minister's subsequently approved amendment to that amendment.)

Town Centre investment

Without continued investment in the public realm within St Helier's commercial core, the area will inevitably become increasingly tired and decline. Town competes for visitors and economic activity, and attractive, accessible streets are essential to maintaining its vitality. Staying still is not an option, as a failure to invest will result in reduced vibrancy, diminished commercial performance, and a poorer experience for residents and visitors alike. The Public Realm programme is designed to address this by delivering improvements that make the town core safer, greener, and more welcoming. Fragmenting the funding risks slowing this progress at a time when momentum is critical.

The proposed amendment does not increase funding; it seeks to place the existing capital from within the IRV funding in specific budget years of expenditure. Creating a separate head of expenditure introduces fragmentation and reduces flexibility. The IRV model allows dynamic reprioritisation across projects, ensuring that funds are directed where schemes are the most deliverable and provide greatest benefit. Splitting the budget would undermine this approach and delay delivery of strategic projects already in progress.

The Public Realm programme has already been scaled back to £2.5 million in the 2025–28 Government Plan and is reduced in real terms value year on year as a consequence of inflation. Further fragmentation would exacerbate delays and reduce the ability to deliver improvements that support economic vibrancy, active travel, and the greening of St Helier. This will only serve to increase periods of disruption to businesses in town.

Risks of the Amendment

There are significant delivery risks associated with creating a separate head of expenditure. Government capital allocations do not roll over from year to year.
For the funds to be released, three conditions must be met:

1. A parish scheme must be agreed upon;
2. Match funding must be voted by ratepayers;
3. The programme must be deemed affordable over the period

If the Parish votes its matching funds at the annual Rates Assembly in July/August, there will likely be insufficient time to design, procure, and deliver works before the end of December, the close of government's financial year. Civil engineering projects typically take 12–24 months from prefeasibility to construction. Annual allocations risk funds lapsing unused and being returned as unspent. The current dynamic allocation arrangements avoid this issue, by allowing in year allocations to be matched to expenditure.

Assuming that it is not permitted to "build up" funds over the proposed three-year period could also mean that the Parish might be restricted to funding three small schemes within short windows of opportunity, which may not represent best value.

Unnecessarily tying up funds in a separate Head of Expenditure will risk delaying improvements to the centre of town and increase the period of disruption to businesses. The programme of public realm projects is essential to revitalising town's centre and are already being developed through their required design stages. The commitment to Neighbourhood improvement can still be achieved over the plan period.

Recommendation

Members are asked to reject this amendment. Retaining all public realm funding within the Infrastructure Rolling Vote ensures coordinated investment, flexibility, and alignment with strategic priorities, while still honouring the commitment to parish-led neighbourhood improvement schemes under the existing amended budget proposals for 2025-2028 and as continued within this Budget.