By email from statisticscouncil@gov.je 08 November 2026

Deputy Lyndsay Feltham
Chair
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel

Dear Deputy Feltham

Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel's review of the Proposed Budget 2027-2030

Thank you for your letter of 13 October. You asked for comments from the Statistics Council in relation to the funding and resourcing for Statistics Jersey and delivery of the broader statistical system, and in particular three specific questions. Council members have been consulted, and I am submitting this response on behalf of the Council.

The Jersey Statistics Council was established in June 2025 following amendments to the Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018. It held its first formal meeting in September 2025 and has met four times in total. Its first annual report was published on 1 October 2026 as States Assembly | R.158/2026.

The primary functions of the Council are:

a. advising public authorities on the production, use, quality, relevance and integrity of the statistics they produce that describe, on a representative basis, the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation in Jersey; and

b. advising generally in relation to Tier 1 statistics.

But importantly we have specific responsibilities to

a. Gather and present the views of **statistical users**, and

b. Provide a neutral forum for **statistics users** to interact with the Chief Statistician; the Statistics Jersey team (being the Office of the Chief Statistician); and other producers of statistics in public authorities on the production, use quality, relevance and integrity of Tier 1 statistics,

c. Respect, uphold, and defend the independence of the Chief Statistician and the Jersey Statistical System (JSS).

Specifically, the legislation states that the Council may use its annual report "*to report any concerns that it has in relation to the funding, resourcing and independence of the Chief Statistician and the Jersey Statistical System*".

We therefore welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel review of the Proposed Budget 2027-2030.

1. What discussions have taken place regarding the Proposed Budget 2027-2030 allocations in relation to Statistics Jersey?

The Chief Statistician attends each meeting of the Statistics Council in an advisory capacity.

In December 2025 he provided the Council with an opportunity to discuss his previous submissions to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel as part of the Panel's review of the 2026-2029 budget: 2025-10-20-Submission-Statistics-Jersey.pdf; 2025-11-14-Submission-Statistics-Jersey.pdf. These documents provided a broad overview of the resourcing environment for Statistics Jersey. We also had an opportunity to consider the historical evolution of the Statistics Jersey budget.

Further to this meeting the Council was provided with an opportunity to review and consider two business cases submitted by Statistics Jersey relating to (a) funding for administrative resources to support the additional activity arising from amendments to the Statistics Law; and, (b) funding of the Living Costs and Household Income Survey.

The Council was provided with an opportunity to comment on a draft of the Chief Statistician's Annual Report 2025.

In July 2026 the Council attended a joint meeting with the Statistics and Analytics Departmental Leads to hear about the challenges and aspirations across the wider statistical system.

We are aware that the recent budget allocations to Statistics Jersey represent a steady state, but some concerns remain around the future sustainability of delivery as set out below.

2. How will the Proposed Budget 2027-2030 allocations impact Statistics Jersey, including any impacts on service delivery, and have any concerns been raised or recommendations made?

Based on discussions to date the Council would like to highlight three key areas for consideration by the Scrutiny Panel.

(i) Funding for activities arising from the 2025 amendments to the Stats Law

There are three specific areas in which the amendments to the Law introduce requirements on the Chief Statistician that carry resource implications, including:

- Producing a separate annual report and accounts detailing the performance and functions of the Chief Statistician;
- Producing the strategy for the JSS and formal co-ordination of the JSS, including secretarial functions for the Statistical Producers Group; and
- Conducting the ordinary programme of reviews and occasional extraordinary reviews of tier 1 statistics

In 2025 the Chief Statistician submitted a business case for a minimum option of a Business Support Manager, and for approximately £50k per year to secure statistical expertise to undertake tier 1 reviews.

