

# STATES OF JERSEY



## PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024): TWENTY- SECOND AMENDMENT

### DIGITAL SERVICES PLATFORM

---

Lodged au Greffe on 12th November 2024  
by Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement  
Earliest date for debate: 26th November 2024

---

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024):  
TWENTY-SECOND AMENDMENT

---

**1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (g) –**

After the words “Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and 5(ii) of the Report” insert the words –

“, except that, in Summary Table 5(ii) –

- (i) the Capital and Other Projects Head of Expenditure for the Digital Care Strategy should be reduced by £400,000;
- (ii) the Capital and Other Projects Head of Expenditure for the Digital Services Platform should be increased by £400,000”.

**2 PAGE 4, PARAGRAPH (o) –**

After the words “to the Report” insert the words –

“, except that –

- (i) on page 61 Table 29 should be updated in line with the following table, and any subsequent related figures should be updated accordingly –.

Project Total	£'000	Spon Dept	Supp Dept	2025 Estimate	2026 Estimate	2027 Estimate	2028 Estimate
2,800	Digital Services Platform	TDS	TDS	1,000	1,000	200	-
17,308	Digital Care Strategy (M)	HCS	TDS	1,603	340	180	-

; and

- (ii) on page 61, after the words “support other systems.” there should be inserted the words “From 2025 and beyond, the delivery of the Digital Services Platform shall be built and designed following open design principles.””.

DEPUTY A.F. CURTIS OF ST. CLEMENT

**Note:** After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –**

to receive the Government Plan 2025 – 2028 (entitled “Budget 2025-2028”) specified in Article 9(1) of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (“the Law”) and specifically –

- (a) to approve the estimate of total States income to be paid into the Consolidated Fund in 2025 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 1 to the Report, which

is inclusive of the proposed taxation and impôts duties changes outlined in the Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(a) of the Law.

- (b) to approve the proposed Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2025, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 2 to the Report, which may be obtained by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as and when required, in line with Article 9 (2)(c) of the Law, of up to those revised approval amounts.
- (c) to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2025 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law.
- (d) to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Stabilisation Fund in 2025 of up to £25 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on the availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2024 in excess of the estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2025.
- (e) to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Agricultural Loans Fund in 2025 of up to £2 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2024 in excess of estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2025;
- (f) to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2025 and the total cost of each such project and any amendments to the proposed total cost of a major project under a previously approved Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 4 to the Report.
- (g) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2025, for each head of expenditure, being gross expenditure less estimated income (if any), in line with Articles 9(2)(g), 10(1) and 10(2) of the Law, and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report “, except that, in Summary Table 5(ii) –
  - (i) the Capital and Other Projects Head of Expenditure for the Digital Care Strategy should be reduced by £400,000;
  - (ii) the Capital and Other Projects Head of Expenditure for the Digital Services Platform should be increased by £400,000”.
- (h) to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2025 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report.
- (i) to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation’s trading fund for 2025 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report.

(j) to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2025 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report.

(k) to approve an updated and consolidated policy of the Strategic Reserve Fund as follows:

“The Strategic Reserve Fund, established in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2005, is a permanent reserve only to be used:

- i. in exceptional circumstances to insulate the Island’s economy from severe structural decline such as the sudden collapse of a major Island industry or from major natural disaster.
- ii. if necessary, for the purposes of providing funding (up to £100 million) for the Bank Depositors Compensation Scheme established under the Banking Business (Depositors Compensation) (Jersey) Regulations 2009, including to meet the States contribution to the Scheme and/or to meet any temporary cash flow funding requirements of the Scheme.
- iii. to support the development of future healthcare facilities and the borrowing costs for such work, in line with a financing strategy agreed by the Assembly;
- iv. as a holding fund for any or all monies raised through external financing until required, and for any monies related to the repayment of debt raised through external financing used to offset the repayment of debt, as and when required; and
- v. in accordance with Article 24 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019, where the Minister for Treasury and Resources is satisfied that there exists an immediate threat to the health or safety of any of the inhabitants of Jersey, to the stability of the economy in Jersey or to the environment, for which no other suitable funding is available.”

(l) to approve the transfer to the Strategic Reserve of the amounts due as a result of the move from prior-year basis taxation after 31st December 2025, as and when these payments are received (estimated at £280 million).

