

STATES OF JERSEY



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

ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT FUNDING

Lodged au Greffe on 24th November 2025
by the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel
Earliest date for debate: 8th December 2025

STATES GREFFE

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

1 PAGE 3, PARAGRAPH (b)(iv) –

After the words "Article 9(2)(b) of the Law" insert the words –

“, except that in Summary Table 3 there should be inserted a new line with the following –

£'000		2026 Proposed	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed	2029 Proposed
Transfer From	Transfer To				
Strategic Reserve	Consolidated Fund	656			

2 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (b)(viii) –

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

“, except that in Table 5(i) the Departmental Head of Expenditure for the Environment should be increased by £656,000, with any consequential amendments to be reflected as necessary throughout the Budget.”

ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY
PANEL

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, except that in Summary Table 3 there should be inserted a new line with the following –

£'000		2026 Proposed	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed	2029 Proposed
Transfer From	Transfer To				
Strategic Reserve	Consolidated Fund	656			

- 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 Table 5(i) the Departmental Head of Expenditure for the Environment should be increased by £656,000, with any consequential amendments to be reflected as necessary throughout the Budget.”**
- 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

This amendment restores the 2026 allocation for the Environment Head of Expenditure in the *Proposed Budget 2026-2029* ([P.70/2025](#)) (the ‘Budget 2026-2029’) to its 2025 level by increasing the sum set out in Table 9 (Revenue Heads of Expenditure) from £11,107,000 to £11,763,000. This reverses the proposed baseline reduction and keeps the Environment Department’s budget at its current level. The amendment proposes that the sum of £656,000 is funded through a transfer from the Strategic Reserve Fund, under Article 24 of the *Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019*.

The Panel considers this necessary due to the deterioration of the Environment Department’s (the ‘Department’) financial position over 2025. In his [letter of 22nd October 2025](#), the Minister for the Environment (the ‘Minister’) confirmed that the Department was forecasting a significant overspend of £500,000 for 2025, and that it had only recently been rebuilt to a functional level. The Minister additionally advised that the Natural Environment directorate will see its budget reduced by just over £500,000 in 2026. During the Panel’s [public hearing](#) on the Budget 2026-2029 held on 5th November 2025 (the ‘Budget Public Hearing’), the Minister also emphasised that in the Department “*we have much smaller teams of maybe 2 or 3, where the manager if you like, the knowledge, the really highly qualified people are part of a very small team. If you reduce that team by one, it has a massive effect.*” This underscores the disproportionate operational impact of resource reductions.

Within the same and enhancing this in answer to [O.Q.245/2025](#), the Minister was explicit that further budget savings can now only be made to essential services and personnel which will “*severely undermine service delivery across the board*”. According to the Minister, the proposed reductions will:

- Prevent full administration of the *Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2021* especially in determining breach of legislation.
- Reduce biodiversity and habitat protection through diminished input into planning applications.
- Undermine required reporting under Multilateral Environmental Agreements including the *Food and Environmental Protection Act* (the ‘FEPA’).
- Jeopardise Jersey’s reputation and its position in external trade relationships, including ongoing EU–UK reset negotiations.
- Significantly weaken regulatory services across air quality, water quality, plant health, animal health, pollution control and environmental law enforcement.
- Scale back the management and upkeep of public paths throughout the Island.
- Reduce critical marine-environment work, including offshore heavy-metal analysis and public outreach and education activity.
- Force a halving of the biodiversity team, cutting monitoring and reporting capacity to two part-time officers.
- Continued pressure to maintain resilience into the Jersey Meteorological Team, providing essential 24/7 meteorological and climatological services.

The impact on biodiversity is particularly acute. The Minister’s letter dated [22nd October 2025](#) confirms the inability to recruit into vacant posts will leave just two part-time officers responsible for Island-wide ecological monitoring and reporting. The Minister acknowledged the extensive contribution of volunteers supporting

environmental monitoring, noting: *“I would not be surprised if it is somewhere nearly 500 people who help the Natural Environment team to do their work... I do not know that I could even think about asking them to do more because their input is great already.”*

Within the same letter, the Minister also outlined the team’s biodiversity work, which includes coordinating this wide volunteer network and providing training and support for reptile, amphibian and butterfly monitoring. The team also carries out water-quality monitoring across streams, groundwater and inshore sites to inform evidence-based improvement measures, including ongoing efforts to reduce nitrate levels. Air-quality monitoring is likewise undertaken, with current data showing poorer air quality during winter and peak school and commuter periods, underlining the need for continued intervention.

Despite this the Water Quality & Safety Programme, including essential PFAS work, must continue into 2026, yet much of the required activity is currently unfunded. Approximately £200,000 is needed for technical scientific expertise and environmental and food-safety surveys to progress the next phase of the programme, which builds on the findings of the PFAS Independent Scientific Advisory Panel.

