

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2025-2028 (P.51/2024): FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT (P.51/2024 AMD.(15)) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 22nd November 2024
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers shares the concerns of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel about the current conditions in some areas of Highlands College. Having considered the amendment, Ministers have agreed to meet the £1.04 million funding request in the amendment for 2025. Ministers recognise that Highlands is a key educational asset, especially for the provision of lifelong learning, and it is important that the facilities at Highlands are maintained.

The £1.04 million investment will come from the Jersey Property Holdings Major Refurbishments and Upgrades budget. Major Refurbishments and Upgrades was established as a Grouped Head of Expenditure in the Budget to both increase the funds available for vital maintenance and to bring greater flexibility to the management of related projects as funds can be dynamically reprioritised if progress is slower than anticipated or more urgent refurbishment requirements arise. In light of the latest project delivery assumptions, Jersey Property Holdings had already taken the choice to accelerate the delivery of the Highlands project by bringing it forward into 2025 as the Amendment intends.

To avoid impacting other refurbishment projects, the Budget for the Grouped Head of Expenditure for 2025 will be increased as necessary as part of the process to develop the capital programme for Budget 2026-29. This will be achieved by bringing forward funds allocated for Highlands in 2027 and/or through the application of funds freed up when other project cashflow requirements are reforecast.

It is neither necessary nor desirable to remove funding from the Public Realm programme in 2025 in order to undertake these important and urgent works.

The Council of Ministers did consider an amendment to reflect its commitment to deliver this funding, but this would have required the deletion of the Panel's amendment wording almost in its entirety. Advice was received that such an amendment would not have been in order. In view of Ministers' commitment to deliver this funding, which it was confirmed to the Panel would be set out in a comment (given that an amendment is not possible), the Panel has been asked to withdraw this amendment. It is hoped that upon presentation of this comment, the Panel will do so prior to the debate. Should the Panel maintain the amendment, it will create an unappetising scenario where Ministers will ask that Members reject the amendment, as it seeks to withdraw funding from the Infrastructure Rolling Vote (Public Realm). This is not necessary as the funding is already available within the grouped head of expenditure. Ministers do not wish to vote against an amendment which they are committed to delivering, albeit through an alternative funding route.

The public realm programme provides a holistic approach to creating a vibrant and healthy Town centre to live in, work, and visit. The programme has the potential to create greater cultural and economic vibrancy in our Capital and to promote the wellbeing of St Helier residents and visitors to town. Attractive streets and places generate more tourism, and greater footfall increases the spend in local shops and businesses. Both will require increased space in town, including for sitting and outdoor dining. The objective is to create more healthy streets by reducing car dependency and enhancing active and sustainable travel opportunities such as cycling and walking, making streets more inclusive and increasing opportunities for tree planting to green St Helier.

The programme focuses on improving key shopping and cultural sites around the town centre, such as Broad Street and the Markets. An important part of the programme is also 'Bridging the Ring Road' which will seek to address existing constraints caused by vehicular dominance by improving crossings, increasing safety and permeability, linking St Helier's community to the town centre and important amenities.

Included within the current projected financial envelope of Public Realm funding are works to “the Vibrant Core” (New Cut, Broad Street, New Street, York Street/Parade and Library Place) which span 5 years of the programme. 2026 and 2027 sees works around the public markets crossings and Minden Place, with the Western Bus Gateway scheme scheduled for delivery in 2025/26, part funded by Planning Obligation Agreements.



Western Bus Gateway (2025/6)

The Public Realm programme has already been scaled back as the budget reductions in 2024 and the Budget 2025-28 have reduced the sums available to £2.5 million.

Scheme designs for the Western Bus Gateway, and the first stages of the Vibrant Core works (New Cut crossover / Broad Street “gateway”) have been prepared and whilst these projects are in delivery in 2025, detailed design for the next phase schemes will be finalised for delivery in 2026. Removing funding at this stage will significantly further extend the programme, losing momentum and deliverability of schemes.



New Cut Crossing (2025)

Funding for Public Realm projects is contained within an overall head of expenditure for Infrastructure projects (the Infrastructure Rolling Vote) that represents the most significant programme of infrastructure investment in the Budget.

The Infrastructure Rolling Vote is a programme of continual improvements to maintain key infrastructure such as the Island's roads, drains and sea defences, which need continual maintenance and replacement over time. This is vital ongoing activity that is integral to the continued functioning of critical infrastructure that Islanders depend on. Accordingly, Ministers wish to maintain this funding, and this instance a solution has been found which achieves this objective and meets the ambition of the amendment.