

Policy Brief

Liquid waste management

Introduction

Upgrading Jersey's liquid waste management system and how this should be funded are important policy issues. This brief collates key evidence, describes statutory context, and analyses policy options aligned to Jersey's strategic goals and international best practice.

Summary

Liquid waste is any unwanted material in liquid form that is produced by households, businesses, healthcare providers, or industries.

The [Waste Management \(Jersey\) Law 2005](#) and the [Drainage \(Jersey\) Law 2005](#) provide the legal framework, and Jersey's Bridging Liquid Waste Strategy (2023–26) sets out the current policy.

Significant investment is needed to upgrade and maintain the sewerage system and treatment facilities. A decision is needed on how this will be paid for. Existing arrangements lack a mechanism to allocate costs according to usage or polluter-pays principles.

Policy options include direct user-pays charging; investment in treatment and circular economy; enhanced licensing and regulatory oversight; incentives for reduction and public engagement; and long-term planning for resilience.

The proposed 2026 Budget includes provision for charges totalling £10 million to be levied from 2028 onwards.

What is liquid waste

Liquid waste is any unwanted material in liquid form that is produced by households, businesses, healthcare providers, or industries. This includes dirty water from sinks, baths, and toilets (known as sewage), wastewater from laundries, dishwashers, and showers, as well as oils, fats, cleaning fluids, chemicals, paints, and even liquid food waste. Most people produce liquid waste every day; whenever the toilet is flushed, dishes washed, or something poured down the drain, liquid waste enters the sewer or septic system. Some liquid waste can be hazardous and must be handled with care to prevent pollution, protect drinking water, and safeguard the environment and public health. Proper disposal of liquid waste is particularly important in Jersey, as there is limited space and a sensitive local ecosystem. Its treatment and disposal are essential for environmental protection and public health, guided by Jersey law and international conventions, in particular the Basel Convention.

Legislative and Regulatory Context

The [Waste Management \(Jersey\) Law 2005](#) is the main legislation. This provides for the control and management of waste operations within Jersey and regulates the transboundary movement of wastes. This draws heavily on the [Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal](#). The law sets out the following objectives –

- (a) the minimising of the generation of waste within Jersey;
- (b) the adequacy, for the environmentally sound management of controlled wastes within Jersey, of facilities used by persons who carry on activities relating to those wastes;
- (c) the taking, by those persons, of measures that are necessary to avoid or prevent pollution arising from such activities; and
- (d) compliance with international agreements, other international instruments and international obligations that relate to the transboundary movement of waste and are applicable to or binding on Jersey.

The law provides for the prohibition of certain activities and the licensing and regulation of activities that are permitted.

A second relevant law is the [Drainage \(Jersey\) Law 2005](#) which covers arrangement for the management of sewerage and flood defences,

The relevant policy is the [Bridging Liquid Waste Strategy 2023–26](#). Key points in this document –

Context and Rationale

- The previous strategy focused on replacing the failing Bellozanne sewerage treatment works (STW), which was originally built for a population of 57,000 but was serving over 97,000 (2011 Census). The new plant, designed for a population equivalent of 118,000 in 2035, is close to completion.
- Funding for the new STW necessitated a diversion of funds away from network projects, leading to underinvestment in the aging sewerage and drainage network. This network capacity now limits the total flow the new STW can handle.

Key Challenges and Drivers:

1. **Population Growth and Housing:** Continuous growth is projected. The Bridging Island Plan called for 4,300 new homes by 2025 (Some have been built, others are in development) and a further 3,600 by 2030, posing a "potentially catastrophic" impact on the existing, limited-capacity liquid waste system.
2. **Aging Network Infrastructure:** The foul water network, developed since Victorian times, and the 109 sewage pumping stations and rising mains are at a critical point. Many core assets are over 60 years old and have no spare capacity.
3. **Climate Change:** Increased rainfall and storms are causing significant problems, particularly groundwater ingress into sewers, stressing pumping stations during wet periods.
4. **Environmental Standards:** The need to monitor and maintain enhanced effluent quality (especially Total Nitrogen) from the new STW.

