

IoD Guernsey: Economic growth action plan

Unlocking economic growth in Guernsey

10 recommendations to unlock Guernsey's next chapter of growth.

For government, business leaders and individuals in Guernsey

November 2026

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How to read this report

This report can be read in order, or entered at the page that matters most to you.

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The question
What is holding Guernsey's growth back, and what can the island do about it?

→ **Introduction**
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The evidence
A survey promoted through the G8, five workshops, with more than 150 participants and 15 one-to-one interviews, over 280 contributions in total.

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The findings
Eight findings on what holds growth back.

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Ten recommendations, with a role for government, business and individuals.

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Choose your route



Government

→ **Recommendations 1–3**
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Individuals

→ **Recommendations 7–9**
Pages 30–35

Everyone should then read **Coordination.**

→ **Recommendation 10**
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The action plan
How the Growth Taskforce helps, the risks to delivery and the first twelve months.

→ **Action Plan**
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Your commitment
One action you or your organisation can take now.

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Reading the evidence

- Percentages come from the IoD Guernsey survey, Unlocking Economic Growth: Guernsey's Competitive Future Survey 2026 (127 business leaders), unless stated. The sample was self-selecting, so read the figures as indicative. See Appendix B.
- Quotes are attributed by role only, because all workshops and interviews were held under the Chatham House Rule. See Appendix G.
- Superscript numbers refer to the notes and sources in Appendix H.
- Appendix E shows how this report aligns with a sample of existing strategies and workplans, and Appendix F lists areas for future research.

Foreword

Guernsey's size should be an advantage. A small, closely connected island can decide quickly and act together in ways that larger nations cannot. Too often we do not act in this way, and the economy is growing more slowly than it should. The cost falls on public services, homes and the opportunities we offer the next generation.

Guernsey has many strengths. It has a finance centre with a global reputation, a diverse business community, a skilled and committed workforce, and a close-knit community in which 98% of residents surveyed in the IoD's social capital research say people are generally helpful.[1] To unlock more growth, Guernsey needs to be stronger, smarter and bolder in how it positions itself in a changing global marketplace, attracting capital, talent and ideas from outside as well as backing those already here. Several things hold us back: off island promotion is fragmented, decisions take too long and are often reopened, homes and talent are hard to find, and we have done too little planning for the changes Artificial Intelligence (AI) will bring.

Over the past year, IoD Guernsey has tested this with chairs and chief executives, next-generation leaders and post-16 students. People are proud of Guernsey and want it to succeed. They are frustrated by how long it takes to get things done and by agreed plans being reopened in a way that erodes trust. Of the 127 business leaders we surveyed, 91% say Guernsey is at an inflection point.[2] Directors' confidence points the same way. Sentiment in the IoD's Directors' Economic Confidence Survey was net negative on the Guernsey economy in both November 2024 and May 2025.[3]

This report builds on the independent research into Guernsey's social capital that the IoD began in 2024.[1] It found that close relationships are a rare strength for the island, although the same closeness can make people wary of risk. That strength is also an opportunity, because Guernsey is well placed to rebuild trust between business, government and individuals.

Our role

IoD Guernsey's role is to help government, business and the next generation make better decisions and act on them. This report supports alignment with Guernsey's growth strategy and the work already under way, and adds what business and individuals can do to help deliver it. Appendix E sets out that alignment in more detail, against a sample of existing strategies and workplans.

The report sets out ten practical recommendations to lift growth, built on collective responsibility rather than a list of demands. Three are asks of government and six sit with business and every individual on the island. The tenth is a cross-sector Growth Taskforce, which will help everyone share insight and work together. It adds no new voices and replaces no one: it helps the bodies already at work to share insight and coordinate.

As an independent body, we can convene and gather evidence without additional public spending, and we will keep speaking for what our members and wider stakeholders need.

Our ask of you is simple. Take action.

- Read the report and choose the recommendations where you and your organisation can make a difference.
- Make one personal commitment from Recommendations 7 to 9 this year, and at least one commitment as an organisation.
- Work with us through the Growth Taskforce, and follow the progress the IoD will report against what we have set out to achieve.

Thank you to everyone who gave their time and candour. I hope you will read this report as an invitation to act.

Glen Tonks
Chair, IoD Guernsey

Acknowledgements

In October 2025, we set out with an ambitious objective: to produce, engage and catalyse a wider, more joined-up conversation about growth, with supporting analysis, in response to continuing sentiment from members and prior reports.

The IoD has never done anything of this breadth and depth. It is a multi-year initiative, with stakeholder engagement and delivery mechanisms designed to ensure that this does not become another report that sits on the shelf.

Whether we will achieve that, only time will tell. It needs the engagement, support and action of everyone, from students and employees to next-generation leaders and decision-makers across the private and public sectors.

This would have been impossible without everyone who contributed, including survey respondents, workshop participants, interviewees, speakers and IoD members, and many more not named. Thank you all.

The programme ran five workshops. We thank the organisations that hosted them, and the focus group facilitators who led each discussion and recorded what was said, so that every view could be captured accurately.

1. **Global decision-making**
   Hosted by Butterfield
   16 April 2026

2. **Ecosystem growth enablers**
   Hosted by Carey Olsen, Carey House
   30 April 2026

3. **Innovation vs. risk**
   Hosted by Opera, Oak House
   7 May 2026

4. **Next-generation leaders**
   Hosted by IoD Guernsey at C5 Alliance
   6 July 2026

5. **Young voices workshop (post-16)**
   Hosted by IoD Guernsey and sponsored by the Ana Leaf Foundation
   16 September 2026

We are especially grateful to the 15 senior leaders, on and off the island, who gave their time for one-to-one interviews and shared candid perspectives.

Thanks also to the next-generation leaders and the post-16 and Guernsey Institute students who gave us their own view of the island's future.

Particular thanks to the G8 business bodies for promoting the survey to their members and taking part in the research, and to the States Committees, including the Committee for Economic Development, and senior officers for engaging with our emerging findings.

Thank you also to the sponsors of the IoD Conference 2026 (Carey Olsen, Aston, Sure, Opera, Butterfield, KPMG, NP Group and Howden) for their support, and to the IoD Guernsey committee for backing the programme throughout.

A final thank you to the members of the IoD Research Advisory Group, who provided the objective review, challenge, stress-testing and quality assurance required across the critical stages of report production.

All workshops and interviews were held under the Chatham House Rule. No comment in this report is attributed to a named individual.

This report has been through a thorough process of review and quality assurance. Despite that, errors or omissions may remain or come to light later. Responsibility for them rests with the IoD alone, and we would welcome any errors being brought to our attention so they can be corrected.

Andrew Essa
Research Lead, IoD Guernsey

Executive summary

The world is more uncertain, and Guernsey cannot rest on its laurels. It has a finance centre with a global reputation, a skilled workforce and a close-knit community, and good work is under way, but much of it runs in separate pockets. Growth has averaged 0.6% a year since 2013, against 2.3% in Jersey, and business confidence in the economy is fragile. As AI, global competition and shifting capital flows reshape the marketplace, Guernsey must adapt proactively or be shaped by those forces.

Unlocking growth means being bolder, sharper and more proactive. In practice, that means being more open for business: smarter in how the island positions itself and attracts investment and people, quicker to clear barriers such as homes, permits and connectivity within sensible guardrails, and working more closely with Jersey, the UK, France and other partners. Business wants an environment where it can get things done. It is a shared effort between government, business and individuals, and this report sets out eight findings and ten recommendations to make it happen.