Moreover, the Panel received submissions from the Jersey Asian Hornet Group on [6th October 2025](#) and [4th November 2025](#) which advised that cuts to biodiversity and invasive species funding would directly undermine the Island’s Asian Hornet Control Programme, particularly the capacity to destroy nests and support volunteer tracking efforts. The Group warned that reduced funding could lead to nests being left untreated, driving rapid growth in hornet numbers and posing *“a significant risk to public health”*, local biodiversity, and the environment. The Group’s letters emphasised the seriousness of these risks, noting that:

- in France there have been several deaths from Asian hornet nests being accidentally disturbed,
- tree surgeons and gardening firms are often required to halt work when a nest is detected and await its destruction, and
- agriculture and the wider natural environment will suffer from a major reduction in pollinators if the species is not effectively controlled.

The Panel also notes further correspondence from the Minister dated [20th November 2025](#), which highlighted the increasing risks arising from the loss of specialist officers within Natural Environment. The Department will no longer be able to respond effectively to UK Government consultations on Multilateral Environmental Agreements, limiting Jersey’s ability to ensure its interests are represented in international environmental policy. For example, workstreams likely to be most affected include those related to the FEPA, which aims to safeguard human health and the environment by regulating food safety, pesticide use, and the disposal of hazardous materials.

Critically, within the letter dated 20th November 2025 the Minister has warned that without the necessary specialist resource, Jersey will be unable to participate meaningfully in upcoming trade-agreement consultations: posing a significant risk to Jersey–UK–EU relations and to future trade opportunities. During the Budget Public Hearing, both the Minister and his Officers confirmed that work on the Brexit Reset is currently unfunded. As a result, *“the first part of trying to balance the equation will be to look at our existing resources within the department and reprioritise them away from*

some areas of work into this area of work.” This means other essential environmental and regulatory functions risk being further undermined.

The laws likely to be affected by the EU–UK reset, and which Jersey must adapt to maintain compliance, include legislation governing the movement of animal products, food, and port-regulated trade. As the Minister stated that *“every law will have to be sifted through to make sure it comes up to the standards required.”* To avoid remaining classified as a “third country”, which would create major barriers to trade, Jersey’s domestic legislation must align with EU requirements on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement matters and operationally align with current EU policies. An initial legislative-scoping exercise has already identified up to 89 pieces of legislation across fisheries, plant health, food safety, and animal-welfare/veterinary law that may require amendment, yet the work remains without funding.

Restoring the Environment Department’s funding allocation to its 2025 level is therefore the most proportionate response. It prevents an unnecessary baseline cut at a time when the Department is already forecasting an overspend, essential workstreams are under strain, and statutory and biodiversity functions would otherwise be underfunded to the point of compromising public health, environmental protection, and Jersey’s compliance with international agreements.

Moreover, in the letter dated [20th November 2025](#), the Minister clarified that while the Department had received budget increases up to 2023, these uplifts were directly tied to new statutory and regulatory obligations arising from the Common Strategic Policy (the ‘CSP’), with Brexit identified as a major driver of increased workload and compliance requirements. Since 2023, however, the Department has received no growth funding for new schemes, while the costs of delivering these additional responsibilities have continued to rise. This structural mismatch between expanding obligations and static resources reinforces the Panel’s assessment that the proposed reduction in 2026 is neither realistic nor sustainable, and that maintaining the 2025 funding level is the minimum necessary to avoid further erosion of core environmental capacity.

The Panel also notes that the Department has no contingency provision within its budget, despite being required to respond to unplanned and unpredictable events. As the Minister explained in the Budget Public Hearing, the Department must manage *“other unknowns”* and *“uncertainties...such as weather events”* as well as *“disease outbreaks, both statutory pest disease or animal health, plant health or...public health.”* The Minister also cited Storm Ciarán as a recent example which had *“a massive impact on the department”*, requiring extensive emergency work for which *“no additional funding”* was provided. The Department was instead expected to absorb these pressures within its existing allocation.

The proposed cuts will also have broader economic consequences. Jersey’s natural environment, biodiversity, and access to coastal paths and countryside are central to the Island’s tourism offer; reductions in environmental management, maintenance and monitoring risk directly undermining this major sector. The Minister further highlighted that diminished capacity within the Department could impede Jersey’s ability to participate effectively in negotiations relating to the EU–UK reset. A failure to secure adequate resources for this work carries material risks for the Island’s trading position, including the possibility of Jersey being treated as a third country or excluded from any new arrangements, thereby increasing barriers to trade.

In the Panel's view, the combination of reduced environmental monitoring, weakened regulatory capacity and degradation in biodiversity protection represents an immediate threat to the health and safety of the inhabitants of Jersey and the environment. The Department has no suitable alternative funding source to maintain these essential functions. Therefore, a limited and targeted draw from the Strategic Reserve Fund is justified to prevent an immediate threat to public health and safety and the environment, as permitted under Article 24(2)(b) of the *Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019*.

Financial and staffing implications

This amendment increases the 2026 revenue allocation for the Environment Head of Expenditure by £656,000, which represents an additional cost to the Strategic Reserve Fund.

There are no new staffing requirements arising from this amendment; however, reinstating the 2025 baseline avoids further reductions in staffing levels and may prevent vacancies from remaining unfilled.

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.