Probation and **After-Care** Service

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BY EMAIL

29 October 2026

Dear Deputy Li

Proposed Budget 2027-2030 Review

Thank you for your letter of 15th October giving me an opportunity to comment on the potential impact of the proposed budget.

In summary, the Probation Service has carefully reviewed service priorities with our Finance Business Partner. In the past seven years, the Service has been able to achieve underspends, and we intend to continue tight fiscal management throughout our future work. The Treasury Minister proposed a £40k recurring annual saving but we have responded recommending that £20k is more realistic given some of the uncertainties about the impact of proposed forthcoming legislation including mandatory post custodial supervision and laws to address domestic abuse.

The demand on the Service has been consistent over the past five years. We are aware that there are plans to introduce a law providing for mandatory post custodial supervision of prisoners. At present, the exact scope of the law has not been decided but the Service has been provided with two extra probation officer posts to address any increase in work. We believe that this extra resource is likely to be sufficient for a proportionate, targeted and carefully considered scheme. Currently, released prisoners are offered voluntary assistance upon release but less than 10% take up this offer; it is often utilised by ex-prisoners to receive ongoing probation support as a condition of tenancies.

Aware that Jersey has a higher rate of imprisonment per capita than the UK and most nations in western Europe, the Service is keen to continue to promote alternatives to custody. A significant change in sentencing policy is likely to provide more work for the community service scheme, and we will need to monitor this. As an aside, the relatively poor rate of pay for community service supervisors, allied to an extremely challenging clientele, has made recruitment difficult. At the time of writing, the job description for the supervisor post is being re-evaluated.

The Service appreciates the assistance of the government in supporting growth bids in the past five years. This has enabled the recruitment of a trainee probation officer which has formed an important part of our succession planning. Growth bids have also made it possible to afford a

new case management system, external inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation as well as essential resources for the community service scheme. I do not recall submitting a growth bid that has not been funded.

The Panel may be aware that the Service has not submitted a growth bid under the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) initiative. Although we accept that the prediction is for more arrests, there must be some uncertainty about the volume of perpetrators who will be presented to court and convicted. Our stance is to monitor the position before making any bid for extra staff. As an interim measure, should the volume of work expand significantly, we would consider reallocating work within the team to ensure that public protection was prioritised. We have used a similar strategy to cope with recent additional demands on community service that has seen us redeploy a post to assist with the scheme.

Currently, we can deliver 1-1 domestic abuse and sex offender interventions in the community and to some prisoners. We are also able to offer a domestic abuse intervention to voluntary and non-convicted self-referrals who want to address attitudes or behaviours of concern.

More broadly, managing high risk offenders remains a priority and the Service employs a co-ordinator of the Jersey Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (JMAPPA) who chairs meetings and supervises a small caseload. Offenders who are assessed as posing the highest risk of harm to others are only supervised by qualified probation officers and this is not proving problematic in terms of resourcing. We do not believe that the budget proposals will affect this given recent sentencing trends.

Your letter asks about funding for young people before they enter the criminal justice system. I think the Children's Service, Education and Youth Services might be in a better position to answer this as they are more involved in early help. I should add that there are some promising initiatives through the Building a Safer Community school initiative in which we participate. The family support service managed by the Children's Service also seems to demonstrate some positive results.

Although the Service attempts to keep growth bids to an absolute minimum and in circumstances where other alternatives have been carefully considered, I think it is timely to raise some emerging operational pressures within our Jersey Family Court Advisory Service (JFCAS). JFCAS is a small team of one manager and four social workers (one part-time). As workload and complexity has increased, the manager has assumed responsibility for a caseload in addition to an important role on the recently formed Jersey Family Justice Council which is focussed on strategic improvement. A review by the Comptroller and Auditor General, that is due to be published shortly, supports the department's view that the Island's drive to develop family court practice has led to extra demands on JFCAS that could be difficult to meet unless adequately resourced. The department is continuing to monitor this situation but will have to consider the possibility of requesting extra resource in 2027 to meet this rising demand.

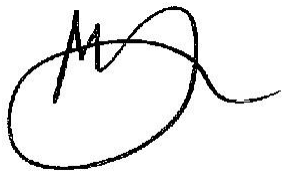
In conclusion, the Service has undertaken profiling work with our Finance Business Partner that we believe allow us to maintain key services for the next four years. An exception to this is likely to be the resource requirements for JFCAS.

It is prudent thought to exercise a note of caution in any forecasting as there will be circumstances beyond the Service's control that will impact on demand. A key determinant will be the resource implications of the proposed post custodial supervision legislation. A law that entails every sentenced prisoner receiving mandatory probation supervision will result in considerable extra work and necessitate consideration of whether the two allocated posts will be sufficient. A more nuanced approach is more likely to be manageable within the resources provided.

Another situation outside of the Service's control relates to any change of sentencing policy. For example, a sustained increase in offenders being sentenced to community service orders would result in the department having to consider purchasing extra vehicles and employing further part-time supervisors. There will, of course, be the added expenses of extra fuel for travel and the purchase and maintenance of more equipment. Whilst the Service will do its best to absorb growing demand, there is sometimes a "tipping point" where, in the interests of efficiency and staff well-being, a case needs to be made for extra resource.

I hope this assists but please contact me if I can answer any subsequent questions.

Yours sincerely



MJ Cutland
Chief Probation Officer