Key statistics

0.6%
Guernsey's average real growth a year, 2013 to 2023, against 2.3% in Jersey.[4]

£643m
estimated extra output in 2023 alone, had Guernsey matched Jersey's growth.[5]

91%
of survey respondents say Guernsey is at an inflection point.[2]

57%
of survey respondents say Guernsey has lost business, talent or investment to a competitor in the past two to three years.[2]

What we found

1. Government decision-making and the cost of inaction are the biggest constraints on growth.
2. Without a shared vision and a direction that survives political terms, plans stall in delivery.
3. Guernsey cannot grow without the homes and the right mix of talent.
4. Guernsey lacks a long-term growth plan and a sustainable fiscal model to fund it.
5. Guernsey is losing business, talent and investment, and its messaging is fragmented.
6. Low risk appetite holds back growth at every level, from students to boards, regulators and government.
7. Young people want a future here but cannot see the path.
8. AI risk is arriving faster than the island's plans, and will widen the skills gap.

What we recommend

Government

1. Build more homes and open a faster route in for talent.
2. Set a long-term vision, growth plan and the fiscal framework to fund it.
3. Fix government decision-making effectiveness.

Business

4. Unify Guernsey's messaging, with sharper positioning, clearer segmentation and better pathways in.
5. Strengthen upskilling, AI and talent programmes.
6. Better pathways and support for corporate innovation, entrepreneurship and R&D.

Individuals

7. Build your AI skills and bring your team with you.
8. Take one considered risk each month.
9. Help develop the next generation.

Coordination

10. Stand up a cross-sector Growth Taskforce to support Recommendations 1 to 9.

About this report

What we did.

Over 280 contributions: a survey with 127 responses, five workshops with more than 150 participants and 15 senior one-to-one interviews, on and off island. All input is under the Chatham House Rule.

The principle behind the report: collective responsibility.

Government delivers the enablers and strengthens how decisions are made, business steps up without waiting, and individuals act and take considered risks. The aim is practical collaboration that builds on the island's strong social capital.

How it fits with work already under way.

The report supports and builds on the Government Work Plan 2026 to 2029, the Economic Development Workplan, the Finance Sector Growth Strategy 2035 and the Digital and AI Framework. It adds a whole-economy view, a role for business and individuals and a route to delivery, and its evidence can feed the 2027 Economic Strategy.

The role of the 18 November conference.

The IoD Conference at Beau Sejour will galvanise the themes and build momentum and collective responsibility, with action at every level. The report and Action Plan will be presented there, with first commitments and owners announced where agreed.

The Growth Taskforce: what it is.

A small advisory group of six, with four members nominated by the G8 bodies and two chosen by the IoD, modelled on the Adult Skills Board. It represents the G8 stakeholders.

Why it is needed.

Better decisions on key growth priorities need better information, and the island has gaps in its data and intelligence. The Taskforce helps fill them and supports the wider Guernsey ecosystem, including States Committees.

How it will work.

It is advisory. It replaces no one, does not own delivery and has no budget, and a light in-kind secretariat from the IoD and the G8 bodies supports it. It starts small and develops as it proves useful.

What IoD Guernsey will do next

Now

2026

2027

Start small and useful

- Present the report and Action Plan at the 18 November conference.
- Agree the Taskforce's terms of reference by the end of 2026 and constitute it by 31 January 2027, with a light secretariat (Recommendation 10).
- Repeat the business survey in 2027 and report progress at the next IoD Annual Conference, including what has and has not moved.

Later

2028

2029

Build on what works

- Hold a Taskforce review point at the end of 2028 to continue, adapt or close.
- Hear wider voices across sectors and the next generation

Much later

2030

2031

If still needed

- Continue the Taskforce only if it is still needed, shaped by what proves most useful.
- Keep speaking for members and wider stakeholders, with evidence, in support of Guernsey's growth strategy.

Introduction

Over the past year, the IoD began an ambitious programme to find out what is holding back Guernsey's economic growth, and what the island can do about it. This introduction explains why we asked, what we did and how to read what follows.

Why we asked.

Real growth has averaged 0.6% a year since 2013, against 2.3% in Jersey,[4] a gap worth an estimated £643 million of output in 2023 alone.[5] Growth is what funds public services, homes and opportunities for the next generation. Our research found that the island does not lack ideas or capable people. In a more uncertain world, it must adapt faster, deciding and delivering more quickly and competing harder for capital and talent.

What holds growth back.

There is a systemic issue in how the island makes decisions and drives change, and it predates any one government. Participants in the workshops identified plans agreed and then reopened, and spoke of priorities that reset with each political term, so even good decisions struggle to stick. Of survey respondents, 57% named decision-making as a bottleneck.[2]

The cost of standing still.

57% of respondents say the island has lost business, talent or investment to a competitor in the past two to three years, and 64% are concerned about its competitiveness.

Why now.

Global uncertainty is rising, AI is reshaping how people work, study and live, competitors are moving faster, the population is ageing and the public finances face pressure. Views differ on the size of the fiscal gap, so this report asks for one clear view of income, spending and reserves. IoD Guernsey's 2024 social capital research found that 87% say the island is not adapting quickly enough and 90% hold strongly negative views of government and politicians.[1] Directors are cautious too. In the IoD's May 2025 Economic Confidence Survey, confidence in the Guernsey economy was net -11%, an improvement on November 2024.[3]

Who is most exposed.

Young people feel it most. Housing, cost of living and careers beyond finance came up at every student focus group, and the working-age population is projected to shrink before the total population peaks in the mid-2030s.[6] The island cannot afford to lose them.

Good things are happening.

Much good work is already under way.

- A new Finance Sector Growth Strategy
- British Airways Heathrow route
- The GST-plus decision
- Grad Routes for young people

Much of it runs in separate pockets. Aligned to one direction and one vision, it would go further and faster.

What already exists.

Guernsey has a respected finance centre, a close-knit community and a growing set of strategies. This report looks across them at the level of Guernsey PLC, and Appendix E shows where it supports, overlaps with and adds to each.

The message.

Guernsey has the foundations to unlock more growth. Business wants an environment where it can get things done, and creating it is a shared responsibility. Closer collaboration with Jersey, the UK, France and other partners is a condition of future growth.

The data gap.

Limited data and intelligence are a critical, island-wide problem that cuts across most of the challenges in this report. Population and employment statistics have been suspended since July 2025.[7] We found no island-wide assessment of what AI could mean for jobs, population or housing, and no published comparison of how Guernsey promotes itself against other markets. Without shared facts, debates default to opinion, plans are harder to hold to, and the island cannot see clearly how it compares with Jersey and others. The Growth Taskforce is designed to help close this gap.

Our evidence.

We gathered over 280 contributions between April and September 2026. They comprise a survey of 127 respondents, five workshops with more than 150 participants across 17 focus groups, and 15 senior interviews. Some people took part in more than one way, so we count contributions. The method is in Appendix A.

How this report fits

This report supports Guernsey's growth strategy and the work already under way. It adds what business and individuals can do to help deliver it.

The principle behind this report.

What collective responsibility means.

The recommendations are built around three groups: government, business and individuals. Each has a distinct part to play.



1

Everyone has a part to play.

Government, business, leaders and individuals each have a role. Business should step up rather than wait for government, and the actions work best when everyone acts at the same time.

2

Join up what already exists.

Guernsey has many strategies, reports and good initiatives, but they sit in separate pockets. We want to connect them and work across sectors far more cohesively.

3

Rebuild trust and collective behaviour.

