JERSEY
Chamber of Commerce

Chamber House, 19, Royal Square, St. Helier, Jersey JE2 4WA

12th November 2026

Dear Chairs and Panel Members,

Thank you for inviting Jersey Chamber of Commerce to contribute to your reviews of the Proposed Budget 2027 to 2030.

As agreed, Chamber is providing one consolidated response to the Corporate Services, Economic and International Affairs, and Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panels. We are grateful for this opportunity to bring business experience and sector perspectives into the Scrutiny process.

This response draws together contributions received through our committees, committee chairs and President. It concentrates on the areas on which feedback was received, rather than providing an exhaustive assessment of every Budget proposal.

Overall direction and competitiveness

There is much in the Budget that Chamber welcomes. The emphasis on economic growth, competitiveness, infrastructure, Government efficiency and reducing administrative burdens broadly reflects priorities that Chamber has consistently advocated.
The principal challenge is delivery. Businesses experience Government through planning decisions, recruitment requirements, regulatory processes, infrastructure and the overall cost of operating in Jersey. The Budget's ambitions must translate into visible improvements in these areas.
We welcome the prominence given to competitiveness, including the Time to Win measures intended to simplify tax and regulation and strengthen Jersey's international appeal. However, this agenda must extend across the economy, including construction, retail, hospitality, tourism, agriculture, digital businesses, professional services and smaller enterprises.
Government should make competitiveness measurable through published improvements in planning times, regulatory processes, administrative requirements and the speed of decisions affecting businesses.

Government efficiency, spending and productivity

Chamber supports the ambition for a leaner, less complex and more affordable public sector. Businesses have faced substantial increases in operating costs and have had to improve efficiency. Government should demonstrate the same discipline.

Scrutiny should distinguish genuine productivity improvements from accounting adjustments, deferred expenditure or reductions in service capacity. Government should identify which recurring savings will come from simpler processes, reduced duplication, better procurement and digitalisation.

Feedback also questions how the savings programme will be delivered and whether sufficient investment is being provided to enable improvement. Across the board percentage reductions would not, by themselves, demonstrate a credible productivity strategy.

One Chamber committee raised concerns about the apparent reduction in the Digital Services budget between 2026 and 2027. Scrutiny should examine whether the proposed resources are consistent with the digital transformation required to deliver savings, improve services and reduce bureaucracy. Government should explain whether, and how, a proportion of savings will be reinvested in further improvements.

We also encourage examination of the relationship between the scale, timing and composition of Government expenditure, inflationary pressures and the tax burden. This should distinguish investment that expands productive capacity from expenditure that adds demand without addressing constraints.

An efficient Government is itself part of Jersey's economic infrastructure. Every unnecessary form, duplicated process and delayed decision creates costs elsewhere in the economy.

The cumulative cost of doing business

Government policies are often assessed individually, while businesses experience their combined effects. Employment costs, taxation, regulation, waste charges, transport costs and other requirements all contribute to the same business cost base. Measures that appear manageable in isolation can collectively reduce investment, recruitment and viability, particularly in labour intensive sectors and businesses operating on narrow margins.

Chamber therefore asks Government to assess the cumulative impact of policy decisions on the cost of doing business, including their effects on different sectors and sizes of enterprise. This assessment should inform both the Budget and future decisions on taxes, charges and regulation.

Supporting households, employment and skills

We welcome the proposed increases in the personal income tax threshold to £21,850, the child allowance to £4,050, the additional child allowance to £6,050, childcare tax relief to £8,300 and enhanced childcare relief to £21,550.

Alongside the proposed expansion of funded nursery hours for children aged two to three, these measures could help parents remain in employment, return to work or increase their working hours. Their effectiveness will depend on eligibility, nursery capacity and provision that accommodates shift work and variable hours. We encourage Scrutiny to examine these practical considerations alongside the financial support proposed.

The recognition of lifelong learning as a strategic priority is also welcome. Employers and training providers would benefit from greater clarity on funding and delivery arrangements for adult retraining, apprenticeships and vocational progression.

