

Deputy R Ward  
Scrutiny Office  
States Greffe  
Morier House  
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28 October 2021

Dear Deputy Ward

### **Government Plan Review 2022-2025**

Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to comment upon areas of the Service's work that have received additional expenditure.

#### **Probation Service Inspection**

This would allow Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) to inspect the work of the Jersey Probation Service and was recommended in an independent review of the Probation and Prison Services in 2019. The review noted that, although the Jersey Probation Service had undergone a number of inspections in recent years, it had not been inspected by HMIP since 2005. HMIP will not be able to undertake the inspection until the first quarter of 2023 due to a backlog in its work created by the pandemic.

The Probation Service supports the importance of external scrutiny as this will provide assurance that it is effective, efficient and provides value for money. It is anticipated that the HMIP inspection will focus on strategic leadership, quality of information and case management, safeguarding, and public protection. It will involve an examination of the Service's work with adults and children both within the community and in custody.

It has been difficult to accurately gauge the cost of an external inspection at this point in time as negotiations commenced pre COVID. The process would entail several inspectors travelling to the island for approximately a week and the Service providing files of evidence prior to the inspection work being undertaken. It is anticipated that local stakeholders would also be interviewed. I am confident that the £47,000 requested would be sufficient for the task.

I have been in dialogue with the newly appointed Chief Probation Officer of Guernsey. The concept of a Channel Islands inspection regime has been mooted and can be explored. This would not, initially at least, have the tradition or gravitas of a HMIP inspection but would be considerably cheaper. It is an issue that the I will discuss with the Probation Board.

### **Probation Service Additional funding (recurring £35,000 per year)**

This funding bid (GP20-161) was submitted for the Government Plan 2020-2023 and met some of the inflation shortfall in the salaries of staff who had previously been paid by the Justice and Home Affairs department under the auspices of the Building a Safer Society Strategy (BASS). The four post holders were the Restorative Justice Officer, Portuguese Offender Officer, Substance Misuse Officer and the Co-ordinator of the ADAPT domestic abuse programme. The first three posts still exist and are explained in more detail below. Following the retirement of the ADAPT Co-ordinator the funds were reinvested in a trainee Probation Officer which has provided an opportunity to provide services in a wider range of areas. The domestic abuse work has been overseen by a Probation manager and other staff using a new programme in conjunction with HMP La Moye.

### **BASS funding, regrading, trainee post (£185,000 in 2022)**

It is important to clarify that this extra money has not been a result of a “growth” plan by the Service. Instead, the BASS funding (previously paid by Justice and Home Affairs) was repurposed by that department leaving a deficit of £146,000 in the Probation Service budget. It is important to note that due to the posts not receiving funding for increments over several years, there was an additional shortfall of £54,000 a year. This difference was funded by the Department by way of underspends in other areas- most recently through the postponing of appointing to two vacancies. It has now been agreed that these two posts will be permanently removed from the budget in recognition of the need for the Department to play its part in the rebalancing of the island’s finances. The budget attached to those posts was £98,000 a year.

The regrading of posts as part of the States Employment Board project to encourage fairness between departments resulted in the department requiring a budget correction of approximately £55,000. This followed a restructure of the department whereby the Assistant Chief post was replaced by a Team Manger to provide increased oversight and supervision of front-line staff – a key recommendation for all services in Safeguarding Partnership Board Serious Case Reviews. The new structure provides increased operational resilience, but the revised job descriptions also recognised the added complexity introduced by responsibilities to conform with evolving multi agency practice, government policies and legislation.

The BASS post holders are continuing to prove a valuable asset to the Service. The Portuguese Offender Officer prepares assessments for courts and the prisons whilst supervising a caseload of Portuguese heritage clients in the community. The risk of reconviction for the majority of these clients reduces after their period of supervision which is encouraging.

The Substance Misuse Officer was appointed in March 2021 and has started to lead substance misuse programmes in the prison and community with a prison colleague. She also undertakes Emotional Coping Skills programmes with groups of clients referred from a range of services including Probation, Alcohol and Drugs Service and Psychology. Feedback from clients has been universally positive.

The Restorative Justice Officer continues to work principally with children who have been referred from either Parish Hall Enquiries or the courts. A key focus of her work is explaining the impact that crime has on victims and, where appropriate, facilitating contact between victims and offenders in order to encourage apology and reparation. A feature of the Officer's work in 2021 has been setting up the Positive Steps programme for young offenders which is aimed at rehabilitation through developing community awareness, building skills and interests whilst also providing opportunities for reparation. Agencies that are taking part in the scheme include the Fire Service, St John's Ambulance, Mind Jersey, Arthouse, Caring Cooks, Little Feet Environmental Group, Thrive, the Lifeboat Association and Boxing Business - to name but a few.

The Service has been delighted to employ two excellent locally educated trainee Probation Officers who will replace more experienced staff. Both will undertake distance learning courses to attain their social work degree and have made an impressive start to their careers. One of the projects they have helped to develop is the Roadsafes programme which is run in conjunction with the Driver and Vehicle Standards department. It provides theory and practical lessons for children who have committed motoring offences. We are committed to continue recruiting and training talented local applicants in order to meet the government objective of harnessing and developing skills. Our experience is that it is important for reputational and operational reasons as well as being considerably cheaper.

I hope this information is useful to the Panel. Please contact me if further details are required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M Cutland', written in a cursive style.

**Mike Cutland**  
**Chief Probation Officer**