

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **DRAFT BUDGET STATEMENT 2013 (P.102/2012): THIRD AMENDMENT (P.102/2012 Amd.(3)) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 3rd December 2012  
by the Council of Ministers**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers supports the Minister for Treasury and Resources in opposing this amendment. This is because of the issues outlined in the Minister's comments. In addition, the Medical Officer of Health and the Police Chief have commented as follows:

### **Medical Officer of Health**

“By every available measure, the extent of alcohol consumption in Jersey is wreaking damage on our Island society, our health and our economy:

- We have the highest alcohol consumption per capita compared with UK and European neighbours.
- Our death rate for conditions caused by alcohol consumption is TWICE as high as the rate in England.
- Our rate of admissions to hospital for alcohol-related conditions is second only to that in the North-East region of England, and higher than everywhere else.
- A high proportion of crime in the Island, including domestic violence, is linked with excessive alcohol consumption.
- The Jersey Annual Social Survey (JASS) tells us that of Jersey adults who drink alcohol, ONE in FOUR reports doing so at the ‘hazardous’ level – that is over 8 units of alcohol daily for men, or 6 units per day for women. And these self-reports are probably underestimates, partly because of lack of understanding about how much constitutes a Unit in these days of higher-strength beers and wines, and larger glasses of the latter.

In view of this, the lost productivity to our Island caused by alcohol-related work absence is likely to be considerable.

Alcohol is responsible for massive costs to the taxpayer of Jersey, including in relation to healthcare, policing, social security sickness payments, prison and probation. The rise in alcohol duty proposed is low compared with the real costs to this Island that can be attributed to alcohol consumption. It is the right thing to do.

The Jersey alcohol problem needs to be tackled on all possible fronts – no one measure can be effective alone. A new comprehensive, States-wide Alcohol Strategy is in development, to be linked to an up-to-date and effective Licensing Law.

We have observed some decreases in alcohol consumption in recent years, but there is still a long way to go.

Increasing the price of alcohol, as well as reducing its availability, are the most effective measures to achieve reductions in alcohol consumption, particularly in the young, and those who drink the most heavily. We make no apologies for a measure to make this harmful substance less affordable. Those who enjoy sensible drinking

within the recommended limits will feel little impact from the proposed increase in duty.

We are watching developments in other UK jurisdictions where ‘minimum price per unit of alcohol’ is being implemented (such as Scotland) or consulted upon (such as England: public consultation announcement 28/11/12). We are also aware that the Scottish position is subject to legal challenge by the alcohol industry. There is an ideal opportunity for Jersey to observe whether the practical impact of the introduction of minimum price tallies with the theoretical evidence, based on mathematical modelling, that minimum price would impact significantly on harmful alcohol consumption. Jersey can also benefit from observing – and ultimately avoiding – the teething problems of those jurisdictions at the forefront of the minimum pricing initiative, such as the current legal challenge in Scotland. A public consultation on aspects of alcohol policy in Jersey, linked to the Alcohol Strategy and updated Licensing Law currently in development, is likely during 2013. A consideration of introducing minimum price as one element of the Strategy could form part of that consultation.”

### **Police Chief**

“Alcohol has an enormous impact on policing services through associated crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. Since January 2011, 60% of the people we have arrested were intoxicated when they were detained. Even this does not paint the full picture, as some people who were sober when we arrested them were drunk when they originally committed the offence.

“While we are successfully driving down levels of night-time violence through the high visibility initiative and closer working with the licensing trade, the fact remains that more than one in five people arrested in Jersey throughout this period were detained on Friday and Saturday nights, 86% of whom had been drinking. Policing alcohol-related disorder entails a significant investment of Police resources and, with it, taxpayers’ money.

“Alcohol misuse ruins lives and we, on a daily basis, see the poor decisions people make because they have a drink inside them.”

For the reasons above, the Council of Ministers opposes this amendment.

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### **Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]**

These comments were submitted to the States Greffe later than noon on Friday 30th November 2012 because the outstanding information required to complete the comments had only just become available.