A workforce and skills plan should identify responsibilities, resources and intended outcomes across the Budget period. Measures should include training completion, sustained employment, career progression and changes in employer reported skills gaps. Provision should be developed with businesses and training providers, with particular attention to smaller employers, people returning to work and those working variable hours.

Time to Win, digital skills and artificial intelligence

We recognise the importance of improving the competitiveness of financial and related professional services through Time to Win, including its objectives for better use of digital technology.

With funding held centrally pending allocation, greater detail is needed on delivery timescales, allocation arrangements and how workforce development and retraining will support the programme. Businesses across the wider economy should also be able to access practical digital skills and productivity support.

Feedback identifies a need for a clearer and adequately resourced approach to artificial intelligence. References to AI in strategic policy should be supported by practical plans for adoption across Government, staff training and the redesign of processes.

The Panels should also examine how education and training will prepare young people and the existing workforce to use AI effectively. Employers need clarity about the support available to develop these capabilities and translate them into productivity gains.

Planning and regulation

The creation of a standalone Planning and Regulation Department offers an opportunity for clearer ministerial accountability, greater focus and improved service delivery.

Planning reform matters across the economy. It affects housing supply, commercial investment, infrastructure, productivity and the cost of living. Greater certainty about what can be built, where development is appropriate and when decisions will be made could unlock private investment without requiring substantial additional Government expenditure.

However, feedback raises concerns that planning fees already affect development viability. A funding model dependent on application income is also exposed to fluctuations in the number and scale of applications.

Government should be prepared to meet any funding shortfall without relying automatically on higher fees. Scrutiny should consider whether a greater contribution from general revenues, alongside lower application costs, could encourage investment while maintaining effective regulation.

The success of the new arrangements should be judged by service quality, timely decisions and their contribution to sustainable economic activity.

Wastewater infrastructure and development capacity

Investment in drainage and sewage infrastructure is essential to housing delivery, commercial development and resilience.

Feedback identifies the St John Main Road sewer and the St Peter storage tank as examples of infrastructure that enables development. The proposed Maufant foul water attenuation tank is highlighted as a priority, with delays reported to be holding back identified development.

It is difficult to assess the adequacy of the proposed funding without clearer information on individual project costs, delivery programmes and the development capacity each scheme would unlock. Scrutiny should seek this information and examine how investment priorities align with planned housing and commercial development.

Liquid waste charges and future transport charges

The proposed liquid waste charging regime from 2028 raises concerns about additional costs for businesses and households, fairness and administrative complexity.

Before implementation, Government should explain:

- How charges would be calculated and whether business and domestic users would be treated differently.
- How water used in products or processes, which does not enter the sewerage network, would be accounted for.
- How privately abstracted water entering the network would be measured.
- What collection, administration and enforcement would cost, and how much net revenue would remain for investment.

- How receipts would be protected for drainage and sewage infrastructure within the proposed capital funding arrangements.
- What the economic impact would be across different sectors and sizes of business.

The need for infrastructure investment is accepted. However, Government should first demonstrate the scope to fund it through efficiencies and reductions in day-to-day expenditure. Any new charge should be supported by a transparent assessment of affordability, economic impact and value for money.

The same principles should apply to any future replacement for fuel duty. Commercial fleets, logistics businesses and tradespeople depend on vehicles to operate and may have limited scope to reduce their use. Policy design must recognise these practical constraints and the cumulative burden on businesses.

Infrastructure maintenance, public realm and regeneration

A flat cash allocation for the Infrastructure Rolling Vote represents a reduction in purchasing power as costs rise. Feedback raises concerns that the proposed funding may be insufficient to address deterioration in roads, drains and sea defences while meeting future development and climate resilience requirements.

Separate public realm funding is welcome, but it should not obscure the adequacy of funding for essential maintenance and renewal.

Road condition matters to businesses, residents, visitors and potential investors. Improvements to the cycle network also merit consideration for their contribution to wellbeing and lower carbon travel, alongside continued investment in roads.

For public realm improvements and neighbourhood regeneration in St Helier, a clearer schedule of projects, costs and intended benefits is needed before the adequacy of the allocations can be assessed. Projects should demonstrate practical value to communities and businesses, with transparent prioritisation.