(m) in relation to the new Government Headquarters (office), to approve;

- i. the exercising of the option to acquire the new Government Headquarters (estimated at £91 million), by the Public of the Island, in line with the pre-agreed terms; and
- ii. the acquisition of the new Government Headquarters as an investment of the Social Security (Reserve) Fund (including authorising the meeting of expenses incurred in connection with the acquisition); and
- iii. the subsequent leasing of the new Government Headquarters by the Public of the Island from the Social Security (Reserve) Fund, with commercial terms to be agreed between the Minister for Infrastructure (on behalf of the Public) and Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Treasury and Resources (both on behalf of the Fund); and

- (n) in relation to the new Government Headquarters, to authorise H.M. Attorney General, the Greffier of the States, the Ministers for Infrastructure, Social Security and Treasury and Resources, and the Public of the Island, to enter into such arrangements, including financing, and pass any contracts as are necessary to put into effect paragraph (m).
- (o) to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2025-2028, as set out in the Appendix to the accompanying Report, **except that** **-**
- (i) **on page 61 Table 29 should be updated in line with the following table, and any subsequent related figures should be updated accordingly -.**

Project Total	£'000	Spon Dept	Supp Dept	2025 Estimate	2026 Estimate	2027 Estimate	2028 Estimate
2,800	Digital Services Platform	TDS	TDS	1,000	1,000	200	-
17,308	Digital Care Strategy (M)	HCS	TDS	1,603	340	180	-

**; and**

- (ii) **page 61, after the words “support other systems.” there should be inserted the words “From 2025 and beyond, the delivery of the Digital Services Platform shall be built and designed following open design principles.”.**

# REPORT

## **1. Summary**

In the Government Plan 2024 – 2027, a new Major Project was created called the ‘Government Digital Services Platform’, that aimed to deliver new and improved access to Government services for the public and provide the tools to do this consistently across the public service.

The Government of Jersey is falling behind in its delivery of public services digitally, and this impacts how easy it is to interact with Government, as well as our trust as islanders in Government.

As such the cut to the Digital Services Platform budget from £6.26 million to £1.8 million in the Budget 2025 – 2028 is concerning. It will mean that islanders will not see the improvements to their digital interactions with Government until long into the future, when our offering will be almost incomparable to other Governments.

I recognise the challenges in prioritising ‘existing crises’ in Government IT, however we must keep an eye on the future as well. In doing so we must also ensure we get a magnitude better value for our money than we often have had in digital programmes.

At the same time as calling for prioritisation, we see the forecast spend on the Digital Care Strategy increase by £2.1m, alongside the £30 million revenue increase in health.

As such, I suggest a minor rebalancing of programme budgets to invest a little more in this new platform that is required for Government departments to offer their services to islanders in modern and easy to use ways.

Lastly, I suggest we adopt principles of ‘open design’. This should form part of a wider move to modernise how we develop and deliver IT and digital and is the only way that I see we will achieve the quantum of new development we need at the cost we can afford.

## **2. Context**

Over the past decade, the Government of Jersey has spent significant amounts of money on IT and digital, however despite the hundreds of millions of pounds spent across all projects, I would question whether islander’s have felt their lives and interactions with Government have been made radically better as a result of this expenditure.

That is not to say that I don’t value the work done by those in Government on digital. Teams across Government, from those in M&D, to others such as analytics in Treasury, Rural Economy, Marine Resources to name few do great work in using digital to deliver their functions. Their work is often tarnished by large expenditure on capital programmes that fail to deliver their suggested benefits.

To respond to this challenge, the Government Digital Services Platform Major Project was created.

The project aimed to consolidate some historic projects such as ‘Service Digitisation’ and deliver new digital capabilities for departments that would enable them to deliver digital services to islanders.

Personally, I had aspirations that the project could be delivered following modern digital practices, could procure dynamically from a range of providers enabling local development, and build internal talent. Even in the Government Plan 2024 – 2027, the budget for the programme was small for its ambition, but often a tight budget forces creativity and prudent delivery.

Following ‘reprioritisation’ in 2024, the project has seen its budget reduced by 71%. The 2025 Budget also confirms this has resulted in a new reduced scope, so islanders will not get the change they expected.

At the same time as this budget was cut, other digital projects saw their significant expenditure retained or increased, and as at the Budget 2025 the following projects have total allocations;

<b>Project</b>	<b>Total Allocation (£,000)</b>
Cyber Programme 2.0 (M)	10,261
IT Major Upgrade and Replacement	13,000
Digital Care Strategy (M)	18,308
Revenue Transformation Programme (Phase 3 + 4) (M)	20,699
Court Digitisation	4,017
TRANSFORM	30,838

Between 2025 to 2028, the total proposed digital change spend (including TRANSFORM) is £74.1 million, of which the Digital Services Platform at £1.2 million represents only 1.6%.

It is often said in woodworking (or any manufacturing) that you should spend 80% of your time to build a ‘jig’ or ‘tool’ that lets you create the part you need in the remaining 20%. With this tool you can continue to replicate your parts quickly and effectively.

Similarly, I believe we should spend (slightly) more money on creating reusable components across Government that lower the cost of digitising the rest of the public service.

Examples of the functionality the DSP (Digital Services Platform) could deliver include.

