

Government of Jersey
Union Street | St Helier | Jersey | JE2 3DN

Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

15 January 2024

Dear Chair

Scrutiny Review: Proposed Budget 2025 –2028

Thank you for your letter dated 11 December, outlining the key findings and recommendations from your comments paper on the Budget (Government Plan) 2025–2028 [[P.51/2024](#)].

Key Findings

- 1. Funding previously transferred from the Criminal Offences Confiscation Fund for various capital projects, e.g. the Firearms Range, Prison Improvement works and Dewberry House, will be carried forward to progress these projects in 2025 and no further transfers of funding for them will be made from the COCF in 2025.**

Noted and agreed.

- 2. The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs advised that funding from the Criminal Offences Confiscation Fund may be used to fund laptops for Honorary Police forces, but this transfer request has not been included in the Budget.**

The Minister for Treasury and Resources made a Ministerial Decision on 9 December 2024 which allocated the required funds to the Law Officers Department for onward distribution to the Honorary Police for this purpose, further to the submission of a business case by the Parishes.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs was pleased to support this bid, recognising the important role of the Honorary Police to the island, and is grateful to the Minister for Treasury and Resources for her support.

- 3. Island youth projects have been reprioritised and reprofiled, to develop a centre at the former Ann Street Brewery site in St Helier earlier, but this has had the consequence of delaying the improvements to the youth centre at Le Squez and Samarès School.**

Improvements will be carried out at Samarès school to enable the school to become 2 form entry, (to be carried out in 2025-26). It is correct that improvements to the Youth Centre (which will also improve the school) have been moved to the end of the capital programme.

It is also important to acknowledge that prioritising the building of a St Helier Youth Centre, as agreed in the 2018 - 22 Common Strategic Policy P.110/2018 as amended, will deliver a new facility for a built-up area that currently has no facility. Were Le Squez to be prioritised over St. Helier this would leave our young people without any youth facilities in both areas for a significant period. Additionally, minor maintenance works have been planned to support the upkeep of the Le Squez facility.

- 4. The major project at Mont à Labbé Secondary has been extended, with an increased total estimated expenditure of £41 million (previous approval was for £23 million).**

Noted.

- 5. The major project for a joint Ambulance, Fire and Rescue Headquarters may be changed to provide for separate headquarters facilities for each of the services, however, the timescale has been extended to 2028 which will mean that there are increased maintenance costs for the existing buildings. The MJHA has also advised that there is a possibility that both services and the school could remain situated in the Rouge Bouillion area.**

Noted.

- 6. The split of the Heads of Expenditure for CYPES was done in a “hurry” and the Council of Ministers has subsequently lodged an amendment to the Budget to move approximately £5.8 million from Children and Families budget to Education and Lifelong Learning.**

Noted.

- 7. The proposed Budget does not clearly identify areas or show support to the third sector or not for profit industry, for example where grants are provided by departments to charities to provide services.**

Grants in excess of £75k are listed in the Annual report and Accounts.

- 8. Savings targets within the Departments for JHA, SoJP and CYPES are lower for 2025 than for 2024. In 2024 departments had been given equal percentage savings targets, but these had been varied for 2025.**

Noted.

- 9. States of Jersey Police are facing significant cost pressures, some examples provided to the Panel was a cost to access a Home Office database rising by 102% since 2021 and software costs for the Digital Forensics Unit.**

Noted.

- 10. There have been changes and cancellations of some projects that were being progressed under CYPES grouped Heads of Expenditure for ‘Upgrades to CYPES Estates’, for example the cancellation for the Music Development project.**

Projects have been reprofiled across the Government Capital Programme. This is to ensure a more realistic phasing of delivery of projects in accordance with anticipated annual spend across the programme.

11. The Government is providing £700,000 of funding to create a housing provision for 16–19-year-olds in a property that is already in Government ownership.

Government plan funding was agreed from GP 2024 to establish an additional residential home to meet the forecasted needs of young people moving towards independence.

The property was identified as a suitable property in an ideal location to provide accommodation for young people aged 16-19. It is also a government owned property that was originally used for key worker accommodation and more recently for Learning Disability Supported living accommodation but has been unoccupied since 2018. There is a requirement to substantially improve the standard of accommodation appropriate to current acceptable standards of residential care for children and young people and the funding is being utilised to carry out this refurbishment work.

12. New School and Educational Developments' is the grouped Head of Expenditure that will see the projects of the new town school (Gas Place) and the new St Helier youth centre (Ann Street site) be developed however no specific breakdown of the proposed funding between the projects has been provided as part of this Budget review.

At this early stage in the development timeline, it is not possible to provide accurate costings. When more detailed financial information is known it can be shared with the Panel.

13. There continue to be delays to capital projects that have been ongoing for years, for example the Army and Sea Cadet Headquarters and Ambulance, Fire and Rescue Headquarters. These projects are waiting on other assessments and reviews to complete and decisions to be made in order to make progress, however, the Panel is concerned about the costs incurred from the uncertainty and feasibility work being unused.

Noted.

14. As part of the Common Strategic Policy focus, the Government is prioritising additional revenue expenditure for Early Years pilots in order to test how the Early Years nursery and childcare provision could be extended, and three pilot schemes were running from September 2024 and would continue into 2025. There have been a number of concerns raised by external stakeholders about the Ministers plans and how they will impact the wider Early Years sector.