Our close relationships are a real asset. Global evidence agrees: Edelman's 2026 survey finds trust becoming more local (28 countries).[8] We want to build on that social capital, rebuild trust between government, business and the community, and replace finger-pointing with practical collaboration.

4

Take action and risk, whatever the scale.

Progress will come from many actions, large and small, from a student taking the risk of starting a side project to a board approving more funding for intrapreneurship or AI upskilling.

5

Keep going.

The Growth Taskforce will help momentum carry across political terms, so that the next generation stays involved.

Findings

What did we do?

Between April and September 2026 we gathered the views of business leaders, next-generation leaders and students, tested what we heard, and turned it into ten recommendations. The steps and the people we heard from are set out below.

280+

Listen widely

A survey of 127 respondents, five workshops with 150+ participants across 17 focus groups, and 15 senior interviews.

25

Find the themes

All material coded against 25 themes and counted by source, so no single voice skews the picture.

8

Test the findings

Each theme checked across the survey, workshops and interviews, and tested with stakeholders.

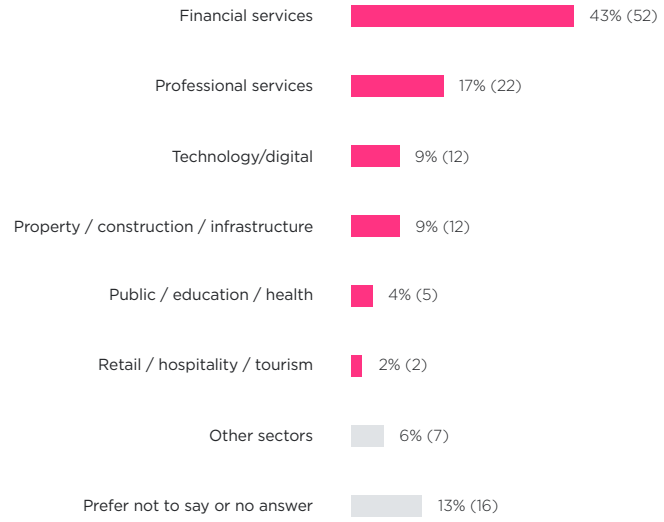
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Recommendations

23 possible recommendations were scored on five criteria. Ten were taken forward, including a Growth Taskforce.

Who we heard from

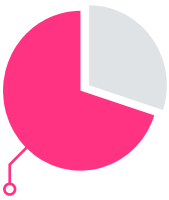
Survey respondents by sector (n = 127)





72%

of survey respondents hold senior roles.



70%

of those answering trade off-island or mixed.

A self-selecting sample, mainly IoD members and senior leaders. It does not represent the whole island. (Appendix A).

Sixty workshop participants were next-generation leaders and students, approximately 30 of them students. Some people took part in more than one way, so we count contributions rather than individuals. Workshops and interviews were held under the Chatham House Rule.

How did we approach it?

We defined growth broadly: an economy that is more productive, resilient and competitive, with gains that are widely shared, on an island that remains a good place to live. GDP and GVA are useful yardsticks, and participants judged success across all of these together.

Two sets of conditions shape growth across the whole economy: what makes Guernsey attractive to outside investors and talent, and what makes it a good place to live and work.

Two sets of conditions that shape everything



Inward investment conditions

Why firms, investors and talent choose Guernsey over rival jurisdictions.



Local conditions

Homes, infrastructure, cost of living and community: whether the island is a good place to live and work.

Within those conditions, we looked at growth through five lenses, from the individual to the economy.

Five lenses, from the individual to the economy

1. **Individual**
   Skills, careers and the confidence to start something or to stay.
2. **Leadership**
   How boards and leaders set direction, decide and take risk.
3. **Corporate**
   Productivity, competitiveness and the ability to hire, innovate and scale.
4. **Public sector**
   How government decides, regulates and delivers.
5. **Economy**
   GDP and GVA, sectors, jobs and population.

What did we find?

The findings emerged from themes coded across the survey, workshops and interviews, and are listed in the order that supports our proposition: findings 1 to 4 are barriers to overcome, and findings 5 to 8 are about being bolder and looking ahead. Each shows the evidence and why it matters.

1



Government decision-making and the cost of inaction are the biggest constraints on growth.

Evidence: 57% named decision-making as a bottleneck, and it was raised in 12 of 17 focus groups. Many saw the tax debate as the clearest example of agreed plans being reopened. Government scores below zero on competence in the 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer (26 countries).[8]

Why it matters: Every reopened decision delays delivery, and the cost of inaction compounds each year.

2



Without a shared vision and a direction that survives political terms, plans stall in delivery.

Evidence: 50% name the lack of a clear, long-term direction as a top-three constraint, and 36% say a direction that survives political cycles is the single biggest change needed.

Why it matters: Priorities reset with each term, which makes long-term investment in homes, infrastructure and skills hard to commit to.

3



Guernsey cannot grow without the homes and the right mix of talent.

Evidence: Housing was a top-three constraint for 54%, and 57% put housing delivery in their top three interventions. It came up in 16 of 17 focus group discussions. A net 134 homes were added across 2024 and 2025, against 200 or more a year implied by the 2024 pledge and 313 in the States' housing indicator.[9] Talent is the other half: 3,886 population management applications were outstanding at 17 September 2026.[10]

Why it matters: Employers described a permit backlog that holds back hiring, growth and confidence, and said they send trainees to Jersey and recruit graduates through UK offices because they cannot bring them here.

4



Guernsey lacks a long-term growth plan and a sustainable fiscal model to fund it.

Evidence: 66% say Guernsey needs fiscal reform and more growth investment, and only five of 127 think the current model is enough. 25% say funding for each commitment would make a plan credible. Workshops asked for a five-year macro plan and an independent budget body. The survey was held before the GST decision.

Why it matters: The GST decision has since been made, after a long delay. Growth investment in homes,infrastructure and skills still needs a plan and a funding model that hold across political terms.

5



Guernsey is losing business, talent and investment, and its messaging is fragmented.

Evidence: 57% have lost business, talent or investment to a competitor in two to three years, 68% of them for structural reasons. In finance, the figure is 63%. 46% want a single, unified brand story, and a fragmented presence was raised in eight of 15 interviews.

Why it matters: Competitors are present when shortlists are drawn up, and Guernsey is often not considered. Rivals are moving faster, while fragmented messaging is inefficient and leaves Guernsey's differentiation unclear. Targeting also tends to favour retirees over the net contributors, such as entrepreneurs, skilled workers and returners, who are most likely to invest here and drive growth. Guernsey also lacks a standing view of where its markets are heading and where it could lead, so its offering and reputation risk falling behind rivals that scan and adapt continuously.

6



Low risk appetite holds back growth at every level, from students to boards, regulators and government.

Evidence: Fear of failure came up in 14 of 17 focus groups and six of 15 interviews, at every level from students to boards. Regulatory proportionality came up in eight of 15 interviews and eight focus groups, alongside how slowly the island moves around new technologies, though in the survey it ranked lowest of the substantive constraints (14%). Interviewees described public-sector decisions deferred through more analysis, and firms holding back from investing in R&D, change and new technology.

Why it matters: Caution slows decisions, new ventures and the ambition of young people. It overlaps with Finding 1, because slow public-sector decisions reinforce a cautious default, and with firms that do not take the risks needed to invest in R&D, change and new technology. The island's reputation rests on trust, so the aim is risk judged proportionately, with standards held.

7



Young people want a future here but cannot see the path.

