WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS
BY DEPUTY V. LI OF ST. HELIER NORTH
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2026
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2026

Question

"Further to the unauthorised drone activity at Jersey Airport on 30th and 31st October 2026, will the Minister advise –

(a) the police resources deployed during the incident, including –
  (i) the number of States of Jersey Police officers and Honorary Police officers deployed;
  (ii) the number of police hours committed to the incident; and
  (iii) what impact, if any, the incident had on other policing activity in Jersey;
(b) the current legal powers of police officers to stop, seize, disable or otherwise interfere with a drone operating in restricted airspace in Jersey;
(c) what drone detection or counter-drone capabilities were available to police before 30th October 2026, and what additional capabilities or support have been sought from UK authorities since the incident took place, and the expected timescales for this additional support; and
(d) whether a lessons-learned review of the multi-agency response will be undertaken, and if it will, which agency will lead the response and will findings be presented to the Assembly, and if such a review will not take place, will she explain why not?"

Answer

(a) Police resources deployed

(i) On 30 October, 21 officers were deployed to the tactical response:
15 States of Jersey Police officers and 6 Honorary Police officers.

On 31 October, 16 officers were deployed:
5 States of Jersey Police officers and 11 Honorary Police officers.

These figures exclude Gold and Silver command functions. The Police chaired the associated multi agency strategic and tactical coordination groups, as well as their own command structures.

(ii) It is not possible at this time to provide a reliable total for the number of police hours committed to the incident. However, a significant policing resource was committed across the two-day response, encompassing operational deployment, command, and subsequent investigative activity. At the time of writing the latter remains ongoing.

(iii) The response required officers to be abstracted from normal duties and redeployed to the incident. Wider policing resilience was maintained throughout, although the scale and duration of the response necessarily reduced the resources immediately available for business-as-usual activity.

(b) Legal powers

The principal statutory framework is the Air Navigation (Jersey) Law 2014. It regulates the operation of small, unmanned aircraft and creates offences relating to unsafe or unauthorised operation, including operation within an aerodrome traffic zone without the appropriate permission and conduct likely to endanger aircraft, persons, or property.

For the purposes of the Law, a police officer acting in the course of duty is an authorised person. Where the statutory conditions are met, Article 166 of the Law provides powers in circumstances where an aircraft is intended or likely to be flown contrary to the Law and in circumstances creating danger, including directing that the flight does not take place and, where applicable, taking necessary steps to detain the aircraft.

These provisions do not amount to a general power to disable or otherwise interfere technically with any drone encountered in restricted airspace. Any police action must be based on the particular circumstances, the relevant statutory power and considerations of necessity, proportionality, and aviation safety.

(c) Detection and counter-drone capability

Prior to 30 October 2026, the States of Jersey Police did not hold dedicated technical drone-detection or counter-drone equipment. Following the incident, specialist assistance and capability were sought from UK policing partners and other relevant agencies.

For operational and security reasons, it would not be appropriate to provide detailed public commentary on the Island's current or developing counter-drone capabilities, including specific equipment, deployment arrangements, or timescales.

There is ongoing work, led by Ports of Jersey, to consider future counter-drone capability and resilience with which the States of Jersey Police will participate fully.

(d) Lessons learned

A multi-agency "in person" debrief took place on Monday 16th November, conducted by an Instructor for the College of Policing National Structured Debrief (NSDB) Course. This impartial approach to facilitating is aligned to the options contained within the Jersey Resilience Forum Debrief Protocols. It was also conducted in tandem with a wider debrief process using Microsoft Forms, to capture and maximise the feedback.

This was organised by the Emergency Planning team within Justice and Home Affairs. The findings will not be publicly shared under National Security exemptions.