The Minister is aware of the feedback provided to the Panel and for balance it is important to also note the positive feedback received from the Jersey Childcare Trust. This highlights:

“There was an extensive piece of consultative work that took place with 24 different stakeholders, independently facilitated by the ISOS Partnership that was to inform early years policy making in the future, taking account of the needs of children and families.

This work was informed by extensive evidence from well-respected and known research and we would expect the findings of this report to inform and proposed changes.”

- 15. The Panel will seek further clarification about the breakdown of funding related to the additional revenue expenditure to fund school meals. Annual staff costs appear to make up £588,000 of the proposed Budget and the cost of providing primary schools with fresh fruit will be £163,000 per year.**

The figures quoted are accurate and the Minister will provide further clarification for the Panel as and when required.

- 16. £500,000 of the additional funding for lifelong learning and skills for 2025 is to support apprenticeships. Further detail is required on the remaining breakdown of the funding for the Budget period.**

Noted.

Key Recommendations

- 1. The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs should publish all costs of feasibility work that has been undertaken for the Ambulance Fire and Rescue Headquarters major project to date.**

Accept - The Minister is happy to share these costs with the Panel, and they are being prepared.

- 2. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Children and Families should share details with Scrutiny about the utilisation of funding in the Office of the Chief Officer for CYPES, including how this is split between the remits of Education and Lifelong Learning and Children and Families.**

Accept - The Ministers are happy to share further details with the Panel as requested above.

- 3. In future years, the Budget could provide further detail about how Government grant funding will be used to support the third sector, particularly any funding provided for the provision of essential services to show the importance of this sector to the community and show a connection with Government provided funding.**

The Panel are advised to raise this request with the Minister for Treasury and Resources as she would be best placed to advise on the feasibility or otherwise of this recommendation.

- 4. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should revise the engagement with key stakeholders in the Early Years sector and share outcomes and updates about the pilots and future plans with Scrutiny.**

Accept - The Minister has engaged and will continue to engage appropriately with Early Years sector stakeholders. He is happy to share outcomes, updates and future plans with the Panel.

- 5. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should publish details of the contingency plans in place related to the capacity issues at Mont à Labbé School to provide assurance that all children will receive the opportunity of education in a school for the academic year 2025-6 and beyond.**

Accept - During the Autumn term SEND panels have forecast the arrangements required for children with the highest complexity of need requiring specialist placements. Mont à Labbé remains at stretched capacity for 2025-2026 and therefore Additional Resource Provisions (ARP's) have been planned at both Primary and Secondary to increase the number of specialist places within the system. Recruitment for these ARP's will commence in the Spring Term with relevant training programmes commencing in March 2025. A graduated transition will be put in place for all students to ensure a smooth transition commencing in the Spring Term.

- 6. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should review the accessibility of all post-16 courses (to include consideration of the flexibility of delivery) and, also, the financial support and grants provided for higher education.**

Accept - Work to review post 16 courses and funding mechanisms has already commenced. In summary this includes:

Accessibility and Flexibility of Delivery

We are progressing changes to Distance Learning so that these students will be entitled to the same level of financial support as those studying in-person. This initiative significantly improves accessibility to higher education for individuals who cannot or do not wish to leave the island for an extended period to pursue their studies.

During the remainder of this term, we will continue the review of higher education funding in accordance with the areas identified in Proposition 12.

Post-16 Education and Review of Apprenticeships

Given the limited time available within this current term, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning will prioritise a review of apprenticeships, which form part of the wider post-16 education and training pathways. This review will respond to the obligations set out in Proposition 51 Amendment 5, which committed the Minister to review the scheme and increase the funding and support available.

Response to Tuition Fee Cap Increase

In response to the announcement that the tuition fee cap for universities in England will increase next year, we will also be increasing the tuition fee grants by 3.1%. This adjustment ensures that the maximum tuition grant will continue to cover the full cost of tuition fees in England next year.

Level of Financial Support for Higher Education

We will increase the amount of grant households are eligible to receive by raising income thresholds. For example, the upper limit to receive a maintenance grant will increase from an income under £90,000 to an income under £94,680. Additionally, the Minister has agreed to an inflation measure by which income thresholds will be adjusted annually to ensure they keep pace with increases in average incomes in Jersey in the future.

7. **Further details should be published by the Minister for Children and Families and the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning about how the delays to the major project at Le Squez will impact the Youth Service and Samarès School, including any mitigating measures that have been put in place in the interim.**

Reject – This was debated at length during the Budget debate and the Hansard provides sufficient detail.

The Le Squez Centre is currently operational and there is no question that we will not continue maintenance on that centre to ensure that it is able to fulfil its role. The youth service is confident they can continue delivering a programme for young children from Le Squez through to 2028, which is where the reprofiling puts the build of the new Le Squez Centre will commence.

Conversely, continuing to have no youth facility in St Helier would have a negative impact.

Yours sincerely,



Connétable Richard Vibert
Minister for Children and Families



Deputy Rob Ward
Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning



Deputy Mary Le Hegarat
Minister for Justice and Home Affairs