- **A common data platform** - To make it cheaper and easier to use data, make more informed decisions, and let islanders access their own data from Government.
- **A modern ‘front-door’** – To enable islanders and businesses to access their services easily. This has been built in part but years on is only scheduled for public access in March 2025.
- **A common platform for creating interactive ‘web apps’** - To replace our online forms. The current forms platform is showing its age. It doesn’t let users access data or allow for good automation. Islanders want to see their ITIS rate or request a tax or social statement and see it online. Islanders want more

complex interactions to happen at their most convenient time and have transparency in the process throughout.

- **A consistent ‘programmable’ access to services** – To allow businesses or interested parties to automate interactions with Government. Within Government building modern ‘interfaces’ against a common standard would let other internal services automate their workflows and deliver productivity savings, making repeatable labour-intensive roles more enjoyable and creative.

These types of ‘capability’ are just some of what we need, but work must be done to start delivering and showing results.

Until the Government view these types of functionalities as core to its delivery of public services, we will continue to see duplication, manual processes, and mismatched experiences to name a few.

### **3. Delivering Value for Money - Designing and Building the Platform in the Open**

The second part of this amendment seeks to ensure that the delivery of the small budget that the Digital Services Platform has is spent well, and it also reduces the cost of delivering new services on top of it.

Digital assets (such as code, documentation) are easy to host and easy to share. The past few decades have seen the rise of new ways of working that see developers build their software ‘in the open’, which can mean many things such as;

- i. Working on their code in a public location
- ii. Granting rights to others to reuse the code they write
- iii. Publishing documentation (both software and process)
- iv. Accepting public contributions

Developers and companies often do a mix of the above, but they do so for good reasons, such as;

- v. Increasing adoption of their new technology
- vi. Improving trust in their products
- vii. Sharing value, since they may have benefited from other organisations’ open software.
- viii. Encouraging good practices and standards, since their progress is open to view.
- ix. Decreasing cost of implementation, since any developer or team can upskill on the project to tender or bid for work.

Open-source and open design principles are adopted by Governments, businesses, non-profit organizations all over the world. Examples include;

#### ***UK Government Digital Service (GDS)***

GDS <sup>1</sup>is the ‘in-house’ development team for the UK Government. They develop tools such as forms platforms, the core website, data services etc. GDS provide their services across Government, promoting lower cost of ownership, flexibility and meeting standards.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Government Digital Service - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/digital-service)



They operate their own ‘Government Digital Service’ and provide all their code free of charge in public. The Government of Jersey for instance uses their implementation of a petition platform and does not have to pay to do so.

### ***Estonia X-Road***

Estonia have built their famous ‘X-Road’ to allow Government and non-government systems to exchange data and is largely responsible for their cohesive set of digital services built on data. ‘X-Road’ is open-source, and any country or organisation can implement it to start an exchange for data.

It is not suggested here that we adopt X-Road, but it is worth noting that the open and free creation of this product has enabled integrated and more affordable services in Estonia as well as other countries such as Finland, Iceland, Argentina<sup>2</sup>, and the open-source code has not compromised security.

So how will open design principles make Government Digital more affordable?

- i. It should help ensure delivery focusses on products and improvements that are truly needed.
- ii. It enables a wider range of suppliers to deliver work, and to tender for work in smaller amounts.
- iii. It ensures good documentation and repeatability, delivering reuse of code, tools and processes.

Like many things, good discipline to process, focus on the objective and appropriately using skilled resources can make the difference between wasted money and money well spent.

Lastly it is worth noting that in a response to WQ.380 <sup>3</sup>it was confirmed that the Digital Services Platform has spent £992,000 in 2024 year to date.

Islanders may be surprised at this level of spend, since they have still not seen the new platform despite it being ‘close to launch’ over twelve months ago, and they cannot attribute how this substantial amount of money was spent, how progress has been made, let alone if it was value for money.

## **4. Conclusions**

Good, trustworthy and transparent digital services have the power to change islanders’ experiences with Government for the better. Who does not want to easily interact with Government and not feel swamped in bureaucracy, missed phone calls, and emails across departments as many currently do?

It is recognised that the Government needs to invest in essential remediation works on its current IT estate, but if it doesn’t set a course to a simpler more rationalised set of tools, it may risk making the same mistakes.

---

<sup>2</sup> [X-Road@ — X-Road World Map](#)

<sup>3</sup> [wq.380-2024.pdf](#)

It is also hoped that the Government Digital Services Platform could be the new model for delivery of digital change, and I hope the topics of open-source and open-data will be revisited by the assembly in 2025.

The proposed reallocation from the Digital Care Strategy Budget is not much and is not enough to really deliver the change needed, however paired with an ambitious and creative new approach to delivery, we may be able to prove that money spent in digital is money well spent. It is certainly worth a try!

### **Financial and staffing implications**

If adopted, this amendment would reduce the total budget for the Digital Care Programme by £1 million and increase the total budget for the Digital Services Programme by £1 million.

### **Children's Rights Impact Assessment**

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.