Carbon Neutral Roadmap and green skills

Chamber supports a practical approach to reducing emissions that recognises both the climate challenge and the financial pressures facing businesses and households.

Committee feedback questions whether sufficient tangible delivery and measurable benefit have emerged from the work undertaken to date. The revised Roadmap should set out clear actions, costs, delivery dates and expected emissions reductions, with funding assessed against demonstrable outcomes.

Vehicle transition policy should take account of the availability and affordability of vehicles supplied through the UK market, including implications for Jersey's new and used vehicle markets.

Support for low carbon heating, carbon literacy and green skills should translate into practical training and recognised qualifications. Early engagement with employers and training providers will help ensure the Island has the capacity to deliver the intended changes.

Capital investment, procurement and delivery

A central concern is the gap between announcing capital investment and delivering projects to the stated timetable.

Chamber remains broadly supportive of the Jersey Capital Investment Fund and the Island Construction and Engineering programme. Businesses nevertheless need greater clarity on how these arrangements will improve project preparation, funding allocation, procurement and delivery.

In particular, we encourage the Panels to seek:

- Clear governance and allocation arrangements for the Jersey Capital Investment Fund, including how projects will be assessed and prioritised.
- Consideration of independent expertise within its governance arrangements.
- Regular updates to the infrastructure pipeline, showing project readiness, approval stages, procurement routes and anticipated start dates.
- A clear connection between strategic priorities, Budget allocations and the infrastructure programme.
- Early engagement with local contractors and supply chains, enabling them to plan recruitment, apprenticeships, equipment purchases and investment.
- Regular reporting of planned and actual expenditure, delivery milestones, reasons for slippage and corrective action.

The stated £921 million programme over four years represents a substantial economic opportunity. Its value will depend on a credible and deliverable pipeline, supported by sufficient capacity to move projects through approvals, planning, procurement and construction.

Delays and underspending should not automatically be regarded as savings. Where infrastructure remains necessary, postponement can increase eventual costs, prolong constraints and weaken business confidence.

For illustration, at an assumed annual construction inflation rate of 6%, delaying a £4 million project by a year would add approximately £240,000 to the cost of delivering the same work. This is an illustrative scenario, rather than a forecast, but demonstrates why the financial consequences of delay should be recognised.

Capital cost assessments should reflect relevant construction costs and project risks, rather than relying solely on retail price inflation. Timely procurement and stronger engagement with local supply chains would also help retain more of the economic benefit within Jersey.

Healthcare capital expenditure and financial resilience

Feedback raises particular concern about the risk of significant capital overspending on the new healthcare facilities. This should be examined as a material risk to the wider Budget, rather than treated as an inevitable outcome.

Scrutiny should seek assurance on cost estimates, contingencies, independent challenge, procurement and the reporting of changes to scope or forecast expenditure. The potential consequences for other infrastructure commitments and Jersey's financial position should be made clear.

More broadly, Chamber supports a cautious approach to unexpected or potentially temporary revenues. Receipts above previous expectations should not automatically support permanently higher recurring expenditure.

Using temporary revenues to strengthen reserves or invest in productive infrastructure would provide a more sustainable foundation. Strong public finances also give Government greater capacity to respond to weaker economic conditions without immediately imposing additional costs on households and businesses.

Chamber supports the Budget's emphasis on growth, competitiveness, modern infrastructure and an efficient Government. Our principal requests are for measurable improvements in services affecting businesses, genuine public sector productivity, assessment of cumulative business costs, a credible capital programme and a competitiveness agenda that reaches the whole economy.

Sustainable prosperity depends on productive businesses investing, employing people, innovating and growing. The test of this Budget will be how quickly and effectively its ambitions create the conditions for them to do so.

We welcome the opportunity to provide our feedback and welcome any further sector input where helpful.

Kind regards,

Murray Norton
Chief Executive Officer
Jersey Chamber of Commerce

Yours sincerely,



Murray Norton, Chief Executive
Jersey Chamber of Commerce