Government of Jersey
Union Street | St Helier | Jersey | JE2 3DN

Deputy Louise Doublet
Chair – Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel
By email

15th October 2025

Dear Chair

Re: Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel – Proposed Budget 2026-2029 Review

Thank you for your letter dated the 30th of September, regarding the Panel's review of the Proposed Budget 2026-2029.

Please find the following responses to the Panel's questions:

- ***We note receipt of the 2025 Departmental Business Plans, however, as we will be reviewing the proposals for 2026, the Panel also requests the Employment, Social Security and Housing (ESSH) Department's Business Plan for 2026. If this is not possible, we request any supporting documentation which has informed the proposed funding allocations for 2026 for ESSH workstreams under your ministerial remit.***

- ***A detailed list of the projects and/or workstreams that you will be undertaking in 2026.***

- ***An outline of your legislative programme for 2026.***

Departmental business plans were published earlier this year and cover an 18 month period, from January 2025 to the end of June 2026. The ESSH plan sets out operational projects and the Cabinet Office plan includes the legislative programme for the Government as a whole, including the Minister's proposals. Both documents are available as follows:

Employment, Social Security and Housing Business Plan 2025.pdf

Cabinet Office Business Plan 2025.pdf

The report attached to this letter as an appendix provides an update on each of the business plan actions, both completed and planned for the rest of 2025 and the first half of 2026.

- ***A progress update in respect of any projects and/or workstreams agreed by the States Assembly as part of the Government Plan 2025-28 including where these:***
    - ***are continuing in 2026***
    - ***have been delayed and the rationale for this***
    - ***have been cancelled and the rationale for this.***

I did not submit any growth bids for the Government Plan 2025-2028. As such, there's no update to provide in response to this question.

- ***A detailed breakdown of how the proposed £113m allocated for ESSH will be spent.***

£'000	**2026 Estimate**
Revenue	
Earned through operations	11,470
Total Revenue	**11.470**
Expenditure	
Social benefit payments	96,262
Staff costs	19,569
Other operating expenses	2,960
Grants and subsidies	5,023
Impairments	955
Total expenditure	**124,769**
Net revenue expenditure (near cash)	**113,299**

- ***An outline of any changes in policy direction or delivery for 2026 and the impact thereof.***

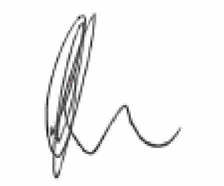
There are no changes in policy direction or delivery.

- ***An outline of any changes to staff posts and restructuring within your department and the anticipated resultant savings and impact on service delivery.***

The organisational changes that were required to meet the 2026 savings target have already been made during 2025, in order to achieve a full year of savings. These were made through vacancy management and non-replacement of roles.

All vacancies within the department continue to be scrutinised before replacement. If any future changes are proposed, the standard processes will be followed with staff as required.

Kind regards,



Deputy Lyndsay Feltham
Minister for Social Security

Appendix: Published Business Plan 25/26 (CABO and ESSH) and update as to current progress and plans

Published wording **Blue = legislative programme**	**Update for Scrutiny October 2025**
Customer Service Continue to implement our Transform programme to deliver a new customer-focused digital system to manage benefit claims & payments, providing value for money and long-term sustainability Bed in and make incremental improvements to the new Union Street customer management systems & processes to align with first few months' experience post-opening	We have successfully completed the planned Discovery and Proof of Concept stages of the programme. This enabled us to tailor our plans for the five subsequent Release implementations, the first of which is now commencing and will deliver Income Support functionality alongside a significantly updated and more accessible customer experience. Union Street bedding in has now concluded. Our pre move-in preparations proved to be comprehensive with only a few relatively minor changes required in subsequent months. Positive feedback has been received from staff and customers alike, especially when comparing the improvement in experience to La Motte Street.
Disability strategy Implement agreed priorities within the disability strategy, based on the recommendations of the Independent Advisory Board, to support Islanders with disabilities across all aspects of their daily lives (see also below)	Focus has been maintained on the five key deliverables: launching the Connect Me directory, introducing Inclusion Champions in schools, improving Blue Badge parking accessibility, developing customer-facing staff training, and planning for transition improvements. Strong progress has been achieved across all areas, with delivery tracking well against schedule. The 2026-2029 Budget includes funding to accelerate the delivery of the Disability Strategy to improve access to services and activities for disabled Islanders who may face barriers to inclusion.
Update benefit legislation to support the major IT benefits project (Transform)… Support the implementation of the Transform programme to deliver a new customer-focused digital system, to manage benefit claims and payments, providing value for money and long-term sustainability	Work will continue in 2026 on the Transform programme. The first benefit element to be delivered will be income support. Legislative items will continue to be progressed as needed
Continue to develop and maintain primary care services delivered through general practice and community pharmacy, providing access in the community to a range of health services	Work will continue in 2026 to support the delivery of primary care services using HIF funding
Update benefit legislation… including replacement of current Long Term Incapacity Allowance rules	The LTDA regulations are being lodged in October for debate at the end of November.