3. Proposed Actions and Investment Focus

- **Emerging Projects:** Concept solutions for infrastructure upgrades will be developed in areas identified for short-term housing growth (St Peter, Les Quennevais, St Helier, Five Oaks).
- **Network Resilience:** A long-term programme is planned to improve the Island's resilience against climate change impacts, focusing on surface water separation and actively sealing points of groundwater ingress.
- **Asset Management and Monitoring:** Rolling maintenance programmes, condition surveys (2022-26), and linking all programmes to a new asset management system (SAP) by 2026.
- **Pumping Station Overhaul:** An urgent review and plan for replacement or upgrading of the critical pumping stations and rising mains to protect the Island for the next 60 years.
- **Investment Need:** The strategy calls for significant, extended investment to avoid catastrophic asset failures, protect the Island's

reputation for managing liquid waste, and handle population and climate change demands.

Current Funding and Challenges

The Bridging Liquid Waste Strategy identifies a multi-million-pound investment need for upgrading and maintaining the sewerage system and treatment facilities, as well as ongoing operational costs and planning for evolving standards. Traditional use of general taxation for funding is becoming unsustainable in the face of rising demand, increased capital needs, and a pressing requirement for more equitable and resilient solutions.

The proposed 2026 Budget includes the following –

As set out in previous Budgets funding for future liquid waste infrastructure is intended to be met through the introduction of liquid waste charging in 2028. This Budget includes an estimate of £10 million to be raised through liquid waste charging in 2028 onwards. Receipts will be paid into the Consolidated Fund through general revenue income. Government Plan 2024 - 2027 previously gave approval for the application of existing resources for work on the development of a 'user pays' charge in relation to all aspects of waste. Details of the charging mechanism and proposals will be included in future Budgets, alongside all other necessary arrangements for charges to take effect.

The Budget envisages annual charges of £10 million from 2028.

Policy issues

Existing arrangements lack a mechanism to allocate costs according to usage or polluter-pays principles, resulting in a funding gap and limited incentives for water conservation or waste minimisation. There is growing urgency to address capital, regulatory, and fairness challenges in a way that complies with technical guidelines and international benchmarks.

The following policy options are available -

- **Direct User-Pays Charging:** Introduce user-based charges linked to water usage, property size, or another equitable basis to align costs with service demand and encourage responsible consumption.
- **Investment in Treatment and Circular Economy:** Prioritise investment in advanced liquid waste treatment, nutrient recovery, and resource valorisation to achieve environmental standards, climate resilience, and circular economy goals.
- **Enhanced Licensing and Regulatory Oversight:** Strengthen reporting requirements, facility licensing, producer registration, and

regular audits in line with best practice outlined in multilateral conventions and Jersey's planning guidance.

- Incentives for Reduction and Public Engagement: Consider mechanisms that incentivise water conservation and pollution minimisation, including rebates, education, and sector-specific engagement.
- Long-Term Planning for Resilience: Integrate forward-looking infrastructure investment, population and climate projections, and evolving legal standards into strategy development and resource allocation.

Sources

Waste Management (Jersey) Law 2005.

https://www.jerseylaw.je/laws/current/l_7_2005

Bridging Liquid Waste Strategy 2023 - 2026

<https://statesassembly.je/publications/assembly-reports/2023/r-71-2023>

Bridging Liquid Waste Strategy 2023-26 Scrutiny Review

<https://statesassembly.je/getmedia/d7bcb4bf-30f8-41fe-b9a7-fcec636a45bb/S-R-1-2024-Bridging-Liquid-Waste-Strategy-2023-2026-Scrutiny-Review-Final-Report.pdf>

[fcec636a45bb/S-R-1-2024-Bridging-Liquid-Waste-Strategy-2023-2026-Scrutiny-Review-Final-Report.pdf](https://statesassembly.je/getmedia/d7bcb4bf-30f8-41fe-b9a7-fcec636a45bb/S-R-1-2024-Bridging-Liquid-Waste-Strategy-2023-2026-Scrutiny-Review-Final-Report.pdf)

Liquid Waste Treatment Process Review 2009

<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government%20and%20administration/R%20Bellozanne%20Sewage%20Treatment%20Works%20Process%20Review%20Report%2020090930%20SF.pdf>

UNITED NATIONS Technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with UV-328

<https://www.basel.int/Portals/4/download.aspx?d=UNEP-CHW-OEWG.14-INF-8-Rev.1.English.pdf>

General technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with persistent organic pollutants

<https://www.basel.int/Portals/4/download.aspx?d=UNEP-CHW-OEWG.14-INF-5-Rev.1.English.pdf>

Liquid waste drainage requirements for developments

<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning%20and%20building/Liquid%20waste%20drainage%20requirements%20for%20developments.pdf>