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Deputy Catherine Curtis Chair – Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Office
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Submission by email to Katherine De Carteret,
Committee and Panel Officer – K.DeCarteret@gov.je

12th November 2025

Dear Deputy Curtis,

Re: Review of the Government's Proposed Budget 2026–2029 (P.70/2025)

Thank you for your letter of 29th October 2025 inviting the Jersey Police Authority ("JPA") to contribute to the Panel's review of the Proposed Budget 2026–2029 and its supporting Annex (R139/2025).

The Authority welcomes the opportunity to provide its views on the financial position of the States of Jersey Police ("SoJP"), the implications of the current budget proposals, and the potential impact on policing effectiveness and community safety.

The JPA recognises the Government's commitment to fiscal discipline and understands the challenges of balancing competing priorities in a constrained economic environment.

Nonetheless, the Authority remains concerned that the budget profile set out in the current Government Plan represents a reduction in the resourcing available to SoJP. This is occurring at a time when the complexity, breadth and intensity of policing demand in Jersey continue to grow.

Budget Overview and Context

According to the Budget Annex, the SoJP is allocated a net revenue expenditure of approximately £31.1 million per year for the period 2026 to 2029, with a total expenditure of £31.3 million and a staff establishment of 347 full-time equivalent officers and staff, falling to 344 from 2027 onwards.

The reality is however SoJP is planning for a headcount of 333 in 2026 although it will present a cost pressure of approximately £750k at the start of the year,

Staff costs account for around £28.5 million, or ninety-one per cent of total expenditure, leaving very limited flexibility within the remaining budget to absorb operational pressures, cost inflation or strategic investments. This static funding position means that, once inflation and unavoidable cost

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growth are considered, the SOJP will face a real-terms decline in available resources over the next four years.

Jersey currently has 1.9 police officers per 1,000 population, which is lower than the UK average of 2.1 and below Guernsey (2.2) and the Isle of Man (2.7). In comparison, Gibraltar has a significantly higher ratio of approximately 7.6 officers per 1,000 population, reflecting its much larger policing presence relative to population size.

The Authority notes that modest growth has been provided elsewhere within the Justice and Home Affairs portfolio, notably to the Fire and Rescue Service and emergency management functions, but that no equivalent provision has been made for the Police.

Operational Demand and Public Safety Challenges

The SOJP operates in an increasingly complex environment. Its officers and staff are dealing with more vulnerable individuals, more technologically sophisticated criminal activity, and more statutory and partnership responsibilities than at any previous point.

In 2024 alone, the Force responded to 741 missing person reports involving young people, a figure that not only illustrates the scale of youth-related safeguarding concerns but also highlights the estimated cost burden of £1.8 million for investigating, managing, and supporting such incidents. So far in 2025, SoJP has recorded over 1000 mental health related incidents, an increase of 38%.

At the same time, the Force is implementing the National Operating Model for Rape and Serious Sexual Offences ("RASSO") and contributing to the Joint Domestic Abuse Action Plan, both of which require specialist training, investigative time and dedicated support for victims. The success of the VAWG agenda has seen a 27% increase in reported offences in the last 3 years.

Digital and technology-enabled crime continues to expand rapidly, increasing the demand on the Digital Forensics Unit and the Force's broader investigative capabilities. Demand is already outstripping capacity leading to inevitable delays to the delivery of justice not to mention unsatisfactory outcomes for the victims of those crimes.

The Authority commends SoJP's commitment to trauma-informed and victim-centred policing, but these essential improvements cannot be achieved without sufficient investment in people and infrastructure. The JPA is particularly concerned that a planned enhancement to the Digital Forensics Unit has been curtailed by £47,000, directly constraining the team's capacity to manage complex digital evidence.

Alongside this, unresolved non-pay budget pressures of approximately £0.5 million are being managed by leaving vacancies unfilled, an approach that is both unsustainable and detrimental to operational resilience.



