

STATES OF JERSEY



STATUTORY DUTIES TO FUTURE GENERATIONS (P.56/2026): COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 24th March 2026
by the Council of Ministers

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers ask that this proposition be rejected.

Ministers, along with all other States Members, already weigh carefully the best interests of both current and future generations when making decisions.

The impact on future generations is also a reoccurring theme in Scrutiny and Assembly debates. For example, when discussing our environment, housing, public finances, education, and a range of other topics. Jersey also has a strong track record of making necessary and often difficult decisions early.

Introducing new statutory duties to future generations is unlikely to improve matters, or be enforceable in a meaningful way. It would require more reports to be completed by officials; and in other jurisdictions has necessitated a dedicated “commissioner” to be appointed to assess what are fundamentally subjective matters better assessed by democratic mechanisms. The findings from elsewhere are also mixed. In Wales, the Auditor and Controller General found that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 *“is not driving the system-wide change that was intended”*.¹

Most importantly, our political system already has numerous checks and balances seeking to support good decisions – including media scrutiny; close engagement with constituents; Scrutiny Reviews and the Public Accounts Committee, the C&AG and Fiscal Policy Panel; and transparency requirements such as Freedom of Information Law and annual reporting.

There are also clear statutory responsibilities already in place, including around public finances and our environment and economy.

For example, the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 requires the Council of Ministers to *“take into account the medium-term and long-term sustainability of the States’ finances and the outlook for the economy in Jersey”* and to *“take into account the sustainable well-being (including the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being) of the inhabitants of Jersey over successive generations”*. The Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002 also expressly exists to *“conserve, protect and improve Jersey’s natural beauty, natural resources and general amenities, its character, and its physical and natural environments”*.

Finally, the Island is well served by an independent statistical body, “Statistics Jersey”, who monitor long-term outcomes; and an enduring outcomes framework as established by “Future Jersey” in 2018.

Conclusion

While agreeing on the importance of long-term decision making and our obligations to future generations, the Council of Ministers nevertheless ask Members to reject the proposition. Ultimately, Members face the electorate and account for their actions, and extensive arrangements are already in place. A new set of statutory duties is an unnecessary administrative overhead and disproportionate in the circumstances.

¹ [Ten years on, the Well-being of Future Generations Act has increased prominence but is not driving the system-wide change that was intended | Audit Wales](#)

Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]

These comments were submitted to the States Greffe after the noon 20th March deadline, as set out in Standing Order 37A, due to multiple work commitments in preparation for the Assembly sitting.
