STATES OF JERSEY

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025): COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 4th December 2025
by the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

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STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

Background

The *Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2026-2029* (P.70/2025) (hereafter the 'Budget 2026' or 'this year's Budget') was lodged on 16th September 2025, and the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Panel (hereafter the 'Panel') launched its Review on 29th September 2025. The Terms of Reference are appended to this report.

The Panel gathered evidence through Review Public Hearings held with the Ministers for the Environment, Infrastructure and Housing and as part of its Quarterly Public Hearing with the Minister for Infrastructure on 24th September 2025. It also received further information from each Minister through correspondence.

The Panel sought information from:

- Ports of Jersey in relation to progress of the development of a private aircraft decarbonisation charge,[1]
- Andium Homes in relation to the Use of Public Land for Public Benefit proposals,[2]
- the Judicial Greffier in relation to the proposed Rent Tribunal service,[3] and
- the Jersey Development Company in relation to the redevelopment of Fort Regent.[4]

The Panel also received two submissions from the Asian Hornet Volunteer Group, one on 6th October 2025[5] and the other on 4th November 2025.[6]

The nature of the Proposed Budget means that there are topics and projects which fall within the remit of more than one Scrutiny Panel. As a result, this Panel worked with others during the development of relevant questioning, including the Children, Education and Home Affairs Panel in relation to estates and infrastructure.

Introduction

The Panel believes that this year's Budget maintains stable short-term funding for the housing and infrastructure portfolios, however, it does not provide sufficient funding for the environment portfolio, and also offers limited assurance that the medium- to long-term challenges particularly those relating to infrastructure resilience, climate policy delivery, and housing affordability are being adequately addressed.

Departmental Budget, Savings and Staffing

To begin its Review, the Panel received evidence of the budgetary allocations across all three Ministerial portfolios within its remit.

[1] Submission-Budget-2026-2029-Ports-of-Jersey-20-October-2025.pdf
[2] Submission-Budget-2026-2029-Andium-Homes-23-October-2025.pdf
[3] Submission-Budget-2026-2029-Judicial-Greffier-6-November-2025.pdf
[4] Submission-Budget-2026-2029-Jersey-Development-Company-31-October-2025.pdf
[5] Submission-Budget-2026-2029-Asian-Hornet-Volunteer-Group-6-October-2025.pdf
[6] Submission-Budget-2026-2029-John-De-Carteret,-Asian-Hornet-Volunteer-Group-4-November-2025.pdf

The Environment Department's allocation for 2026 is estimated as £11,107,000[7] with the Department's 2026 programme consisting of a wide range of regulatory, scientific, policy and legislative workstreams, many of which are long-term and statutory in nature.[8] The Panel has concerns regarding the budgetary allocations for the Environment Department which will be set out in the next section.

The Infrastructure Department's allocation for 2026 is estimated as £63,269,000,[9] which the Panel understands is to be spent on a mixture of policy and capital project workstreams including:

- Accelerating the Major Refurbishments and Upgrades to Highlands College (previously due to extend into 2028 now scheduled to complete in 2026).[10]
- The Redevelopment of Fort Regent.[11]
- Exploratory funding for the Shoreline Management Plan into 2028.[12]

The Minister for Infrastructure confirmed that his Department currently has a net overspend of £400,000 for 2025 within his response to the Panel's letter dated 10th October 2025.[13] The Infrastructure Department also has a saving proposal of £2,189,000 for 2026, with the Minister for Infrastructure noting in a Review Public Hearing that this target is achievable, with the expectation that the majority of savings will be realised through efficiency improvements rather than reductions in service provision.[14] The Panel identified no significant concerns with the departmental budget for infrastructure.

The 2026 allocation for the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Team that sits within the Cabinet Office is estimated as £543,000, with the Minister for Housing confirming in his response to the Panel's letter dated 10th October 2025, that this will be used to meet staffing costs, "with no spend allocated to individual projects".[15] The Panel identified no concerns regarding the departmental budget for housing.

The Panel's detailed findings for each Ministerial portfolio are outlined in the sections that follow.