Evidence: All four student focus groups raised housing, cost of living and careers beyond finance, and the next generation came up in 10 of 17 focus groups.

Why it matters: The working-age population is projected to shrink before the total population peaks in the mid-2030s,[6] so the island cannot afford to lose them.

8



AI risk is arriving faster than the island's plans, and will widen the skills gap.

Evidence: 39% of organisations have not yet deployed AI, rising to 63% of mainly local firms. 46% name a lack of in-house skills as the biggest barrier, the most-selected option.[2] We found no island-wide assessment of what AI could mean for jobs, population, housing, social security or tax revenue.

Why it matters: AI will change the skills firms need while the island is already short of workers and homes. Participants described a window for action of one to two years.

Sources: IoD Guernsey, Unlocking Economic Growth survey 2026 (n = 127), focus groups and interviews; BBC Guernsey, 2 October 2026 (permit figures).

What are the implications?

The eight findings reinforce each other. Slow and reopened decisions, and a cautious default, leave homes, talent and AI undelivered. That costs the island business, talent and young people, and it wears down confidence and trust. This makes the next decision even harder.

1

Decisions are slow and reopened, and caution is the default.

Findings 1, 2, 4 and 6

2

Enablers stall: homes, talent and AI.

Findings 3 and 8

3

Growth lags, and business, talent and young people leave.

Findings 5 and 7

4

Confidence and trust erode.

87% say the island is not adapting quickly enough, and 90% hold strong negative views of the system (2024 research)[1]

Each turn of the loop makes the next decision harder, and the cost of inaction larger. Collective responsibility is how the island breaks the cycle.

The scale of what is at stake

£643m

more output in 2023 alone, had Guernsey matched Jersey's growth over the last decade. (illustrative)[5]

0.6%



Guernsey real growth a year, 2013 10 2023.[4]

2.3%



Jersey's growth, same period.[4]

2.0%



OECD countries average growth, approximately.[4]

91%



of survey respondents say Guernsey is at an inflection point.[2]

Sources: States of Guernsey GVA and GDP Bulletin; Statistics Jersey. Jersey is the main comparator because participants described it as Guernsey's closest competitor and its figures are directly comparable. The measures differ (GVA for Guernsey and Jersey, GDP for the OECD), so the comparison is indicative. This report does not set a growth target: Recommendation 2 proposes that the Growth Taskforce analyse and propose an indicative ambition for the States to agree.

What are the next steps?

The findings lead to 10 recommendations built on collective responsibility: government, business and individuals each playing their part. 52% of respondents want growth delivered jointly by government and industry. Part one sets out the 10 recommendations and the role each group plays, and Part two explains each in detail. A cross-sector Growth Taskforce, Recommendation 10, would keep them moving.

Government
Fix how decisions are made and deliver the enablers.

Business
Step up rather than wait.

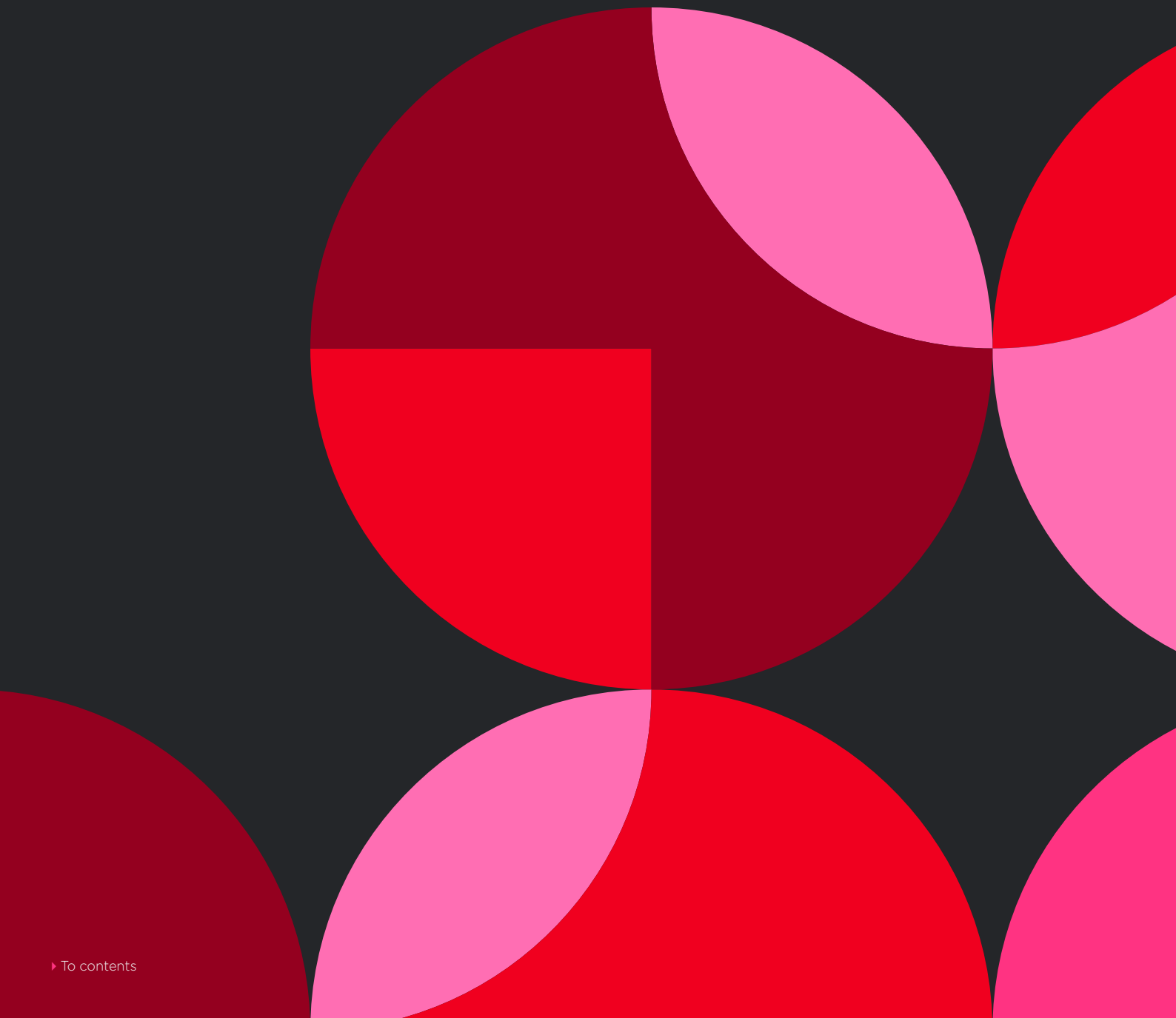
Individuals
Take action and risk, whatever the scale.

Coordination
A cross-sector Growth Taskforce to keep it moving.

Part 1: Recommendations

Ten recommendations, including a Growth Taskforce to support them

The recommendations rest on one principle, collective responsibility, which sets the roles of government, business and individuals. All ten start now.



To contents

Role	Recommendations					
	Short All start now; deliver in 12 months		**Medium** All start now; deliver in 1 to 3 years		**Long** All start now; deliver in 3+ years	
Government	1	Build more homes and open a faster route in for talent.	2	Set a long-term vision, growth plan and the fiscal framework to fund it.	3	Fix government decision-making effectiveness.
Business	4	Unify Guernsey's messaging, with sharper positioning, clearer segmentation and better pathways in.	5	Strengthen upskilling, AI and talent programmes.	6	Better pathways and support for corporate innovation, entrepreneurship and R&D.
Individuals	7	Build your AI skills and bring your team with you.	8	Take one considered risk at work and in life each month.	9	Help develop the next generation.
Coordination	10	Stand up a cross-sector Growth Taskforce to support Recommendations 1 to 9.				