Although the business case was not supported, on 5 September 2025 the Chief Officer of the Cabinet Office stated that "*The Cabinet Office and Treasury and Resources will continue to support Statistics Jersey in meeting its new statutory obligations, including the production of the annual report and accounts. As demonstrated in 2024, this can be achieved without additional resources and while it is recognised that this may present some challenges, this decision reflects the difficult balancing act required in the current fiscal environment.*" An amendment lodged by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel to provide Statistics Jersey with the business support to fulfil the additional functions in the Statistics Law did not pass.

As we understand, the Cabinet Office has not provided the Chief Statistician nor Statistics Jersey with business support although, as the Chief Statistician references in his response, a review of business support in Cabinet Office is underway and might provide some such resource.

We are aware that the 2024 annual report published in July 2025 was supported by a contractor, but, although Statistics Jersey had the budget in 2026 to repeat that support, government restrictions on the use of contractors prevented this. Consequently, much of the work was undertaken personally by the Chief Statistician which is neither a good use of his skills nor is it cost-effective.

The criteria for designation as tier 1 statistics are set out in full in the Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018. These include that the category refers to statistics that are 'essential to critical decision-making' and 'of high public interest'. The Council has a function to advise any person or body on these statistics including on the criteria for reviews of tier 1 statistics. Reviews of tier 1 statistics have not yet commenced, but the Council is concerned that within the current allocation Statistics Jersey will have neither the capacity to manage such reviews nor the resources to secure the necessary expertise to conduct them.

Currently only Statistics Jersey produces tier 1 statistics, but the Council is keen to see this designation extended to statistics produced by public bodies outside of Statistics Jersey such as crime statistics and exam results statistics. As this develops the ability to ensure the quality, integrity and consistency of such statistics will become increasingly important.

(ii) Funding for survey advice and control across government

Surveys undertaken by government departments or public bodies can be used to inform or justify policy decisions, resource allocation, inform debate, and often claim to represent the views of the public. If such surveys are not properly designed they risk being unrepresentative, biased, and failing to provide information which is fit for the purpose for which it was intended. This is not only damaging to the legitimacy and quality of decision making but also represents a waste of public money.

Statistics Jersey has no post dedicated to advising Departments on surveys and consultations before they go live. The Council would argue that the lack of such a post is

probably a false economy and the matter has been raised by individuals outside of the Jersey Statistical System. The Council is aware that such a post is funded in Guernsey, and the job description can be found at Consultation and Survey Support Officer.

(iii) Security of funding for periodic, but predictable, surveys

The Council recognises that the funding requirements for a statistical body are not consistent from year-to-year. Some survey activity is periodic, and funding is required for research and preparation prior to the survey; conduct of the survey itself; and for analysis and publication of the results. This means that the funding required in different years will vary. It means that the statistical body will require certainty around funding commitments well in advance if it is to operate efficiently and effectively. It also means that the need for statistical information, particularly by government, needs to be considered in the long term not just year-to-year.

There are two surveys where this is most significant at present.

a) **The Living Costs and Household Income Survey ('LCHIS')**

The Council is aware that the cost of living is an important issue for Islanders and for ministers and is in fact one of the four pillars set out in the new government's proposed Common Strategic Policy 2026-2030.

An important source of evidence in relation to this priority would come from an update of the LCHIS, which is an income and expenditure survey and was last run in 2021-22, which means that statistics on households in relative low income after housing costs are five years out of date. The Statistics Council is aware that the survey is being re-run from spring next year and won't produce statistics on relative low income until the end of 2028. We also understand that this survey is currently reliant on being treated as a pressure on Cabinet Office funding. Given that this work requires certainty and is committed, funding via such an approach is neither transparent nor does it provide the confidence required for planning purposes.

b) **The 2031 Census**

A further pressure not included in the 2027-30 budget is preparation for the 2031 Census. This is currently unfunded. This becomes more concerning if methods are to change to include a greater role for administrative data, particularly given that the administrative data development team was reduced from 5 to 4 as a result of the cuts to the Statistics Jersey budget in 2024. We are aware that the Chief Statistician plans to put forward a business case to support this work in spring 2027. The Council acknowledges that any move away from a full census should be subject to a full public consultation to ensure that user needs are well understood including those of users outside of government. Any changes to established processes are not without risk and would need to be carefully thought through.