Environment

The Panel notes that the funding allocation for the Environment Department in this year's Budget is £656,000 less than last year's. The Panel questioned the Minister for the Environment on this during its Review Public Hearing on 5th November 2025, in response he highlighted that his Department continues to experience sustained financial constraint: [16]

[7] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 106, Table 5i: Revenue Heads of Expenditure
[8] Letter-Response-MENV-Budget-2026-Review-Launch-22-October-2025.pdf, p. 9
[9] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 106, Table 5i: Revenue Heads of Expenditure
[10] 30-10-2025-MINF-to-Chair-EHI-Panel-re-Proposed-Budget-2026-29.pdf, p. 4
[11] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 56, Table 20: Estates
[12] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 55
[13] 30-10-2025-MINF-to-Chair-EHI-Panel-re-Proposed-Budget-2026-29.pdf, p. 1
[14] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing.pdf, pgs. 4-5
[15] Letter-Response-MH-Budget-2026-Review-Launch-22-October-2025.pdf
[16] 2025-11-05-Transcript-Minister-for-the-Environment-Budget-Review-2026-2029_3.pdf, pgs. 2-3

"The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, there is no doubt that next year is going to be challenging. The last few years we have been working hard to make sure that we stay inside budget, budget which is continually under pressure… all the way across the department, are going to be affected by the further cut of £750,000 next year. I think it is fair to say that the effects will be felt, as I just said, across the whole department, regulation and environment…we are in a position now where we are having to take those vacancies and not replace staff into those jobs in order to make our targeted cuts."

The Panel understands that the £750,000 reduction referenced by the Minister corresponds to the Savings Proposals set out in Budget 2026, and that the Environment Department is expected to deliver this saving entirely through the removal or non-replacement of staff roles. [17]

In his letter of 22nd October 2025, the Minister for the Environment also confirmed a forecast overspend of £500,000 for 2025 and advised that the Natural Environment directorate will see its budget reduced by a further £500,000 in 2026, despite only recently being rebuilt to a functional level. He highlighted that the Environment Department operates with very small specialist teams, often just two or three highly qualified officers, meaning that the loss of even one post has a "massive effect" on statutory delivery. [18]

In the same letter, the Minister warned that the proposed reductions would weaken core regulatory functions across biodiversity, habitat protection, planning advice, air and water quality, plant and animal health, pollution control, enforcement, and the upkeep of public paths and coastal access. Biodiversity capacity would be reduced to two part-time officers for Island-wide ecological monitoring, with volunteer networks already operating at their limit. Essential programmes, including PFAS work, water-quality monitoring, and air-quality interventions, face significant unfunded costs. [19]

Submissions from the Jersey Asian Hornet Group highlighted the public-health and ecological risks of reduced environmental funding.[20] Cuts would directly undermine the Island's Asian Hornet Control Programme, increasing the likelihood of untreated nests, rapid population growth, and serious safety hazards.

Evidence from both the Review Public Hearing and the Minister's letter of 20th November 2025[21] confirmed that the forthcoming UK–EU "Brexit Reset" will generate a substantial, unavoidable legislative workload for the Environment Department. An initial scoping exercise, undertaken with DEFRA, has already identified around 89 pieces of legislation that may require amendment to ensure Jersey can participate meaningfully in the reset arrangements. This work is currently being absorbed by existing officers, but the Minister warned that the volume "will increase significantly" as negotiations progress, and that no funding has been allocated to support it. At the same time, the Department has lost specialist officers it cannot replace due to savings

[17] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, pg.112, Table 50: Saving Proposals

[18] 22nd October 2025

[19] 22nd October 2025

[20] Submission-Budget-2026-2029-John-De-Carteret,-Asian-Hornet-Volunteer-Group-4-November-2025.pdf and Submission-Budget-2026-2029-Asian-Hornet-Volunteer-Group-6-October-2025.pdf

[21] 20th November 2025,

pressures, already limiting its ability to respond to UK consultations on Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as the *Food and Environment Protection Act,*[22] contribute to trade-agreement discussions, or fulfil domestic statutory functions such as biodiversity and ecological advice on planning applications. The combined effect is that the Department will be required to divert further diminished resources to a major, externally driven programme of work, heightening the risks created by the proposed budget reduction and savings proposals.[23]

The Panel concludes that the proposed reduction and savings to the Environment Department's budget allocation for 2026 are neither realistic nor sustainable. They would erode essential statutory functions, undermine biodiversity, weaken environmental protection, expose the Island to avoidable public-health risks, and damage international trade and multilateral agreement compliance.