Two-way arrows show the alignment, coordination and collaboration required: the recommendations reinforce each other and feed the Growth Taskforce.

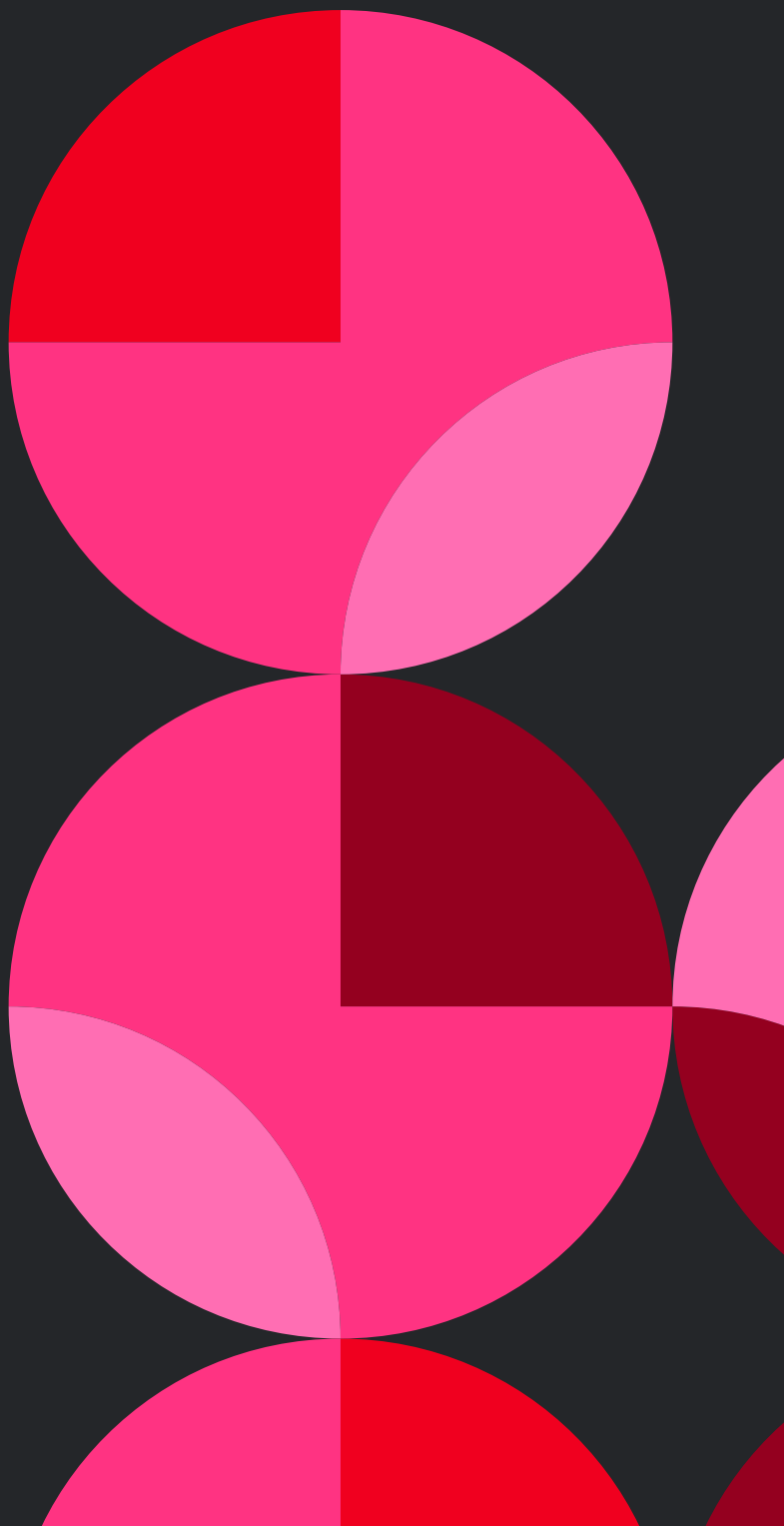
	Recommendation	What it means	Role
1	**Build more homes and open a faster route in for talent.**	Faster planning, higher density and borrowing powers for the Guernsey Housing Association, plus a guaranteed permit turnaround for key roles.	Government with business
2	**Set a long-term vision, growth plan and the fiscal framework to fund it.**	A 10-to-15-year plan with sector priorities and a measurable growth ambition, tested against one independently reviewed multi-year budget.	Government with business
3	**Fix government decision-making effectiveness.**	An independent review of critical decision-making processes and systems, with published decision timelines and owners in the meantime.	Government with business
4	**Unify Guernsey's messaging, with sharper positioning, clearer segmentation and better pathways in.**	A more unified story and toolkit, with a campaign that targets net contributors and a streamlined route in.	Business with Government
5	**Strengthen upskilling, AI and talent programmes.**	A more joined-up route from education to later career, with employers, representative bodies and government agreeing shared skills priorities.	Business with Government
6	**Better pathways and support for corporate innovation, entrepreneurship and R&D.**	Better backing for corporate innovation, entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs, pathways from education to start-up, and better celebration of entrepreneurial success stories across all sectors, to show what is possible.	Business with Government
7	**Build your AI skills and bring your team with you.**	Leaders learn AI first-hand, put it on the board agenda and give their teams the time and permission to do the same.	Individuals
8	**Take one considered risk at work and in life each month.**	Leaders back one idea they would once have declined, share what they learn and make it safer for others to try.	Individuals
9	**Help develop the next generation.**	Leaders build on existing projects such as Grad Routes, open doors to young people and keep in touch with leavers.	Individuals
10	**Cross-sector Growth Taskforce.**	An advisory catalyst convened by the IoD, with the G8 bodies nominating members, to help keep Recommendations 1 to 9 moving, starting with insight and data. Competitor intelligence support could develop over time.	IoD and the G8 bodies

Part 2: Detailed Recommendations

Each recommendation sets out the evidence, proposed ideas for what could happen next, and how progress could be measured.

- 3 for government
- 3 for business, working with government
- 3 for individuals
- 1 Growth Taskforce to support them

Each recommendation names who could be involved and the support it needs, and proposes how progress could be measured.



To contents

Government

1

Recommendations 1 to 3 • Our asks of government

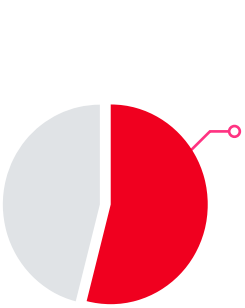
Build more homes and open a faster route in for talent.

Work on housing and permits is continuing and progress is being made, but more can be done. Guernsey needs more homes and a simpler, faster permit route, so that businesses can hire, young people can stay and the island can attract the people who add most to its economy.

Housing was the most widely shared theme in this research, raised in 16 of 17 focus group discussions and at every student focus group. A States-commissioned review found that "one in 12 homes are not available to the market".[11] Government has taken steps to enable building, but a net 134 homes were added across 2024 and 2025, about 67 a year, against the 200 or more a year implied by the 2024 pledge and 313 in the States' housing indicator, and almost no affordable homes.[9] Participants said what is missing is clear, published progress against the targets.

