

Deputy R. Ward  
Chairman, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel  
Scrutiny Office, States Greffe  
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Dear R. Ward,

**RE: [The Government Plan](#)**

Digital Jersey welcomes the time and consideration given by the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel to consult with stakeholders on the Government Plan and in particular digital skills. In September 2019, Digital Jersey opened the Digital Jersey Academy, the islands first dedicated centre for the delivery of digital skills. We see this new Academy as imperative to delivering Governments ambition for economic diversification, productivity growth and resilience.

From our perspective, the decision to clearly commit resourcing the Digital Jersey Academy in the new Government Plan, which spans political cycles and brings together the Council of Ministers priorities, income and expenditure decisions and public sector operational objectives is strongly welcomed. We echo the views of Government that many economic and social goals acted upon today, will only bear fruit over a timeline that stretches well beyond the term of any Council of Ministers. This rationale clearly applies to the Digital Jersey Academy and the long-term investment into digital skills.

We welcome the broadness of the Government Plan and its foresight to consider the wider geopolitical, technological and economic context within which the island operates, acknowledging that *'change is happening at an increasing pace and while this brings with it risks, it also offers new opportunities'*. This foresight reflects the decision to invest in digital skills and specifically the Digital Jersey Academy. The Academy will be instrumental in mitigating against possible negative implications from the adoption of new technologies and better prepare the economy and social infrastructure for changes beyond our control.

Recognition throughout the Government Plan of the importance of skills in achieving continued prosperity, economic diversification and the Council of Minister's objectives mirrors the views of our members. We welcome the Government's commitment to resourcing the new post-16 education strategy, a purpose-built further education campus and ongoing support for the Digital Jersey Academy. We believe that it is vital that islanders are given the opportunity to train and reskill throughout their careers, especially if we are to profit from the opportunities presented by the fourth industrial revolution.

As an industry association the feedback provided in our response is positioned to reflect the needs of the business community. However, our primary concern is with developing the islands digital economy. The following paper addresses the specific consultation points which we feel, as an economic development body, it is appropriate and useful for us to comment on. For this reason, our paper primarily addresses the funding to deliver the Digital Jersey Academy

Kind regards



**TONY MORETTA**  
CEO DIGITAL JERSEY

## Question 1

Whether funded projects meet the Ongoing Initiatives, Common Themes and, ultimately, Common Strategic Priorities?

Digital is a pervasive enabler for all five of the Governments Strategic Priorities, be it the use of technology to reduce our impact on the **environment**; improving **social mobility and inequality** through enhanced job opportunities; creating a **vibrant economy** and economic diversification; as a tool to underpin self-paced and independent learning for **children**; and to enhance, motivate and measure **islanders wellbeing and physical health**.

The Common Themes that underpin the Strategic Objectives directly reference digital - *'We will explore and use the opportunities offered by digital'*. Digital is also imperative to the delivery the Governments Ongoing Initiative to create a *'modern, innovative public sector that meets the needs of islanders effectively and efficiently'*.

In the Government Plan, spending prioritisation has been given to the launch and running of the Digital Jersey Academy and the Digital Leadership Programme. Based on the above, it is Digital Jersey's view that this funding prioritisation aligns closely to the stated ongoing initiatives, common themes and common strategic priorities detailed.

### (a) Digital Jersey Academy

There is broad acknowledgment that *'as a system overall, Jersey's educational provision does not yet perform to the highest international standards'*.

The Government Plan outlines continued financial support for the newly launched Digital Jersey Academy. The Academy is the islands first dedicated centre for the delivery of in demand digital skills. It acts as a hub for people interested in technology, looking for career guidance, or deciding their next steps in education. This funding is central to the successful delivery of several Government objectives, including the new post-16 education strategy; the stated need to address digital skills shortages; and ultimately to *'create a sustainable, vibrant economy and a skilled local workforce for the future'*. For this reason, the Academy forms a cornerstone of plans to develop a sustainable long-term plan to improve the islands education system.

This will *'transform access to relevant high-quality education and training, bringing it into the Island wherever possible, and equipping Islanders with the training and qualifications that will protect and sustain our economy and maintain a vibrant society. The skills and capacity to respond to fast-evolving developments in technology are a crucial component of this approach'*.

The Academy offers a wide range of training with a delivery approach designed to suit the needs of all learning styles and personal commitments. This includes, part and full time, apprentice and short courses. The style of learning delivery is innovative by design, with all courses recorded and streamed online, a strong emphasis on cross-curricula project work and assessments against industry projects. This will close the gap between educators and employers. Industry plays an active role in steering and shaping courses taught as the Academy, as is outlined in the Government Plan. The combination of these delivery approaches will significantly improve education outcomes.