Therefore, the Panel lodged an amendment to the Budget 2026 (P.70/2025.Amd.(32)) on 8th December 2025 to reinstate the department's Revenue Head of Expenditure to the same figure as was agreed in the *Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028* (P.51/2024).

Carbon Neutral Roadmap, Climate Emergency & Net-Zero

During its Public Hearing on 5th November 2025 with the Minister for the Environment, the Panel heard that the Climate Emergency Fund's income base is structurally declining, primarily due to falling fuel duty receipts, which is a direct and expected consequence of Government policy encouraging electrification, sustainable transport and reduced fossil-fuel use. While increases in Vehicle Emissions Duty ('VED') will partially offset this decline, these measures will not generate sufficient revenue to meet the full funding requirements of the Island's net-zero transition. During the same hearing the Department confirmed that:

- Fuel duty income will continue to fall year-on-year, with no projected "cliff edge" yet, but a clear downward trend. [24]

- VED increases provide only short-term mitigation and will not close the long-term funding gap. [25]

- A Net Zero Financing Strategy will be brought forward in 2026 for the 2027-2030 delivery period, setting out additional revenue measures required beyond the Climate Emergency Fund's existing income stream. [26]

- Jersey will not attempt a full costed pathway to 2050. [27]

[22] The Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 ('FEPA') is UK legislation that provides the framework for regulating activities that may pose risks to human health or the environment, including the use of pesticides, the control of harmful substances, and the protection of the marine environment. Jersey aligns with FEPA requirements to maintain compliance in areas relevant to environmental protection and international trade.
[23] 20th November 2025
[24] 2025-11-05-Transcript-Minister-for-the-Environment-Budget-Review-2026-2029_3.pdf, pg.17
[25] 2025-11-05-Transcript-Minister-for-the-Environment-Budget-Review-2026-2029_3.pdf, pg.17
[26] 2025-11-05-Transcript-Minister-for-the-Environment-Budget-Review-2026-2029_3.pdf, pg.17
[27] 2025-11-05-Transcript-Minister-for-the-Environment-Budget-Review-2026-2029_3.pdf, pg.17

The Panel remains concerned that the Carbon Neutral Roadmap cannot be delivered within current funding arrangements, yet the Minister for the Environment will not attempt to identify a costed pathway for its full implementation.

The Panel also examined the treatment of environmental risks within the Budget 2026 and identified that the climate emergency, previously included as an Environmental Wellbeing Risk in the Proposed Budget 2025–2028 (P.51/2024), had been removed. The title of Figure 12 was also found to be incorrectly labelled as "Economic Wellbeing Risks" despite relating to Environmental Wellbeing.

During the Public Hearing on 5th November 2025, the Panel sought clarification from the Minister for the Environment on the rationale for the omission. The Minister explained that climate impacts were not considered "imminent" enough to warrant inclusion; however, both the Minister and the Chief Officer acknowledged that climate-related risk "has not gone away", that the Island is "seeing increasing risks related to the climate", and that addressing these risks remains an "absolute top priority" for the Infrastructure and Environment Department.[28]

Given that climate risks are ongoing, remain a stated departmental priority, and continue to require mitigation measures, the Panel concluded that its removal from the Environmental Wellbeing section of this year's Budget was inappropriate and misleading. Accordingly, the Panel lodged an amendment (P.70/2025.Amd.(9))[29] to reinsert the Climate Emergency as an Environmental Wellbeing Risk.

FINDINGS

1. The Panel finds that the proposed reductions to the Environment Department are unsustainable, undermining essential statutory functions and exposing the Island to significant environmental, public-health, and compliance risks.
2. The Panel finds that the Brexit Reset workload is currently being absorbed within the Environment Department's existing budget, but with its volume expected to "increase significantly" and no funding allocated, this will further erode statutory functions and exacerbate environmental, public-health and compliance risks.
3. The Panel finds that the Climate Emergency Fund's income base is expected to decline year-on-year and no viable plan currently in place to meet long-term net-zero financing needs.
4. Evidence from the Minister confirms that climate risks persist and remain a departmental priority. The omission of the Climate Emergency from the Environmental Wellbeing Risk section was inappropriate and misleading.

