Government of JERSEY

Deputy Hilary Jeune
Chair, Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel

23 October 2026

Dear Chair

Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030 Review

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October 2026 in relation to your panel's review of the Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030.

To assist the panel, I provide the following responses to your questions:

1. The Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030 establishes a standalone Planning and Regulation Head of Expenditure. During the Panel's Quarterly Hearing, officers identified that income and resources are key risks for the department. The Panel is therefore seeking to understand the sustainability of the proposed funding model and the extent to which delivery of the Department's statutory responsibilities is dependent upon achieving forecast income levels. To assist the Panel's review, please provide:
    a) A breakdown of the budgeted £5.7 million income by source:

Area of activity	Budget 2027 (£)	Notes
Planning application fees	2,265,350	
Building application fees	1,866,400	
Licence fees	843,750	Includes water discharge licence, tourism registration, food condemnation certifications, rented dwelling licences
Registration fees	517,750	Includes liquor licensing, waste management licences, ship sanitation certifications
Other fees	248,150	Includes places of refreshment, weights and measures, property and legal search (conveyancing) fees
Sale of goods	10,500	Map services
Hire and rentals income	3,700	
Miscellaneous income	400	
TOTAL	**5,756,000**	

    b) The assumptions underpinning those forecasts:

Assumptions for all income except Planning and Building application fees are based on historic trends and, where relevant, existing client base. Very little is expected to change for 2027.

Large projects requiring Planning and Building applications have been volatile over the last few years reflecting the downturn in the construction industry driven by wider macroeconomic pressures. However, these budgets remain optimistic as large one-off projects such as the new hospital are expected to materialise in 2027 improving overall yield.

c) The potential impact on service delivery should forecast income not be achieved:

The impact of any variation in income levels within Regulation is currently being managed through underspends on salaries (around £1,000,000) and other budget lines (such as training, testing costs and equipment). Service delivery with a 20% vacancy rate is being managed through an appropriate risk and task-based prioritisation approach.

d) Any contingency arrangements in place should fee income fall below forecast levels:

Financial security is assessed and managed in the same way as any other service risk, with continual monitoring and review by officers. Departmental budgets are regularly monitored, and appropriate actions are taken throughout the year to maintain a balanced financial position in accordance with established financial procedures. The risk is also formally recognised and monitored through the departmental risk register as Risk R-2827.

2. The Panel wishes to understand whether the staffing resources available to the Department will be sufficient to deliver its statutory responsibilities, planned work programme and proposed policy reforms during the period covered by the Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030. To assist the Panel's review, please provide:
   a) The number of posts that are currently vacant:

In the Regulation Directorate vacancy rate is 20% at present (21 vacancies out of 107 FTE posts). This includes posts in which incumbent officers will be leaving due to retirement or resignation by the end of 2026.

The vacancy breakdown for each service is as follows:
Development and Land: 37 FTE – 7 vacancies
Regulatory Improvement and Licensing 29 FTE – 5 vacancies (including Head of Service vacant since January 2026)
Environmental and Consumer Protection 41 FTE – 9 vacancies

b) The number of vacancies that are subject to recruitment restrictions:

There is a general recruitment freeze across government, and all recruitment proposals require a Workforce Expenditure Approval Request (WEAR) to be agreed by the Chief Executive and Treasury. Additional approval is required for recruitment at Grade 14 or above (typically Head of Service positions). Limited recruitment is being undertaken in Regulation at present, mainly in order to manage the Directorate's budget due to forecasted income (as outlined in financial information above). The recruitment freeze does, however, allow for recruitment to essential roles which, if not filled, would create a risk to the public and / or the non-fulfilment of our statutory responsibilities, which includes some Regulation roles.

c) Details of any functions or services where staffing levels are affecting the Department's ability to deliver its responsibilities:

The Regulation Directorate's statutory responsibilities continue to be delivered with existing staffing levels by following an appropriate risk and task prioritisation approach to service delivery. Continued vacancies in senior and pivotal roles may in the longer term affect the speed of delivery of projects and legislative changes.

3. The Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030 includes measures relating to planning reform and future review of the island plan. During the Panel's quarterly hearing, you advised that certain planning policies may be inhibiting economic growth or limiting the ability of Islanders to improve their homes. Please provide further information on:
    a) The policies currently being reviewed:

The Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030 seeks to support delivery of the priorities identified in the proposed Common Strategic Policy 2026 to 2030. These include specific planning reform measures to revise the bridging island plan to facilitate economic growth and sustainable development and to review supplementary planning guidance, rules and regulations, particularly to enable Islanders to improve their homes and businesses to expand.

Work is continuing to identify those elements of the island plan and wider planning framework that may benefit from review in support of these objectives. This includes consideration not only of planning policies, but also supplementary planning guidance and permitted development rights.