3. Are you confident that the core service delivery of Statistics Jersey can be maintained with the allocations provided for in the Proposed Budget 2027-2030?

In light of the comments above the Council would conclude that the regular core activities of Statistics Jersey can be maintained albeit with pressure on statistical capacity and leadership due to the lack of business support. However, maintaining existing outputs is not the same as having sufficient resources to meet future requirements.

Significant risks remain around the major periodic surveys, including the Census 2031. No funding has been committed to support these activities and in the absence of such funding either the core work of Statistics Jersey will be impacted, or these surveys will simply not be able to proceed. This makes planning and preparation for these activities difficult and certainty, one way or another, should be provided at an early stage.

A further pressure that was discussed at Council in July 2026 relates to necessary improvements to private rental data in support of ten percent of the Retail Price Index (RPI). We understand the two options to be that either the housing minister makes an order for landlords to provide the government with rental data, or the government provide Statistics Jersey with the additional £100k funds to carry out a compulsory survey of landlords. We understand that the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Planning and Regulation have been briefed on the RPI private rents index. The Council is keen to see a decision that will provide clarity on the way forward. Based on our current information the Council may have to consider whether a failure to address this promptly may result in the RPI losing its tier 1 status.

Recognising the current fiscal environment, the Statistics Council has not at this stage focussed on user requirements for new potential outputs. However, the Council recognises that sources and methodologies will change and is concerned that there is little capacity within Statistics Jersey to respond within the current allocation. The Council will continue to consider, and is happy to comment, on any future business cases submitted by Statistics Jersey.

Matters relating to the wider statistical system

As referenced above the Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018 requires the Council to consider funding, resources and independence across the whole Jersey Statistical System (JSS).

In July 2026 the Council attended a joint meeting with the Statistics and Analytics Departmental Leads (the heads of statistics and analytics in each department) to hear about the challenges and aspirations across the wider Jersey Statistical System.

Under the law the Chief Statistician must produce a Jersey Statistical System Strategy aligned to the CSP, and the Council will be considering a first draft of this at its meeting in November 2026.

In his Annual Report for 2025 the Chief Statistician includes a table setting out the number of analysts in each government department. This highlights that some large departments (such as Justice and Home Affairs) are poorly served with analyst support and therefore may not have the evidence to know that they are targeting resources effectively and efficiently. The Council has also recently written to the Chief Executive Officer seeking to understand the

funding and capacity for statisticians and analysts that exists in Departments outside of Statistics Jersey.

The Council is keen to see an increase in the availability of published statistics where departments already hold the data, and has recently begun looking at agricultural statistics, and statistics relating to the criminal justice system, initially focussing on crime.

We welcome progress on publication of crime and policing statistics and also welcome the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning's commitment to greater publication of exam results. We are keen to see further developments including the pre-announcement of publication dates and extensions to the range of statistics available in the interests of transparency and accountability.

In summary we would conclude that:

- Core funding for Statistics Jersey appears broadly adequate to maintain the status quo, but has built-in inefficiencies, particularly due to the lack of business support and lack of a government-wide survey support resource
- Users of the RPI, including ministers, would benefit from prompt resolution of the identified issues in relation to private rents data
- Statistics Jersey would benefit from longer-term commitments to support efficiency and efficacy in the preparation and conduct of periodic surveys and the 2031 Census
- Resources in the wider statistical system are widely variable, and we will continue to seek greater clarity of the budget and resources available for analysts in departments outside of Statistics Jersey, as required in the law
- The Council would welcome a strong commitment across departments and public authorities, in the interests of democratic accountability, to the publication of data that is already available. Islanders should not have to rely on making Freedom of Information requests to access readily available government data.

Yours sincerely,



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