Infrastructure

Investing in Jersey Programme

[28] 2025-11-05-Transcript-Minister-for-the-Environment-Budget-Review-2026-2029_3.pdf, pgs. 24-25

[29] This amendment was subsequently re-issued to correct an error in the wording. The line:
"The Budget includes proposals to increase Fuel Excise Duty and Vehicle Emissions Duty, with the income transferred to the Climate Emergency Fund to support the implementation of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap" was replaced with:
The Budget includes proposals to increase Vehicle Emissions Duty, with the income transferred to the Climate Emergency Fund, and to increase Fuel Excise Duty, a portion of which is already transferred to the Climate Emergency Fund, to support the implementation of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap."

The Panel notes that the Investing in Jersey Programme represents the overarching strategic framework through which major capital projects will be identified, prioritised and delivered over a 25-year period. The Programme sets the long-term vision, principles and investment ambitions for Jersey's infrastructure.

Examples "early strategic investment" as set out in the Budget 2026, include: [30]

- *"Fort Regent Regeneration – £43 million – creating a modern, accessible leisure, events, and community destination.*
- *Jersey Property Holdings (JPH) Estate Upgrades – £6 million – additional funding for major refurbishments, accessibility improvements, and energy efficiency upgrades across the public estate."*

The Panel also notes that the Capital Investment Jersey Fund is the financial mechanism proposed to support the delivery of that Programme. However, the Budget 2026 does not establish the Fund; instead, the Minister for Treasury and Resources confirmed during the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel hearing on 29th October 2025 that a separate proposition will be brought to the Assembly, stating: *"We will have to bring forward legislation to establish the fund, to set out the terms of reference."*[31]

During its initial questioning of the Minister for Infrastructure during its Quarterly Public Hearing on 24th September 2025, the Panel gained a clearer understanding of the intent behind the Investing in Jersey programme. The Minister emphasised that the Island's infrastructure cannot be sustained on short-term or inconsistent capital allocations. Predictable, long-term funding is essential not only to safeguard ageing assets, including Jersey's Victorian sewer network, but also to give the private sector the confidence to scale and maintain the specialist skills and equipment required for continuous delivery. The Programme is therefore designed to lift infrastructure planning out of the constraints of individual electoral terms and move away from the short-term prioritisation that has historically hindered major capital projects. [32]

When asked how the Capital Investment Jersey Fund would strengthen infrastructure's leverage in securing funding, the Minister acknowledged:

> "*The challenge will be… how much money is released to start and then where that money goes. That will really depend on the priorities of the day*."

He also confirmed the uncertainty around how existing allocations will interact with the future fund, stating:

> "*I honestly do not know the mechanics… The mechanics of how future budgets will be designed and delivered will depend very much on the structure and the governance around the Investing in Jersey fund*." [33]

As such, the Panel remains concerned that, despite the Programme's intention to mitigate short-termism, significant competition between major capital priorities may

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[30] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 52
[31] 2025-10-29-Transcript-Proposed-Budget-2026-29-Reveiw-Hearing-Minister-for-Treasury-and-Resources_1.pdf, pgs. 11-12
[32] 2025-09-24-Transcript-Quarterly-Hearing-Minister-for-Infrastructure.pdf, pgs. 8-10
[33] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_2.pdf, pg. 9

continue to drive decision-making, limiting the extent to which the Investing in Jersey Programme will achieve the long-term stability it seeks to provide.

Moreover, the criteria and mechanisms by which projects will be prioritised for funding remain entirely undefined, as the operational framework of the Jersey Capital Investment Fund has not yet been brought forward. In the absence of this detail, the Panel is unable to assess whether the Fund will meaningfully alleviate short-term political pressures or simply replicate the existing competition between major capital priorities. Without clarity on governance, prioritisation methodology and the interaction between current allocations and future funding rounds, the effectiveness of the Jersey Capital Investment Fund to deliver genuine long-term infrastructural investment remains uncertain.

The Panel therefore recommends that the Council of Ministers give careful attention to establishing clear and transparent prioritisation criteria when determining the structure of the Jersey Capital Investment Fund, and that this detail be provided to the States Assembly when the accompanying proposition is lodged.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5. While the Investing in Jersey Programme is intended to provide a strategic framework for planning and funding the Island's long-term infrastructure needs, however the Budget lacks sufficient detail to show how projects will be prioritised. Furthermore, this year's Budget does not bring forward the proposal to establish the Capital Investment Jersey Fund, which is the mechanism intended to finance delivery of the Programme, and therefore offers no basis on which the Assembly can assess how the Fund will support the implementation of the Programme.
6. The Council of Ministers should develop clear, transparent prioritisation criteria for the allocation of capital within the Jersey Capital Investment Fund, and that this detail be provided to the States Assembly when the accompanying proposition is lodged.