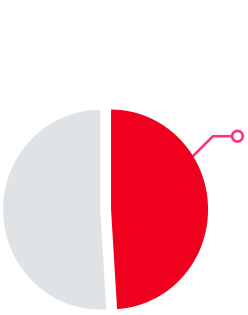
Talent was raised alongside housing. 52% want managed population growth and 35% put modernising permits in their top three interventions. Participants found the permit route hard to navigate, with categories that do not fit practical trades or skills such as AI. At 17 September 2026, 3,886 population management applications were outstanding, alongside 324 in immigration workstreams, and a wider review of population policy is due to begin.[10]

Homes and permits should be sized to the workforce Guernsey will need, not only the one it has today. Building cannot wait, because the shortfall is already real. But the medium-term housing roadmap and permit priorities should draw on the workforce assessment in Recommendation 5, so that the island neither under-builds nor plans for a population its economy no longer needs.



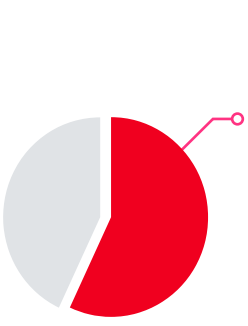
54%

put housing supply and planning in their top three constraints, rising to 62% in financial services.



49%

put skills, talent availability and workforce participation in their top three constraints.



57%

put housing and infrastructure delivery in their top three interventions, the most-selected.

Ideas for what could happen next

Government

- Publish a housing roadmap with milestones: faster planning, higher density, empty homes and Guernsey Housing Association borrowing, prioritising essential workers and young people. Report progress openly.
- Remove barriers to social and affordable housing, support first-time buyers, and review brownfield remediation rules that developers say make the majority of sites unviable.
- Simplify the route in for key workers, skilled people and returners, with a guaranteed permit turnaround time.
- Use the AI workforce assessment (Recommendation 5) and the population policy review to set housing and permit priorities by the roles and skills most needed.
- Use AI tools, with guardrails, to clear the planning and permit backlog, an urgent, high-impact use case that would also make the States more AI-enabled.

Business

- Developers bring forward the sites they already control, including starter and key-worker homes.
- Employers tell the Taskforce which roles they cannot fill, and back key-worker housing.

Individuals

- Take part in planning consultations, and back local housing proposals publicly.

Proposed measurement

- Homes completed each year against target, private and affordable.
- Average time to a planning decision for major applications.
- Time to hire and permit key roles.
- Share citing housing as a top-three constraint in the next business survey (2026 baseline: 54%).
- Housing and permit targets reviewed against the workforce assessment once published.

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

“Why do we send those five trainees to Jersey? Because they could get apartments and they can’t get them here.”

Business leader, Workshop 1

“Some people have already given up on living here...they don’t think they can possibly afford house prices.”

Student, Workshop 5

Government 2

Set a long-term vision, growth plan and the fiscal framework to fund it.

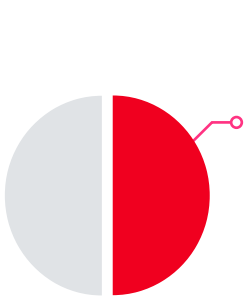
Guernsey needs a pro-growth plan that holds across political terms, a way to pay for it and a clear vision of where the island is heading. Business leaders care less about which tax option was chosen than about reaching a decision and sticking to it. Developers and employers need the same certainty: they commit to sites, apprentices and the next generation only when they can see a direction.

Many saw the tax debate as the clearest example of agreed plans being reopened, and several asked for greater discipline on spending, with value for money raised in six interviews. The States has since voted for a GST-plus package, starting at 3% and rising to 5% over four years. That settles the tax question. The priority now is to implement it and stick to it.

Growth and the public finances are one plan.

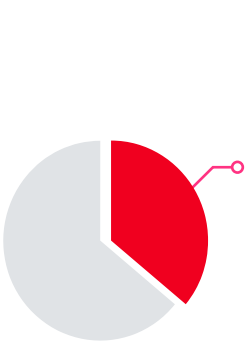
The GST-plus decision is a first step, and growth investment in housing, infrastructure and skills now needs to sit inside one multi-year fiscal framework. 66% say Guernsey needs fiscal reform and more growth investment, and only five of 127 think the current model is enough. A quarter name funding for each commitment as a test of a credible plan. Participants disagree on the size of the underlying gap, so this report takes no position on it and asks for income, spending and reserves to be set out in one place.

The IoD has not modelled the fiscal position. The Growth Taskforce would work with the Treasury and the States' fiscal advisers to reconcile the different views of the underlying gap.



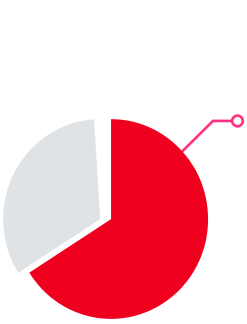
50%

name the lack of a clear long-term direction as a top-three constraint.



36%

say a direction that survives political cycles is the single biggest change needed, twice the next answer.



66%

say Guernsey needs fiscal reform and more growth investment.

Ideas for what could happen next

Government

- Agree what Guernsey wants to be known for, including two or three signature categories with an international reputation.
- Set a 10-to-20-year vision covering how many people the island needs and what they will do, with a bold, long-term, sustainable, pro-growth plan inside it.
- Give the plan sector priorities, an infrastructure plan, a measurable growth ambition and milestones that outlast a political term.
- Name air and sea connectivity in the infrastructure plan, with a clear owner and timetable.
- Set out one multi-year view of income, spending and reserves, independently reviewed (for example by the Fiscal Policy Panel).

Business

- Give the Taskforce evidence from your business on investment, recruitment and barriers to growth.
- Offer a business view on the growth ambition and sector priorities, drawing on the Taskforce's horizon scanning.

Individuals

- Take part in the growth plan consultation, and support the plan publicly.

Proposed measurement

- Growth plan and measurable growth ambition adopted, with milestones.
- A multi-year fiscal framework published alongside the growth plan and independently reviewed.
- Tax package implemented as decided, with no material reopening within the political term.
- Share citing lack of long-term direction as a top-three constraint in the next business survey (2026 baseline: 50%).
- Two or three signature categories agreed and named in the growth plan.

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

"[On GST] my point is they can't even make a decision on that."

Business leader, Workshop 2

"Analysis of taxation vs. spending: keep spending that brings value, cut spending that does not have the return."

Business leader, survey

Government

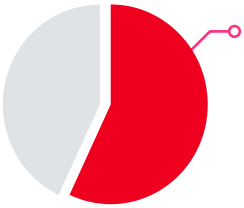
3

Fix government decision-making effectiveness.

Slow and reopened decisions are the constraint business leaders name most often, and participants see them as the root of many other problems. Guernsey needs a system that can choose, commit and deliver.

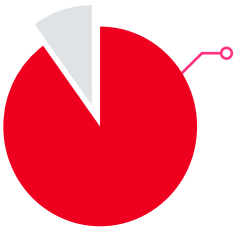
Buisness leaders we consulted described a structural mismatch. The system is designed as though there were an executive, but in practice it operates as consensus government. Policy & Resources has limited leverage over committees and amendments, so agreed plans can be reopened in the Assembly, as the tax debate has shown, and Deputies are drawn into casework at the expense of strategy. The last full review of how the States works was by the Harwood panel in 2000.[12] Moves have been made to improve leadership and accountability structures in committees through Chief Officer appointments, which points in the same direction as this recommendation.[13]

Confidence is low, as the 90% above shows. The 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer finds governments scoring below zero on competence (net -19 in high-income countries; 26 countries surveyed).[8] We propose an independent review of decision-making effectiveness in critical processes and systems, in 2027 and 2028, reporting about nine months before the 2029 election so that every candidate can publish their position on it. IoD Guernsey's 2019 paper on the machinery of government is a useful starting point.[14]



57%

put government decision-making speed and ambition in their top three constraints, the most-selected option.