Published wording **Blue = legislative programme**	**Update for Scrutiny October 2025**
Develop and introduce a modern benefit system to support workers with ongoing health conditions to reduce the impact of ill health on individual workers and the economy as a whole	Work will continue throughout 2026 to develop the details of the scheme with an anticipated go live date in 2027.
Social Security (Jersey) Law 1974 & Social Security Bonus (Jersey) Law 2014 – review pensioner benefit eligibility rule Review eligibility for the Jersey old age pension and means-tested pensioner benefits and update as needed to provide appropriate support to today's pensioners (also see below)	The 2026 budget includes provision for an expansion of the Pension Plus scheme. Law drafting is underway with a debate likely in early 2026, subject to approval of the budget proposal. Implementation of the expanded scheme will follow in 2026.
Social Security (Jersey) Law 1974 – review working age eligibility rules Review current eligibility rules for working age benefits and the award of credits to ensure that the contributory benefit system continues to provide appropriate support to today's workers	Changes have been completed to expand the provision of credits to students and parents, to support access to future benefits. Work continues to explore possible options to support access to short term benefits for migrant workers. This work will continue in 2026.
Long Term Care (Jersey) Law 2012 – legal framework to establish rates for domiciliary care Complete the introduction of standard domiciliary care rates to help the growth of a sustainable domiciliary care market, supported by the fair allocation of LTC benefit funding	Standard rate has been implemented. Law drafting is well advanced to incorporate standard rates into the LTC legislation.
Work across government to make greater use of technology to support Long-Term Care (LTC) services, including a wider telecare offer to support independent living	We are working with Health Care Jersey on a 'Discharge to Assess' pilot that incorporates telecare devices to support safe and independent living at home. We have also initiated steps that will enable Income Support customers to access telecare devices in 2026, helping to reduce barriers to adoption.
Provide financial support to local households through the Community Costs Bonus scheme in line with current cost of living pressures in each year	The 2026 CCB will be delivered using the same rules as the 2025 bonus.
Employment (Jersey) Law 2003 – improvements to include whistleblowing protection Complete the introduction of appropriate whistleblowing legislation as agreed by the States Assembly	Law drafting is well advanced. An extended lodging period is being planned to provide time for detailed consideration of the proposed legislation with a debate in early 2026.
Employment (Jersey) Law 2003 – improvements to include whistleblowing protection Continue to develop employment law in line with international good practice, including a consideration of TUPE, unfair dismissal rights and a review of the rules governing the Jersey Employment and Discrimination Tribunal	Work continues on the review of Tribunal rules and a reduction of the qualifying period for unfair dismissal from 52 weeks to 26 weeks. These will be accommodated as resources allow alongside the work on the whistleblowing project. The proposed review of TUPE protection will not take place before the election.
Confirm and publish the 2026 minimum wage rate based on two-thirds of the 2024 median wage in line	The rate for 2026 will be published shortly.

Published wording **Blue = legislative programme**	**Update for Scrutiny October 2025**
with the Common Strategic Policy (CSP) commitment to move towards a living wage	A minimum wage consultation will be undertaken in Q2 and Q3 2026 to support the setting of the 2027 minimum wage.
Provide financial support to low earning workers with less than five years residency during 2025 as part of the transition towards a living wage	The RESP scheme has been successfully run in 2025, using one off funding. It is not planned to continue in 2026.
Commission and support independent actuarial reviews of the three social security funds (Social Security, Health Insurance, and Long-Term Care) to provide an up to date, expert assessment of the financial state of each for the incoming States Assembly in 2026	Reviews for the SSF and LTCF are being commissioned in the autumn with results published in 2026 (LTC) and early 2027 (SSF). The Minister is supporting the MHSS in his major review of sustainable healthcare funding and the HIF review will now be undertaken at the end of 2026 in line with the timing of the wider MHSS project to transform health services and investigate sustainable funding options for future health care costs.
Building on previous work, undertake research and preparatory work to develop a framework for secondary pension scheme, which will give all workers the opportunity to access a workplace pension (also see below)	Funding from 2026 is included in the 2026 Budget to support preparatory work in this area.
Items added to 2026 programme in line with 2026-2029 Budget proposals	
SSF and SSRF review: *"… the Minister for Social Security will instruct the independent actuary to undertake a full review of the current funding policy of the scheme as established in the late 1990s. The review will include the outcome of the decisions taken at that time and an assessment of the current position. An international comparison of similar government funded schemes will be undertaken and an assessment of the level of assets considered to be prudent to support such a scheme. The actuary will also be asked to set out a range of options in terms of the future sustainable funding of the scheme, in terms of both contribution levels and the future role and nature of an annual States grant into the scheme"*	Scoping for the review is underway, and the review will run through to 2026. The results will be provided to the incoming Government in July 2026.
LTC review: *"Ministers have instigated a detailed internal review of the LTC scheme to consider the way in which benefit levels are set and income and assets of claimants are taken into account as well as the way in which services are delivered.*	Scoping for the review is underway, and the review will run through to 2026. The results will be provided to the incoming Government in July 2026.

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The outcome of this detailed review will be available to the incoming Council of Ministers in summer 2026 to allow for a decision to be made during 2026 as to the actions needed to increase contributions into the Fund and/or reduce the generosity of benefits paid out of the Fund for future new benefit applicants, to ensure the sustainability of the Fund in coming decades"	
SISCo: *"The Budget also allocates funds to support Islanders and strengthen communities, through the provision of targeted support to*	
• *expand eligibility for the Pension Plus scheme*	See above
• *help struggling parents with the cost of the new school year,*	A new bonus payment will be made in 2026 to parents of school children. Development work will run through Q4 2015 and Q1 2026.
• *accelerate the delivery of the Disability Strategy to improve access to services and activities for disabled islanders who may face barriers to inclusion, and*	In addition to actions above, in Q4 2025, the Disability and Inclusion team will identify an accelerated programme for delivery in 2026.
• *work to develop a workplace pension that gives all workers the right to an occupational pension"*	See above