Fort Regent

The Budget 2026 proposes £43 million to initiate the redevelopment of Fort Regent which is "*to be financed through borrowing*".[34] Given the minimal detail on both the details of the borrowing facility as well as the intended use of the funds within the Budget 2026, the Panel sought further information from the Minister for Infrastructure at its Review Public Hearing on 3rd November 2025.[35]

The Minister for Infrastructure confirmed that the funding will cover only the minimum level of work required to bring the building back into meaningful use, following a prolonged period of underinvestment. The Panel heard that the initial phase or phase one will be focused on long-overdue safety and restoration interventions. The Minister and Chief Officer explained that the Grade 2 listed roof structure has been surveyed and found to be structurally sound but will require recovering and internal upgrades to address thermal performance, glazing, and fire-safety requirements, alongside work to

[34] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, pg. 58
[35] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_2.pdf, pgs.17-19

improve acoustics within the Queen's Hall. The Panel notes that this phase is intended to put right historic maintenance deficits and make the building safe and operable, rather than to deliver a fully developed events offer in its own right.[36]

While the Panel's scrutiny limited its review of the Fort Regent redevelopment project to its capital allocation and departmental planning considerations, it notes the evidence given to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel during its Budget 2026 Review Public Hearing with the Minister for Treasury and Resources.[37] The Treasurer of the States confirmed that borrowing for Fort Regent will be delivered through the Revolving Credit Facility ('RCF') in the short term, with the debt subsequently consolidated into the wider Government borrowing strategy alongside the hospital financing. The Treasurer advised that borrowing was selected over the use of reserves on the basis that no unallocated funding was available to meet the £43 million requirement for phase one without drawing down further on the Strategic Reserve.[38]

During its Review Public Hearing on 3rd November 2025, the Minister for Infrastructure was clear that Fort Regent must, in his words, "wash its face".[39] The Panel understands that the Department's objective is that, once the capital works are complete, income generated from events, activities and commercial uses should cover the ongoing operational and maintenance costs of what is a very large and complex estate. However, the Minister also confirmed that the detailed revenue plan and debt-financing structure are still in development. The Panel therefore understands the current £43 million allocation is to be directed only at essential stabilisation and refurbishment, with further decisions on the operating model, private-sector involvement and long-term financial risk-sharing to be brought back to the Assembly in due course.[40]

FINDINGS

7. The £43 million allocated for Phase 1 of the Fort Regent Redevelopment will fund only essential restoration and maintenance works, with borrowing to be undertaken through a Revolving Credit Facility, however significant uncertainty remains regarding the future operating model and the project's ability to meet its estimated ongoing costs.

Revitalising St Helier

The Panel notes that Revitalising St Helier remains a stated Common Strategic Policy priority,[41] yet this year's Budget contains no dedicated funding line for the work beyond the existing budget for the Infrastructure Rolling Vote and Public Realm. [42]

During its Public Hearing on 3rd November 2025, the Minister for Infrastructure confirmed that work is being delivered through a series of site-specific schemes, including New Street, Broad Street, and future works for Conway Street and Library

[36] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_2.pdf, pgs.17-19
[37] 2025-10-29-Transcript-Proposed-Budget-2026-29-Reveiw-Hearing-Minister-for-Treasury-and-Resources_1.pdf, pgs. 46-47
[38] 2025-10-29-Transcript-Proposed-Budget-2026-29-Reveiw-Hearing-Minister-for-Treasury-and-Resources_1.pdf, pgs. 46-47
[39] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_2.pdf, pgs. 17-19
[40] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_2.pdf, pgs. 17-19
[41] Common Strategic Policy 2024 to 2026.pdf, p. 3
[42] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 60

Place, but acknowledged that this represents a programme of actions rather than a single, structured plan. [43]

When asked whether a plan exists, the Minister stated: [44]

> "*We have got a plan which we are happy to share… but it will certainly not all be done by the end of the term.*"

The Panel notes that it has not received sight of any such plan.

