

To:

Deputy Miles
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
States Greffe: Scrutiny
Morier House
St. Helier
JE1 1DD

14 November 2025

Dear Deputy Miles

Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel

Proposed Budget 2026-2029 Review – additional questions

Thank you for your letter to me of 11 November 2025 requesting further information in relation to the business case for the Living Costs and Household Income Survey (LCHIS) submitted by Statistics Jersey as part of the 2026-29 Budget process. I have listed your questions below, along with my responses.

1. In your submission you made references to business cases submitted by Statistics Jersey for the Survey in previous years (2024-2027 and 2025-2028), and that these were also rejected. Can you provide a brief explanation as to why these were rejected, and the subsequent impact on Statistics Jersey and the Survey workstream?

Answer:

For the 2024-2027 and 2025-2028 Government Plans/Budgets, I provided briefing, including to the Council of Ministers, but I was not party to the reasons for decisions on those government plans/budget.

For the 2026-29 Government Budget, the more formal and transparent process meant that, as I mentioned in my 20 October letter to the panel, the decision not to include the LCHIS in the 2026-2029 Government Budget was that funding is not required until 2027 and so should be funded under the Government Budget 2027-30.

The survey has been run every five years since at least 1998, except during the pandemic; the last survey was in 2021-22.

- The Government Plan 2024-27 business case envisaged the survey starting in spring 2025 if ministers wanted results to be available before the next election
- The Government Budget 2025-28 business case envisaged the survey starting in March 2026, five years after the last run of the survey
- The Government Budget 2026-29 business case envisages the survey starting in March 2027, six years after the last run of the survey.

Statistics Jersey has no core funding for this survey, so the business cases not being included in the earlier government plan/budgets therefore meant that the survey was not run.

The impact of this is primarily on users of the statistics produced by the survey. If the survey is run in 2027 this will be a year later than the usual cycle, which means that the updating of the RPI basket of goods; the production of the income distribution (and definitive median wage estimate) and expenditure reports will be a year later than the usual cycle.

2. The Panel notes from your submission that the funding requested by Statistics Jersey from the business case submitted through the current Budget process, highlights a funding request of £393,000 in 2027, £281,000 in 2028 and £22,000 in 2029. Please can you provide more context about the funding requests for 2027, 2028 and 2029 included as part of the current Budget process?

Answer:

The Living Costs and Household Income Survey is the sole source of important statistical information such as: the definitive measure of median wages; households in Relative Low Income; the proportion of renters classed as living in rental stress; and expenditure analyses (which has been used, for instance, in tax modelling).

The expenditure data is also required to update the "basket of goods" for the Jersey Retail Prices Index to keep the RPI representative of islanders spending patterns. The Jersey RPI is the key inflation measure in Jersey and is linked by statute to the uplift of the state pension.

The LCHIS consists of two parts:

- A household survey conducted face-to-face in households, collecting detailed income and expenditure data;
- A two-week spending diary completed by each member of the household, detailing their expenditure over the two-week period

The survey needs to be run for a year to collect spending patterns of households across the year as households buy different products in the summer than the winter – this is important for the RPI basket of goods weights. The collection across a year also enables the required 1,100 survey responses to be obtained to provide reliable results.

The project will broadly follow the previously established methodology, with fieldworker and office staff recruited on fixed-term contracts for the project duration, with support provided by existing Statistics Jersey staff. The business case preferred option envisages the survey starting in March 2027 with the survey data collection phase lasting approximately 13 months in total, with the overall project spanning just over 2-years. A spring start to the survey is preferred as this means fewer people on holiday and lighter evenings as the survey ramps up and field staff become familiar with their roles.

Staffing for the project would include:

- A statistician role from the start of 2027 to manage the project, design the sampling, and conduct the analysis
- Five FTE fieldworkers employed for approximately 15 months (the survey period plus some additional time beforehand for training and afterwards for debriefing and closure)
- Two FTE office staff are required for a similar period to manage the fieldwork and perform the data entry.

The 2027 costs are primarily for nine months of survey fieldwork, and the 2028 costs are for four months of survey fieldwork followed by data capture, analyses, and production of the income distribution report. The small costs in 2029 cover the analyses and production of the Expenditure report.

As I mentioned in my 20 October 2027 letter, the government budget process has proven difficult for allocation of funding to Statistics Jersey in advance for periodic (but predictable) activities such as the LCHIS (and, in due course, the 2031 Census).

Although not the recommended option, the business case did include an option for a continuous Living Costs and Household Income Survey, which would solve the need for periodic business cases. This would involve the establishment of a small permanent field team that would enable ongoing data collection. The field team would be approximately half the size of the team required for the recommended option and the required sample would be collected over the course of two years, rather than one.

Once established, such a rolling program would enable reporting on a more frequent basis (every two years rather than four) and also provide more flexibility around when analysis can occur. This option is, however, more expensive, which is why it was not the recommended option. The business case costs for this option were £389k each year from 2027 onwards, with a 2027-29 cost of £1.167m as compared to total costs of £696k for the recommended option.

3. Please can you clarify whether funding is required by Statistics Jersey for the Survey preparations to take place in the latter half of 2026 and, if so, the amount and detail of how the funding identified is to be used in 2026?

Answer:

There will be a small amount of preparation and set-up of the survey during 2026, including:

- Starting the process to recruit office and survey field staff
- Setting up databases to hold the survey results
- Updating the spending diary to make it easier to complete

I estimate these activities as costing around £25k, but budget for these activities was not included in the business case as we will need existing experienced staff to do this set-up, and I plan to absorb these costs within business-as-usual resources.

4. Should you not require funding for the Survey in 2026, please can you provide the rationale for including the funding request for allocation as part of the current Budget process, rather than the Proposed Budget (Government Plan) 2027-2030?

Answer:

There are two reasons why I submitted the business case for consideration as part of the 2026-29 Government Budget process:

1. The [Proposed Budget 2026 to 2029.pdf](#) includes 'The budget sets out the income and expenditure proposals for the next 4 years'. LCHIS has costs in the last three years of the budget and so, in the interests of effective financial planning, it seemed appropriate to submit the business case for this budget, as the survey is a known expenditure pressure.
2. Starting the survey in March 2027 will require:
 - a) Statistics Jersey to recruit survey office staff to start working in January 2027
 - b) To recruit survey field staff to be available in February 2027 so that they can be inducted and trained in time to start survey collection in March 2027.

The above will require Statistics Jersey to start the recruitment process of both office and survey field staff during the latter part of 2026 (probably in around September 2026 for the office staff, and November/December 2026 for the survey field staff).

Typically, recruitment is only allowed to start when funding has been approved and is in budgets. My concern was that if the business case was only included in the 2027-30 government budget, that budget will only be approved by the States Assembly in December 2026, which would mean that the recruitment could not start on time, and the survey could be delayed by three to four months.

Including the funding for the LCHIS in the 2026-29 budget would provide certainty of funding for 2027 onwards, which would allow recruitment to start on time, and with confidence, in the latter part of 2026.

I trust that the information above provides full responses to your additional questions. If you need further information, I am happy to provide it.

Yours sincerely,



Ian Cope

Chief Statistician

Email: Chiefstatistician@stats.je

Statistics Jersey | PO Box 140 |