STATES OF JERSEY

CURBING GROWTH OF PUBLIC SECTOR (P.44/2026): COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 5th March 2026
by the Chief Minister

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

From the beginning of this Government in early 2024, the Council of Ministers have highlighted their concerns about the sustainability of public sector expenditure.

We have focused on delivery of the Common Strategic Policy, investment in front line services, such as health and education, and our infrastructure, while taking necessary and significant steps to curb growth in public expenditure and our workforce compared with the levels seen in previous years.

As examples:

- Savings totalling **£47 million** were included within the Budget 2025 – 2028 and are being delivered.

- An external recruitment freeze was introduced in August 2024, without which it is estimated that there would have been over 500 additional Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts by now. This equates to approximately **£31 million** per annum in avoided staff costs. In addition, over 1,000 vacant or unfunded posts have been removed from the establishment.

- Restrictions on the use of external consultancy and temporary staffing have also been in place since June 2024. Expenditure in this area has reduced by approximately **£29 million** during 2024. Final audited figures for 2025 will be published in April.

- A reprioritisation of departmental activity has also taken place to focus on core functions, including reviews of Digital Services programmes and the Legislative Programme, has taken place to ensure resources are aligned with essential delivery.

As a result, the rate of public sector growth has slowed. As a percentage of base budget, growth has reduced from 5.1% in 2023 and 4.7% in 2024 to 1.2% in 2025 and 2.5% in 2026.

As to our workforce, excluding healthcare and education staff, total headcount decreased by 181 people (5.7%) and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) by 128 people (4.2%) in 2025 compared with 2024. Health and education also make up the substantial proportion of active recruitment (50 of the total 71 vacancies across the public sector).

Building on this work, and following a series of workshops with States Members, the Chief Executive Officer was asked to develop a range of options on internal process improvements, similar to that requested by the proposition.

Work is already underway to examine the extent that internal governance processes have become too bureaucratic, too costly, and not necessarily add value to front line services. For example, this could include whether end to end processes are as efficient as they could be for: data privacy impact assessments, financial governance processes, audit and risk processes, and freedom of information processes. This work is continuous and underway and will report to the next government, as requested by the proposition.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the public sector should not grow faster than the economy that funds it; and nor should government tax individuals and business more than is needed to fund essential public services. The Government has therefore been working hard to deliver a leaner public service with resources focused on front line services and public investment.

This is being delivered, it will continue, and the proposition in the meantime, by asking for work already underway, is unnecessary and overly prescriptive. Ministers therefore ask that it be rejected.

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

This comment was submitted to the States Greffe after the noon deadline as set out in Standing Order 37A due to the volume of States business and to enable drafting to be finalised.