The Panel therefore aligns with the Scrutiny Report of the Common Strategic Policy Review Panel (S.R.5/2025), which concluded that no integrated revitalisation plan for St Helier currently exists (Key Finding 8) and recommended that the Council of Ministers develop one with clear governance, cross-departmental oversight, environmental and accessibility standards, and measurable milestones (Recommendation 2).

FINDINGS

8. The Minister for Infrastructure confirmed that a strategic plan to deliver the Common Strategic Policy priority to revitalise St Helier will not be published by the end of the political term, with current activity consisting only of individual public-realm projects.

Liquid Waste Infrastructure

The Budget allocates £43 million to the Liquid Waste Key Infrastructure project, which forms the core of delivering Jersey's Liquid Waste Strategy and is necessary to support the housing growth set out in the Bridging Island Plan. This investment will expand capacity across the Island's surface water and foul sewage networks, replace ageing pipes, and upgrade pumping stations so the system can accommodate increased volumes. [45]

The Panel notes that funding for 2027 is expected to come from asset disposals, while costs from 2028 onward are intended to be met through the proposed liquid waste charging mechanism, to be brought forward in the next Budget. The Budget 2026 also notes that cost estimates have risen significantly following detailed feasibility work and tender returns, and that sustaining the enlarged network will require an ongoing rolling allocation of £5–10 million per year once the project is complete.[46]

Liquid Waste Charges

The Panel examined the proposed liquid waste charging mechanism, given the Minister for Infrastructure's continual confirmation that charging would be brought forth before the end of this political term in its previous Quarterly Public Hearings.[47]

[43] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_2.pdf, p. 33
[44] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_2.pdf, p. 33
[45] [45] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, pgs. 60-61
[46] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, pgs. 60-61
[47] 2025-06-18-Transcript-Quarterly-Hearing-Minister-for-Infrastructure.pdf, p. 24

The Budget 2026 forecasts that this charging will generate £10 million annually from 2028, with receipts intended to be paid into the Consolidated Fund as general revenue income.[48] The Panel notes that approval for the development of a user-pays charging model for waste was previously granted in the Government Plan 2024–2027, enabling the application of existing departmental resources to design such a scheme. However, the Budget 2026 provides no detail on the proposed charging mechanism, stating only that the structure of the charge and all necessary operational arrangements will only be brought forward in future Budgets.[49]

During its Review Public Hearing on 24th September 2025,[50] the Panel questioned the Minister for Infrastructure on the proposals:

> *"The Connétable of St. Mary:*
>
> *How was this £10 million revenue figure calculated, and what assumptions have been made regarding household and insurance contributions?*
>
> *The Minister for Infrastructure:*
>
> *I do not think the £10 million figure is going to be sufficient to cover all of our liquid waste costs…£10 million is the figure that has been identified, but I would just look at double-checking that figure. It has got to be achievable; we have got to be able to deliver this*."[51]

The Panel also examined departmental capacity to design the charging scheme. During the same hearing, the Minister for Infrastructure acknowledged that the previously referenced £300,000 budget for developing the system may not be realistic, stating that the scale of consultation required would be "*significant*", and that delivery would depend on the level of time and resourcing allocated. The Minister confirmed that multiple charging models remain under consideration.[52]

The Panel is concerned that the proposed liquid waste charging mechanism remains at an early and insufficiently developed stage, with major uncertainties around both the estimated revenue and the costs of implementation given its proposed implementation for 2028. The £10 million annual figure, as confirmed by the Minister for Infrastructure, is not yet grounded in a full assessment of Jersey's needs, raising concerns about the reliability of the Budget's projections.

The Panel therefore recommends that the Minister undertakes the necessary work to deliver an appropriately designed and funded model for Jersey's liquid waste charging system as a matter of priority.

[48] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 39
[49] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 39
[50] 2025-09-24-Transcript-Quarterly-Hearing-Minister-for-Infrastructure.pdf
[51] 2025-09-24-Transcript-Quarterly-Hearing-Minister-for-Infrastructure.pdf, p. 32
[52] 2025-11-03-Transcript-Minister-for-Infrastructure-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_2.pdf, p. 32

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

9. The Panel finds that the proposed liquid waste charging mechanism is insufficiently developed, with significant uncertainty around the £10 million revenue estimate, the costs of implementation, and the design of the charging model.
10. The Panel recommends that the Minister for Infrastructure undertake the necessary development work on the liquid waste charging model as a matter of priority.