90%

held strong negative perceptions of the system of government and politicians (2024 social capital research).[1]

> "Kick it down the road...so it looks like we're doing something."
>
> **Business leader, interview**

Ideas for what could happen next

Government

- Start now: commission an independent review of decision-making effectiveness in the key committees, with a clear scope and funding.
- Cover options from practical reform to consensus government through to a blank-sheet model, even if this means restructuring government.
- Publish decision timelines and owners for major growth decisions while the review is under way.
- Report openly on delivery against government plans and Deputies' manifesto commitments, with transparent measures that help build trust with voters.

Business

- Give the review evidence, including examples of decisions that cost the island investment or talent.
- Brief 2029 election candidates on the decisions that matter most to growth.

Individuals

- Join the review's consultations, and ask 2029 candidates how they will decide faster and make decisions stick.

Proposed measurement

- Independent review scoped, funded and commissioned, with published terms of reference.
- Review findings published before the 2029 election.
- Decision timelines and owners published for major growth decisions.
- Fall in the share citing decision-making as a top-three constraint in the next business survey (2026 baseline: 57%).

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

"The way our government set up, it's actually set up to tie themselves up and to go round and round and round."

Business leader, Workshop 2

"Everything takes ages... it feels like we're kind of like 10 years behind to everywhere else."

Student, Workshop 5

Business

4

Recommendations 4 to 6 • Business stepping up, working with government

Unify Guernsey's messaging, with sharper positioning, clearer segmentation and better pathways in.

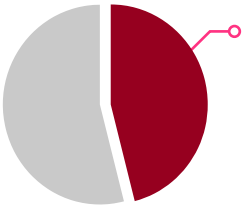
Guernsey has a strong offering, but it is promoted by many organisations, each in its own voice. Before any new body or campaign is funded, we ask the existing bodies to tell one unified story with a louder voice, sharper positioning and better pathways in, backed by a shared toolkit, a campaign that targets net contributors and a streamlined route in for each audience.

A fragmented presence abroad was raised in eight of 15 interviews and in every focus group in the global decision-making workshop, and current targeting tends to favour retirees over net contributors, meaning people who add more to the economy than they draw on public services, such as entrepreneurs, skilled workers and returners.

Weak routes in are already costing business, as employers send trainees to Jersey for apartments and recruit graduates through UK offices (Recommendation 1).

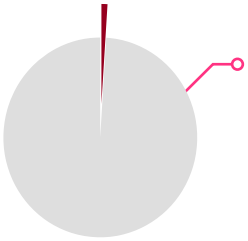
Workshop participants said Jersey Finance has a much larger promotion budget and team than Guernsey Finance, and that Guernsey firms tend to undersell the island. Over time, the island could also consider bringing the relevant promotional bodies together under a single body, as London did with London & Partners and as Ireland and Singapore have done.

Promotion is only half of it. Guernsey also needs to be known for something, and to say so with confidence. The island should choose one or two flagship strengths in which to lead the international debate, which raises its profile with new audiences and gives islanders a reason to be proud.



46%

want a single, unified Guernsey brand story and vision among their top three interventions, the second-highest.



0.1%

real annual growth in finance and related services, 2017 to 2025, according to the Finance Sector Growth Strategy.[15]

> "We're guilty of underplaying our strengths. And we keep publicly airing our laundry. We've lost business that way."

One-to-one interview, industry body member

Ideas for what could happen next

Business

- Agree one Guernsey story and toolkit (key messages, evidence, visuals, one website and contact point) for every firm and promotional body to use.
- Promote jointly with Jersey and other partners where it strengthens the case.
- Run a campaign targeting net contributors such as entrepreneurs and skilled workers, starting with a benchmark against other markets.
- Choose one or two areas where Guernsey can lead the international debate, and show up with one voice.
- Engage the advisers who shortlist jurisdictions, and act on where Guernsey scores poorly.

Government

- Hold the existing promotional bodies, including Guernsey Finance and Locate Guernsey, to one story, a louder voice and clearer segmentation.
- Consider over time bringing the different bodies under one P&L and brand, akin to models in other jurisdictions, for example an "Invest Guernsey".
- Streamline the routes in that depend on government, such as the talent route in Recommendation 1.

Individuals

- Join the review's consultations, and ask 2029 candidates how they will decide faster and make decisions stick.

Proposed measurement

- Shared toolkit in use by firms and the promotional bodies.
- Campaign reach and enquiries through each pathway.
- Benchmark of Guernsey's promotion against other markets completed.
- New firm registrations and inward investment.

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

"If I turn up to a conference, there's 20 of them [from Jersey], and there's two of us [from Guernsey]."

Business leader, Workshop 1

"You go to the Middle East, they're sending everything to Jersey, because Jersey Finance are all over it."

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

Business

5

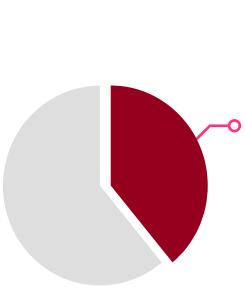
Recommendations 4 to 6 • Business stepping up, working with government

Strengthen upskilling, AI and talent programmes.

Guernsey has many good skills initiatives, but they are not prioritised or coordinated as a whole. AI is best seen as a productivity tool for existing sectors. Business is well placed to lead practical AI and skills initiatives and to use that experience to shape policy, preparing future and existing talent as AI changes the number and mix of workers the island needs.

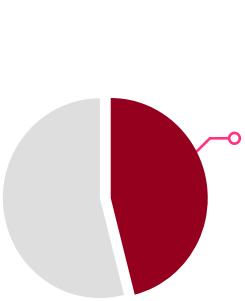
AI adoption is uneven: 46% of financial services firms and 73% of property and construction firms have not yet deployed it, against 8% in technology.[2] Skills, AI and digital adoption came up in 14 of 17 focus group discussions, where participants spoke of an opportunity window of one to two years. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that almost 40% of jobs worldwide are exposed to AI, and about 60% in advanced economies.[16]

Participants described a busy but fragmented picture across schools, the Guernsey Institute, Careers Guernsey, employer academies and an Adult Skills Strategy with short-term funding. Planning is also hampered by a lack of data, as population and employment statistics were suspended in July 2025.[7] Employer-led programmes such as Singapore's AI Apprenticeship Programme show how industry can lift adoption and inform policy.



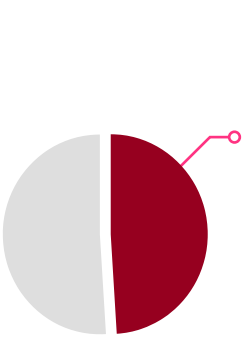
39%

of organisations have not yet deployed AI, rising to 63% of mainly local firms.



46%

name a lack of in-house skills as a barrier to AI, the most-selected option.



49%

put skills, talent and workforce participation in their top three constraints.

Ideas for what could happen next

Business

- Assess and publish AI's impact on the workforce within 12 months, modelling population, housing and reskilling needs.
- Use it to inform the population policy review and housing roadmap (Recommendation 1), and agree skills priorities with education providers and the Guernsey Institute.
- Run shared AI academies so smaller firms can take part, and release staff time for learning (Recommendations 7 and 9).
- Work with Jersey on shared course provision and a joint approach to AI oversight.
- Offer boards a light-touch AI governance baseline: a model inventory, risk classification and record-keeping.