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The combined effect of these pressures is that the SoJP is being asked to meet rising public expectations with diminishing real-terms funding. This poses risks to response times, to safeguarding outcomes, and to the morale and wellbeing of officers and staff.

New laws have also been introduced, and others are being proposed that will inevitably impact police demand but as yet, attract no additional funding. These include new laws such as stalking and non-fatal strangulation, Suffocation and Choking.

Impact on Strategic Delivery

The Policing Plan 2025–2028 sets out a clear and ambitious vision for policing in Jersey under five strategic pillars: keeping people safe; problem-solving policing; supporting our people and culture; preventing crime and bringing offenders to justice; and delivering value for money.

The Authority believes these priorities remain wholly appropriate. However, the Force's ability to achieve them will be seriously compromised if the current funding trajectory continues.

A reduction in establishment and budget will inevitably limit early intervention and safeguarding work with children and young people, restrict the development of trauma-informed services for victims of sexual and domestic abuse, and constrain the Force's capacity to lead on community partnerships and problem-solving policing initiatives. Furthermore, the absence of dedicated funding for digital transformation risks leaving Jersey behind comparable jurisdictions in the ethical and effective use of data analytics, AI assisted investigation tools, and cybercrime prevention.

The JPA is also aware of the cumulative impact of sustained fiscal constraints on workforce morale and retention. The SoJP has demonstrated remarkable adaptability and professionalism, but continued reliance on vacancy absorption to balance budgets is eroding capacity and placing increasing strain on personnel.

The Case for Reassessment

Having reviewed the figures in the Proposed Budget and the operational data provided by the SoJP, the Authority believes that the Force's current financial envelope is insufficient to meet both its statutory obligations and the expectations of the community it serves.

The JPA therefore urges the Panel to recommend a comprehensive review in 2026 of SoJP's funding, with a view to securing a modest but essential uplift in core resources. This review should also examine the sustainability of staffing levels, particularly in specialist areas such as safeguarding, digital forensics, and investigation.

The Authority considers it vital that any reduction in establishment be paused until a full workforce analysis has been completed. Additionally, investment in digital capability, including forensic technology, AI-assisted analytics, and data-driven performance management, should be prioritised to ensure Jersey's policing model remains fit for purpose in the modern age.



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Finally, the JPA would encourage the Government to revisit its approach to non-pay pressures. Reliance on vacancy absorption to balance budgets is a short-term expedient that compromises operational effectiveness and long-term value for money. A stable, transparent allocation for operational costs would provide a more sustainable foundation.

The JPA respectfully draws the Panel's attention to the proposed budget for 2025-2028 in which it states, 'the successful implementation of violence against women and girls' legislation will require additional resources for the police and other departments, who are already seeing increased demand in these areas. The financial implications will be considered as part of the proposition proposing the new legislation and will be included in the budget for 2027. It is therefore considered vital by the JPA that additional funding for SoJP is delivered in 2027.

Conclusion

The Authority wishes to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the officers and staff of the SoJP, who continue to deliver a high standard of service despite increasing demands and constrained resources.

The Authority appreciates the financial challenges faced by the Government and the Assembly, but believes that underfunding in policing carries significant operational, reputational and social risks.

The Authority is encouraged by recent meetings between senior Treasury officials and the Chief Officer of Police to address the budgetary challenges in 2026. It also wishes to acknowledge the determination of the Minister for JHA in securing 10 new recruits in 2026.

The community's safety and confidence depend upon a well-resourced, responsive and modern police service. The current budget proposals, while fiscally restrained, do not provide the flexibility or growth necessary to sustain that standard.

The Authority therefore respectfully invites the Panel to recognise these concerns within its forthcoming report and to recommend that Ministers give urgent consideration to an uplift in funding for the SoJP.

The JPA would be pleased to provide further information, or to attend an oral hearing, should the Panel find that helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Harman

Simon Harman
Chair,
Jersey Police Authority

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