Housing

Rent Tribunal

The Budget 2026 includes provision for the enforcement and implementation of the new *Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law*, which was approved by the States Assembly on 12th September 2025 (P.24/2025). This allocation includes £149,000 for establishing and operating the Rent Tribunal, which will be administered by the Judicial Greffe within its existing tribunal service.

The Panel sought early comments from the Judicial Greffier on this matter, who advised the Panel that the £149,000 allocation for the Rent Tribunal in 2026 comprises £95,000 for the Tribunal Service Registrar and set-up project management, £46,800 for the Chair, Deputy Chair and lay members, and £7,200 for interpreters. The allocation contains no flexibility beyond the estimated case volume, which is inherently uncertain given the absence of any precedent; any significant influx of cases would likely result in a backlog until a further business case could be approved. The Greffier confirmed that one-off establishment costs in 2026 include recruitment, administrative design work, and development of procedural and web materials, while preparatory work in 2025 has been absorbed within existing resources due to the later-than-expected debate on the primary legislation.[53]

The Panel highlights that total proposed allocation is based on an assumed volume of cases, which, as set out in its Scrutiny Report to the *Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law* (S.R.3/2025), remains speculative. The Judicial Greffier similarly cautioned that:[54]

> *"The business case should however be adequate to meet the estimated number of cases as it was based on known operational costs within the Tribunal Service and by using consistent day-rate allowances for the Tribunal Chair, Deputy Chair and lay-members."*

Finally, the Panel noted that the Budget 2026 only allocates £59,000 in Expenditure Growth to support the establishment of the Rent Tribunal,[55] however the Annex to the Budget included a further £90,000 transfer from the Employment, Social Security and Housing Department to the Cabinet Office,[56] prompting the Panel to seek clarification.

[53] Fax Cover
[54] Fax Cover, p. 2 (underlining has been added to reflect the italicisation in the original text)
[55] P-70-2025-Government-Plan-2026-29-CoM-INCL-CORRIGENDUM-CHANGES_1.pdf, p. 111
[56] Proposed Budget 2026 to 2029 Annex.pdf, p. 4

During a Review Public Hearing with the Minister for Housing, the Head of Strategic Housing and Regeneration advised that the £90,000 relates to a historic budget line created in 2021 to support earlier work on establishing a rent tribunal; however, the funding was incorrectly placed within Customer and Local Services while the employee carrying out the work sat within the Cabinet Office. The transfer therefore corrects this long-standing misallocation, with the funding to be moved to the Judicial Greffe only when the Tribunal becomes operational.[57]

Policy Agenda

While this year's Budget provides for the implementation of the new tenancy legislation, the Panel notes with concern that there is no new substantive policy development scheduled for 2026 within the Housing portfolio.

In his response to the Panel's letter dated 10th October 2025, the Minister for Housing set out the full list of projects intended for delivery by the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Team. Excluding the Residential Tenancy Law workstreams, the projects identified for 2026 are: [58]

- Social Rents Policy review and report to the States Assembly, in accordance with the requirements of P.29/2025 (as amended).
- Begin scoping and delivery of the property transaction process consultation, in accordance with the requirements of P.61/2025 (as amended).
- Homelessness in Jersey Report, quarterly data collection and reporting.
- Annual review of Social Housing Eligibility Criteria.
- Annual review of Assisted Purchase Schemes Eligibility Criteria.

Of the projects listed, only two amount to new non-business-as-usual policy work: the Social Rents Policy review required by P.29/2026 (as amended) and the initial scoping of the property transaction process consultation required by P.61/2025 (as amended). The remainder are routine review or operational commitments rather than substantive new policy development. The Panel is therefore disappointed that, beyond implementing the new *Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law*, the Housing portfolio has no dedicated programme of forward-looking policy work scheduled for 2026.

This is of particular concern given that housing affordability and access remain among the most acute pressures facing Islanders, with growing public expectation that Government should take a more proactive role in addressing systemic issues such as supply, affordability, and the effective use of existing housing stock.