Work is already under way to consider revision of some supplementary planning guidance and the extension of permitted development rights. The scope and priorities for revision of island plan policies have not yet been finalised. It would, therefore, be premature to identify specific policies for change before the relevant evidence and assessment have been completed.

    b) The evidence base supporting those reviews:

The Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030 supports delivery of the priorities identified in the proposed Common Strategic Policy 2026 to 2030, including its commitments to facilitate economic growth and sustainable development and to create a simpler and more proportionate regulatory environment.

The evidence base required to support these objectives is being developed alongside the identification of areas for review. Any proposed changes will be evidence-led and informed by experience as to how the existing planning framework operates, having regard to appropriate economic, social and environmental considerations.

This will include assessing whether existing requirements remain necessary and proportionate and whether particular objectives might be achieved more effectively through changes to island plan policy or other elements of the current planning framework.

    c) The anticipated benefits of any proposed changes:

As the scope and evidence base for the revision of island plan policies is still being developed, it would be premature to specify or quantify the benefits of individual changes. The overall objective of any revision, however, would be to ensure that the planning framework remains effective and proportionate, supports appropriate development and does not impose unnecessary regulatory burdens.

These objectives may be delivered through changes to island plan policy or, where more appropriate, through other elements of the planning framework, including supplementary planning guidance and permitted development rights.

    d) How these proposals support the wider objectives of the Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030:

The Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030 supports delivery of the priorities identified in the proposed Common Strategic Policy 2026 to 2030. The proposed Common Strategic Policy identifies restoring Jersey's competitiveness as a strategic priority and includes commitments to revise the island plan to facilitate economic growth and sustainable development and to review supplementary planning guidance, rules and regulations. It also seeks to create a simpler and more proportionate regulatory environment while maintaining appropriate safeguards.

The planning reform programme will support these objectives by considering the planning framework as a whole and identifying where change can facilitate appropriate investment and development whilst having regard to relevant environmental, heritage and wider public interests. This is not limited to changes to island plan policy and may include changes to supplementary planning guidance and permitted development rights where these provide a more effective and proportionate means of achieving the Government's objectives.

4. The Panel notes that the proposals outlined above (in point 3) align with commitments contained within the Common Strategic Policy 2026 to 2030 relating to reducing regulation and red tape, including within the planning system. The Panel wishes to understand how these objectives will be delivered in practice and balanced against other public interests. To assist the Panel's review, please provide:
    a) Information on how proposed planning reforms will balance the objectives of facilitating economic growth and reducing regulatory burdens with the protection of Jersey's natural environment, built heritage and wider public interest:

Planning reform will be directed towards ensuring that regulation is necessary, proportionate and effective, rather than removing appropriate safeguards. In considering potential changes to the island plan or wider planning framework, regard will continue to be given to environmental, heritage and other relevant public interests.

Proposed changes to any part of the planning framework will be subject to appropriate engagement and consultation and independent scrutiny. Representations received will always be taken into account and changes to island plan policy will be subject to the relevant statutory process, including the approval of the States Assembly.

The intention is to identify where processes or regulatory requirements can be simplified or made more proportionate without undermining the legitimate planning objectives they are intended to secure.

    b) Details of the aspects of the island plan that the Government considers require review or amendment during the period covered by the Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030, including the evidence supporting any proposed changes and the anticipated timetable for delivery:

As stated above, work is continuing to identify those elements of the island plan and wider planning framework that may benefit from revision to deliver the objectives of planning reform. The scope and priorities for revision of island plan policies have not yet been finalised. The evidence base for change will be developed as part of this work and will draw on experience of the operation and application of existing policies, together with relevant economic, social and environmental considerations. It would, therefore, be premature to identify specific policies for change before the relevant evidence and assessment have been completed.

The timescale for revision of the island plan will depend upon the nature and scope of any proposed changes. It is, however, anticipated that this work will be progressed during 2027, with a more detailed timetable to be published in due course.

c) Information on how the Department assesses whether planning policies, regulatory requirements or associated fees have a disproportionate impact on smaller businesses, householders or community organisations when applying the principle of proportionality:

The principle of proportionality requires consideration of whether the regulatory requirements applied are appropriate to the nature, scale and likely impact of the development concerned, relative to the planning objectives they are intended to secure. As part of the planning reform programme, consideration will, therefore, be given as to whether existing planning policies, regulatory requirements and associated fees impose unnecessary or disproportionate burdens, particularly on smaller businesses, householders and community organisations.

This will include consideration of the scale and nature of the regulatory burden, relative to the planning issue being addressed, and whether the same objective could be achieved through a simpler or less burdensome mechanism, including whether regulation is actually required. Depending on the issue concerned, this could include changes to guidance, regulatory requirements and associated fees or planning policy.

The objective is not to remove necessary safeguards, but to ensure that the level of regulation is proportionate to the planning issues and public interests involved. This reflects the proposed Common Strategic Policy commitment to reduce unnecessary regulation, whilst maintaining appropriate protection and standards.

I look forward to meeting the panel next month to discuss these matters in more detail.

Yours sincerely

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