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Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.
By email to: K.Decarteret@gov.je

09th November 2023

Dear Deputy Curtis,

Government Plan Review 2024-2027

Thank you for your letter requesting the views of the Jersey Police Authority (“JPA”) regarding a number of areas of the Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023). I have taken into consideration your Terms of Reference for this review, and I offer you the Authority’s views and comments on the related following projects:

Digital Forensics Unit (I-POL-GP24-001)

Digital forensics is a rapidly evolving branch of forensic investigation that looks to maximise the evidence recovered from devices used to commit crime. The Digital Forensics Unit (“DFU”), within the States of Jersey Police (“SOJP”), carries out this work. The number of devices that people own and the volume of data that is stored on these devices makes examinations incredibly complex and lengthy. Recovering data as evidence has a legal basis under the Criminal Procedures Law, which comes at a cost, and the process needs to comply with the Forensic Science Statutory Code from the 2nd of October 2023.

The number of cases submitted to the DFU has increased by over 140% in recent years. This has at times meant that the DFU has struggled to keep up with the unprecedented demand. Recent events in the form of two major incidents (marine collision and Haut Du Mont explosion) have brought into focus the lack of resilience and capacity within the unit. Keeping up with demand, advances in technology, the required software licences, equipment, and technology comes at a significant cost. The additional investment will allow the department to continue to address the increasing demands on the DFU.

Replacement Assets and Minor Capital – SoJP

Replacing assets and incurring minor capital expenditures are essential for maintaining operational effectiveness, ensuring officer safety, maintaining the confidence of the public, and meeting legal requirements. It also supports community policing efforts, crime prevention, emergency response, and employee morale. Further, it ensures that the organisation is able to adapt to technological advances.

For further information about the JPA,
Please go to www.jerseypoliceauthority.je
Contact us via enquiries@jerseypoliceauthority.je

Dewberry House – Sexual Assault Referral Centre

The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (“SARC”) is a vital resource for the Island. Staffed in partnership with other government departments and charitable stakeholders to ensure that victims of sexual assault can access the care and support they need promptly and comfortably.

An accessible building is essential for protecting victim’s physical and emotional well-being, preserving their confidentiality, and aiding in their path to recovery and justice. This is a continuation of funding from the original bid and the JPA remains of the opinion that this is a crucial service for the Islands and suggests that consideration should be given to the option for other government departments to share the funding requirement. .

You kindly requested our consideration on matters such as staffing levels or the proposed Value for Money Savings targets. I am aware that Officer Head count should be recruited to 215 with 125 support staff. This was agreed by the Assembly, and has indeed never been funded appropriately to allow this to occur.

The JPA addressed this matter to the Panel last year and has been clear that a fully established workforce as agreed in 2019 should be in place. While I fully support SOJP contributing to efforts to address public financing pressures, this cannot be at the expense of having appropriate numbers of police and support staff to deliver what the public in Jersey deserve and expect.

In recent years, SOJP have already made a significant amount of savings to ease the burden of public financing pressures.

Inadequate funding can have several consequences, which may affect public safety, police effectiveness, and community well-being. It is important to note that the specific consequences may vary depending on the extent of underfunding and the unique circumstances of Island life.

It is crucial to strike a balance between adequately funding SOJP and holding them to account for their performance. However, the consequences of underfunding can be detrimental to both our officers and staff as well as the communities they protect.

Given the statutory responsibility of the Authority to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the SOJP, I believe these matters should be brought to the attention of the Scrutiny panel.

Thank you for inviting the JPA to participate in this review.

Yours sincerely

Simon Harman

Simon Harman
Chair
Jersey Police Authority

CC: Executive Officer Jersey Police Authority
Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police
Minister for Justice and Home Affairs
Chief Officer Justice and Home Affairs

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