Empty Homes

Notably, in October 2025, the Jersey Youth Assembly (the 'JYA') met at the request of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel to discuss the Budget 2026, with a particular focus on health, housing, and how public services should be funded. The JYA subsequently published the key findings from that discussion in a report, which highlighted that: [59]

[57] 2025-11-05-Transcript-Minister-for-Housing-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_1.pdf, pgs. 7-8
[58] Letter-Response-MH-Budget-2026-Review-Launch-22-October-2025.pdf
[59] https://statesassembly.je/getmedia/6085ed64-02e4-4abe-a980-ea2da2d9c487/JYA-Feedback-on-2026-Budget-to-CSSP-21-10-25.pdf?ext=.pdf

- Adding to the housing stock by repurposing empty properties ranked as the second most preferred policy option for improving access to housing,
- An empty homes tax was the highest single response out of fourteen initiatives to improve access to housing, and
- Numerous comments expressed frustration at abandoned or unused homes and a clear expectation that such properties should be brought back into use.

Overall, the JYA's feedback demonstrates a strong youth mandate for Government to treat empty homes as a priority housing issue and to invest in mechanisms that bring such properties back into use.

As such, the Panel decided to lodge an amendment to the Budget 2026, given the Minister for Housing's confirmation during the Review Public Hearing on 5th November 2025 that no new policy work on empty homes would commence in 2026 without dedicated funding. [60]

The amendment ringfences £250,000 within the Cabinet Office Head of Expenditure for the development of mechanisms to address empty residential properties. In determining this amount, the Panel noted the States Assembly's existing decision in P.48/2022, but recognising fiscal pressures, chose to allocate half of the previous £500,000 allocation.

FINDINGS
11. The Panel finds that, aside from implementing the Residential Tenancy Law, there is no substantive new housing policy development scheduled for 2026.
12. The Panel finds strong evidence from the Jersey Youth Assembly that empty homes should be treated as a policy priority, yet no work will be commenced without dedicated funding.

Conclusion

The Panel's review of this year's Budget reveals a notably uneven approach across the environment, infrastructure and housing portfolios.

The most serious concern lies within the Environment Department, where sustained financial compression, the erosion of specialist staffing, and mounting pressure on statutory functions now create clear risks to public health, biodiversity, regulatory compliance and Jersey's international obligations. The evidence demonstrates that the Department is already operating at the limits of its resilience; against this backdrop, the reductions proposed in this year's Budget do not constitute simple efficiencies but a material weakening of environmental capacity at a time when climate and ecological pressures are intensifying. This lowering of prioritisation is reflected both symbolically and substantively in the removal of the Climate Emergency from the Budget's Environmental Wellbeing Risk section, a decision that is inconsistent with the Department's own recognition of ongoing climate-related risks.

Infrastructure, by contrast, benefits from political prioritisation through the proposed Investing in Jersey Programme, which, while an important step toward long-term strategic planning, remains unclear. Critical decisions on governance, prioritisation

[60] 2025-11-05-Transcript-Minister-for-Housing-Proposed-Budget-2026-2029-Review-Hearing_1.pdf p. 5

criteria and the operation of the Jersey Capital Investment Fund have yet to be defined, leaving the Panel unconvinced that the Programme will fully overcome the short-termism it is designed to remedy.

Within the Housing portfolio, policy development has slowed markedly following the passage of the new *Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law*. While the Rent Tribunal is an essential component of delivering a fairer and clearer rental system, the lack of any wider programme of housing policy work in 2026 is a cause for concern, particularly given the severity of the Island's affordability and supply pressures. Evidence from the Jersey Youth Assembly reinforces that Islanders expect Government to act with urgency on addressing housing issues such as empty homes. The absence of funded workstreams suggests that housing policy is not being advanced at a pace proportionate to the lived pressures experienced by Islanders.

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference

1. To review components of the Proposed Budget 2026-2029 Proposition [P.70/2025] which are relevant to the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel to determine the following:
    a. The impact of the Budget proposals on departmental budgets, savings and staffing levels.

b. Whether the revenue expenditure growth, capital and other projects are appropriate and likely to have a positive impact on Islanders and Island life.
c. How the proposed revenue expenditure growth, capital and other projects align with the Common Strategic Policy to deliver on the priorities, and in line with the Departments' Business Plans.
d. Whether the resources allocated to revenue expenditure growth and capital and other projects are sufficient, ensure value for money and demonstrate the best use of public funds.

2. To assess the impact of the Budget proposals on the States Funds relevant to the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Panel including the Climate Emergency Fund, Jersey Car Parking Trading Fund, and Jersey Fleet Management Trading Fund.