STATES OF JERSEY

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025): THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT (P.70/2025 AMD.(13)) – COMMENTS

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

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers are grateful to Deputy Bailhache for confirming his support in broad terms for the proposals for the redevelopment of Fort Regent, which he describes in his report as being well considered and sensible in general terms.

It is true that Fort Regent has been something of a drain on public finances for many years. Arguably, this has come as result of years of under investment and a failure to plan properly for its sustainable use. The Council of Ministers are determined to address this, by undertaking the necessary work to restore what is an iconic structure and make meaningful use of the facility to the benefit of the islanders and visitors alike. Indeed, the public have demonstrated overwhelming support for the proposal, which is now more advanced than any other plan which has come before it.

The Council of Ministers made a conscious decision to not put forward budget requirements for the totality of the project. The proposed Budget 2026-2029 allocation is specifically for essential works to make the structure safe and fit for future redevelopment. This Phase one funding also supports the scoping and development of detailed plans to inform Phase two budget requirements.

As a Grade 1 Listed fortress and Grade 2 Listed roof structure, the Fort has been recognised and given protection due to its exceptional public and heritage interest to Jersey, being of more than Island wide importance, as an outstanding example of its historical period, architectural style and building type. Jersey's heritage is not only part of the story and identity of the island, but also has significance and relevance beyond, by contributing to a wider understanding and appreciation of Jersey's place in shared global heritage. The identification and protection of the island's historic environment, and the promotion of an awareness and understanding of it, helps not only to achieve local objectives of sustainable development, but also to meet obligations in relation to international conventions, and to support the island's wider reputation and identity[1].

Second phase funding requirements – to deal with the proposed future uses and fit-out works – will be proposed in the next Budget. It has been indicated that this would take the total cost to redevelop the Fort to £110m. However, it has not yet been concluded how much of this additional £67 investment requirement will need to be directly funded by Government, or through the direct investment of commercial operators. SoJDC have been instructed to deliver a financially sustainable proposal, which is currently in design and negotiation, before the end-use scheme is finalised and budget sought and secured.

Doing nothing with the Fort is simply not an option. Doing nothing comes at a considerable cost. A permanent closure of the building will still inevitably lead to a need to remove the roof structure and ensure the site is safe and secure, coming at a cost of around £12 million, and which would ultimately be untenable as a decision given its listed status and confirmed technical feasibility to repair and refurbish the roof. Attempting to retain the roof and maintaining some degree of use will similarly lead to significant remediation requirements, which would ultimately extend to the same scope of works proposed to be undertaken within the £43m budget, albeit costing more due to works being undertaken reactively and without the efficiency of a planned programme.

[1] Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, October 1985); and the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (Valletta, January 1992).

Alternative works to reinstate the Fort as a heritage site would cost £31 million, plus ongoing substantial costs of maintaining and running the asset.

The Investing in Jersey Programme sets out a long-term plan for maintaining and renewing the Island's infrastructure and public assets. It makes clear that Jersey cannot afford to continue to under invest in essential projects; be it those that keep the island running, or those that keep the island liveable. Investing In Jersey establishes the principle for the creation of a Capital Investment Fund and highlights that funding for capital will come from a combination of existing capital budgets, reprioritisation of spending, efficiency savings, general revenue surpluses and, limited borrowing where appropriate.

It has been proposed that the redevelopment of Fort Regent is financed through borrowing to enable works to be delivered, without displacement of other projects from the capital programme. Borrowing to regenerate this iconic asset is consistent with the fiscal framework, and the budget includes a plan to cover both interest and the capital repayment of the borrowing – spreading the costs over time. It will ultimately be paid for through General Revenues collected from Islanders over time, during which those same Islanders will be able to enjoy and benefit from a revitalised Fort.

The Council of Ministers asks that Members reject this amendment to avoid further delays at Fort Regent, and to ensure we maintain the momentum towards its regeneration and re-opening by the end of 2028 to serve as the Island's premier leisure and entertainment facility for a new generation of islanders.