The Academy will improve access to learning opportunities and broaden social mobility to new and higher-value skills and jobs to those that want to pursue education. This will improve digital skills across our workforce, and help Jersey seize the opportunities presented by developments in technology which will sustain improvements to our productivity and international competitiveness.

Working in tandem with members of Digital Jersey, the Academy will continue to identify current and future demand for skills, taking an agile and responsive approach to the delivery of vocational and academic provisions to meet those needs and enabling targeted upskilling of the workforce.

For the reasons outlined above, we consider the ongoing investment into the Digital Jersey Academy as closely aligned with the Common Strategic Objectives of the Council of Ministers.

## Question 2

Ensuring that the projects and amendments to be lodged are consistent with the requirements of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019.

Digital Jersey welcomes the principle motive behind the Public Finances (Jersey) Law, specifically the obligation on the Council of Ministers *'to have regard to the long-term sustainability of our Island and to ensure that Jersey remains a vibrant, prosperous and safe place into future generations'*. It is Digital Jersey's view that the funding allocated to the Digital Jersey Academy aligns closely with this stated notion. In particular, the Academy will contribute towards the long-term sustainability of the island through the acceleration and adoption of digital solutions and ultimately behavioural change.

The Academy will provide future generation with the skills and infrastructure needed to be successful and prosperous in the fast-changing world being moulded by the proliferation of technologies that are underpinning the fourth industrial revolution. The Academy will also be a cornerstone in the accelerated adoption of new technologies which will lead to a material reduction in our carbon output, creating a more environmentally sustainable island (paperless society, smart island etc.).

We feel that we are not best placed to make a judgment on if planned expenditure in delivering the Digital Jersey Academy contravene or comply with the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019.

## Question 3

The level of resourcing, of all forms, allocated to projects and whether this is sufficient or excessive in enabling the project to meet its stated aims.

We consider the level of funding proposed as essential to the delivery of key Government objectives, as outlined under question one. The challenges the island faces to adapt to the ever-progressing digital landscape and its impact on the way in which we work, socialize and travel is only going to accelerate. For this reason, it's vital that we manage associated risks and fully leverage opportunities. To achieve this requires change to the island's economic architecture, social fabric and Government behaviour, all of which investment into the Digital Jersey Academy will support.

For the reasons outlined above, we feel that the level of funding being allocated to the delivery of the Digital Jersey Academy is broadly sufficient to enable projects to meet their stated aims in the short to medium term. However, as the impact of technology on our economy becomes felt ever more strongly, we will likely need to leverage the Academy as a mechanism for running yet undefined training initiatives. These training initiatives will need to be responsive to the needs of individuals and industry, supporting the realignment of the islands skill profile towards those needed of a digital economy. This will be particularly pressing for those that need retraining and upskilling as elements of their daily tasks, especially those which are repetitive, are automated; freeing up either part of their working day or in some cases leading to redundancy.

## Question 6

Whether or not there are clear lines of accountability for each project?

Digital Jersey has clear lines of responsibility for the management of grant funded projects. This is assured by process and procedures which ensure that relevant oversight and sign-off are given to any number of projects, be it financial or activity related. Our Governance is also assured by a layer of working groups which give transparency and scrutiny to work. Specifically, we have a number of working groups to oversee activity in target areas, such as skills, digital health, IoT and an organisation wide member advisory group.

The Digital Jersey Academy is overseen by the Digital Skills Partnership. The Partnership is designed to bring together industry and education, to co-deliver the Digital Skill Strategy 2018-2023, following the recommendations of the University of Exeter. The group is made-up of over 20 members from industry, education and Government who shape and steer our activity in this area, giving continued oversight of activity.



The Digital Skills Partnership compliments the work of the Digital Jersey Board which has ultimate sign-off and accountability for decision made.

The management of grant funding payments is managed and coordinated by the team at Skills Jersey. Funding is paid upon receiving evidence of spending (invoices etc.) and against pre-agreed spending areas, such as capital, learning material and staff. Oversight and accountability to assured by a quarterly partnership meeting with Government, alongside regular communication with Skills Jersey and the wider CYPES department. All income and expenditures are managed by a third-party chartered and regulated accountancy firm with an annual audit of accounts produced by PwC.

For the reasons outlined above, we are comfortable that Digital Jersey has sufficient lines of accountability in place to deliver stated objectives.

**END.**