

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025): THIRTY- FIRST AMENDMENT (P.70/2025 AMD.(31)) – SECOND AMENDMENT

**Lodged au Greffe on 1st December 2025
by the Council of Ministers
Earliest date for debate: 8th December 2025**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025):
THIRTY-FIRST AMENDMENT (P.70/2025 AMD.(31)) – SECOND
AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 3, PARAGRAPH (b) viii. –

Substitute the words “£250,000 of” with “within”

2 PAGE 3, PARAGRAPH b (viii) –

Substitute the words “should be reserved as a ring-fenced budget line” with “, resources should be made available”

3 PAGE 3, PARAGRAPH b (viii) –

Substitute the words “, with this funding not to be drawn from the existing Housing budget within the Cabinet Office Head of Expenditure.” with “should it be required.”

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Note: After this amendment, the amendment would read as follows –

1 PAGE 3, PARAGRAPH (b)(viii) –

After the words "Appendix 2 – Summary Table 5(i) and (ii) of the Report", insert the words –

“, except that, in “Summary Table 5(i) – Revenue Heads of Expenditure”, within the Cabinet Office Head of Expenditure for 2026 resources should be made available for the development of policy mechanisms to address empty residential properties, should it be required.

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) In accordance with Article 16 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (the Law) to approve an amendment to the Government Plan 2025 – 2028 (entitled “Budget 2025 – 2028”) to a reduction in the 2025 head of expenditure “Grants to States Funds” as included in Table 5(i) Revenue Heads of Expenditure of that Government Plan from £119,821,000 to £69,821,000.

- (b) To receive the Government Plan 2026 – 2029 (entitled “Budget 2026-2029”) specified in Article 9(1) of the Law and specifically –
- i. to approve the estimate of total States income to be paid into the Consolidated Fund in 2026 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 1 to the Report, which is inclusive of the proposed taxation and impôts duties changes outlined in the Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(a) of the Law.
 - ii. to refer to their Act dated 24th June 2003 in which they approved that no new ‘user pays’ charges be introduced without any such charge receiving prior in principle approval by the States Assembly and accordingly to approve the introduction of two new charges, to be levied by Health and Care Jersey to promote appropriate use of the Emergency Department and for repeated non-attendance of outpatient appointments, detailed in the section entitled “Departmental Income Sources” as set out in the Appendix to the accompanying Report.
 - iii. to approve the proposed Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2026, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 2 to the Report, which may be obtained by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as and when required, in line with Article 9 (2)(c) of the Law, of up to those revised approval amounts.
 - iv. to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2026 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law.
 - v. to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Stabilisation Fund in 2026 of up to £50 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on the availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2025 in excess of the estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2026.
 - vi. to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Agricultural Loans Fund in 2026 of up to £5 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2025 in excess of estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2026;
 - vii. to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2026 and the total cost of each such project and any amendments to the proposed total cost of a major project under a previously approved Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 4 to the Report.
 - viii. to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2026, for each head of expenditure, being

gross expenditure less estimated income (if any), in line with Articles 9(2)(g), 10(1) and 10(2) of the Law, and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report, , except that, in “Summary Table 5(i) – Revenue Heads of Expenditure”, within the Cabinet Office Head of Expenditure for 2026 resources should be made available for the development of policy mechanisms to address empty residential properties, should it be required.

- ix. to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2026 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report.
- x. to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation’s trading fund for 2026 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report.
- xi. to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2026 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report.
- xii. to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2026-2029, as set in the Appendix to the accompanying Report.

REPORT

It's unacceptable that, in an island of our size, we have so many properties lying empty when so many Islanders want to find a home that meets their needs – and at a price they can afford. For this reason, the Minister for Housing is grateful to the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel – and the work and emphasis of the Jersey Youth Assembly – for once again raising this issue.

Upon taking office in January 2023, one of the Minister for Housing's first actions was to investigate the progress being made in respect of empty properties. Although the previous Government had £500,000 to deal with the issue of empty homes, only a fraction was spent to fund an additional role within the housing team. The rest of the budget had fallen away as an underspend yet the cost was still being borne on an unfunded basis – and it was not apparent that a single home had been brought back into use.

It became very clear to the Minister that, whilst the former Minister had established the Empty Homes Service, it was not delivering tangible results, and was nothing short of a data collection exercise. The Minister therefore quickly determined that this service should end, and all work be paused until such a time as when work to develop meaningful policy with real impact might be done.

The Assembly are well aware of this Council of Ministers' commitment to ensure that, as a government, we work within our means. This is vital for the sustainability of public finances, reducing reliance on consultants and preventing the continued swell of the public service. For this reason, the Minister made the difficult decision not to prioritise work to address the empty homes issue in Jersey for the time being, instead focusing their resources to support more Islanders into home ownership, improve the experience of renters, and address the plight of homelessness. These were the Minister's commitments upon entering office, which he has been duty-bound to uphold.

However, as we continue to make good progress in those areas [and move closer to an election], now is the time to start thinking about how housing policy resource can be best allocated to make progress on those wider issues prevalent in our housing market, such as tackling the issue of empty homes.

The Minister has already explored promising concepts, such as the potential introduction of a legal framework to implement Empty Dwelling Management Orders. But this type of work is not extraordinary. It is policy and legislation development, which could be delivered within existing resources.

Buying in consultancy, or re-prioritising staff resource from another Ministerial portfolio is therefore not the answer. It will be more efficient and effective to deliver this through our established housing policy expertise, and should additional resource be deemed necessary, it can be sought when a clear plan has been developed.

Whilst well-intended, the Panel's amendment seeks to ring-fence money from within the Cabinet Office, but without any clarity as to why this level of funding would be needed, and what exactly it would be spent on. This would not only be imprudent, but potentially disastrous for the Ministerial portfolio which would then suffer the corresponding loss of budget], comprising their ability to deliver other high-priority work to improve the lives of Islanders.

To be clear, since the formation of this Council of Ministers, the Cabinet Office has saved almost £3.6 million in total. On a like-for-like comparison, it has reduced by 32.6 full-time equivalent staff to a new total of 173.7 FTE, a 16% reduction.

Financial and staffing implications

This amendment removes the direct and immediate financial implications of the original amendment.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

It is considered that this amendment has no direct or indirect impact on children and that the duty to have due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does not arise. Accordingly, a Children's Rights Impact Assessment is not required under the Children (Conventions Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022.