Government

- Align adult skills funding with shared priorities and the long-term vision in Recommendation 2, and fund it for longer.
- Restore population and employment statistics, and give clear data-protection guidance on AI.
- Set up a dedicated AI workforce function in government, with business in support, because the window to act is short.

Individuals

- Commit to one skills or AI learning goal this year.

Proposed measurement

- Shared skills priorities agreed and published.
- Fall in the share of organisations that have not yet deployed AI in the next business survey (2026 baseline: 39%).
- People trained or reskilled through coordinated routes each year.
- Workforce assessment published and used in policy.

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

"AI is going to remove lower level jobs. So we have to make sure that our population can then move up."

Business leader, Workshop 2

"We also need an education system that allows us to retrain that workforce, so not at school age, but now at middle of career age."

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

Business 6

Recommendations 4 to 6 • Business stepping up, working with government

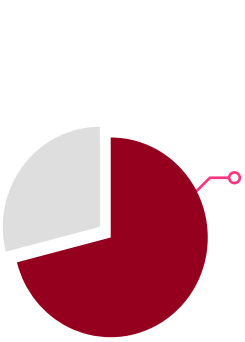
Better pathways and support for corporate innovation, entrepreneurship and R&D.

Participants in the workshops told us Guernsey has plenty of ideas and people willing to start things, but too few of them become growing businesses. Support should favour businesses that can scale, including owner-managed local firms, and give founders and intrapreneurs a clear path from education to start-up, with established firms playing a bigger part through intrapreneurship, corporate venturing and R&D.

New sectors and start-ups were raised in 12 of 17 focus group discussions. Students described ventures that lost momentum for lack of money, time and guidance, and participants said investor clubs tend to back property rather than innovation. In the IoD's 2024 social capital research, 45% said people are cautious about working with those they do not know.[1] Interviewees added that the island has few visible entrepreneurial role models and does less than other jurisdictions to celebrate and recognise its founders, even though successful founders live here and could mentor others.

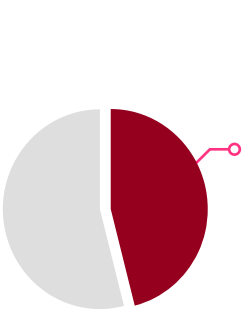
The survey tested this only indirectly. Participants cautioned against repeating a past entrepreneur visa scheme, and some argued the bigger prize lies in moving up the value chain within finance. The founder concierge in the Finance Sector Growth Strategy and the new Fund Foundry, which backs first-time and emerging fund managers, are positive steps.[17]

In August 2026 Economic Development announced that the Digital Greenhouse would close and invited private and voluntary operators to take on incubator services.[18] A tender has since been issued, and there is a clear opportunity for the private sector, with government support, to fill the gap.



71%

of workshop focus group discussions (12 of 17) raised new sectors, start-ups and innovation.



45%

say people are cautious about working with those they do not know (2024 social capital research).

> "Absolutely zero help from Guernsey, like nothing."
>
> **Business leader, Workshop 3**

Ideas for what could happen next

Business

- Fill the gap left by the Digital Greenhouse, and think bigger: work outside-in with Locate Guernsey to connect outside investment with local needs.
- Build better pathways from education into start-up, scale-up and exit, and back intrapreneurs, corporate venturing and R&D in established firms, with one place for advice, growth support and finance.

Government

- Align adult skills funding with shared priorities and the long-term vision in Recommendation 2, and fund it for longer.
- Restore population and employment statistics, and give clear data-protection guidance on AI.
- Set up a dedicated AI workforce function in government, with business in support, because the window to act is short.

Individuals

- Commit to one skills or AI learning goal this year.

Proposed measurement

- New business registrations each year.
- Founders supported through the pathway.
- Spin-outs from established firms.
- Early-stage capital raised on the island.

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

"Nobody helped me spin out. It's huge risk."

Business leader, Workshop 3

"Although it can be judgmental, I would say that the support really is kind of there for young people...".

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

Individuals

7

Recommendations 7 to 9 • What every individual commits to

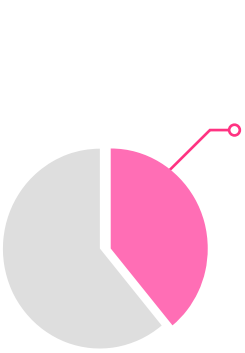
Build your AI skills and bring your team with you.

AI adoption starts with leadership. Leaders who build their own fluency, and give their teams the time and permission to learn, set the pace for their whole organisation.

The gap between early adopters and the rest appears to be widening. Some organisations say they are moving at the pace they want, while others are held back by skills, security concerns or resistance in their own teams. Adoption also varies sharply by sector, with 8% of technology firms yet to deploy AI against 46% in financial services.

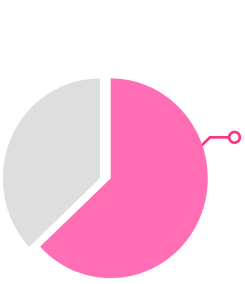
Next-generation leaders questioned whether they have the expertise to keep up, and participants described organisations holding back for fear of breaching data-protection rules. Clear guidance and board-level oversight were seen as the way forward, and this is a recommendation every individual can act on in the coming year.

IoD Guernsey's 2024 social capital research describes individuals as the powerhouse of making connections and building goodwill. Leaders who share what is working with their peers use that strength to lift adoption across the island.[1]



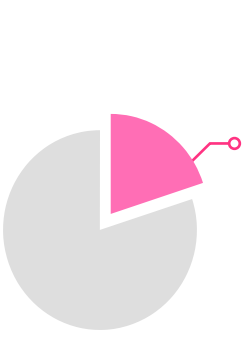
39%

of mainly off-island or international organisations have not yet deployed AI - the gap to close; 57% have deployed it in at least some functions, and the rest said AI was not applicable or gave no answer.



63%

of mainly local firms* have not yet deployed AI.



20%

name cultural resistance in their own organisation, rising to 29% in firms of 250+.

*30 respondents (24%) who mainly serve the Guernsey market

Ideas for what could happen next

Individuals

- Build your own AI and digital skills this year, give your team time and permission to experiment, and share what works.
- Put AI on your board's agenda, with clear oversight.

Business

- Leaders and boards sign up to a shared AI commitment, and publish a short statement on how they oversee AI.
- Keep the G8 AI Sprint learning going beyond its six weeks, with regular peer sessions and board refreshers.

Government

- Use AI to improve public services, and set out how government will bring its staff with it.

Proposed measurement

- Leaders and boards signed up to the commitment (page 42).
- Number of boards with AI on the agenda.
- Fall in the share of organisations that have not yet deployed AI in the next business survey (2026 baseline: 39%).
- Share citing cultural resistance as a barrier (2026 baseline: 20%).

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

"My labour pool I've got here needs to be engaged with how these tools work. That's what I'm doing."

Business leader, Workshop 1

"Do I seriously have the tech expertise, and am I paying enough attention to what's happening in AI world?"

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

Individuals

8

Recommendations 7 to 9 • What every individual commits to

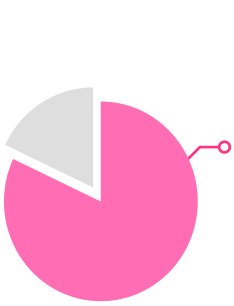
Take one considered risk each month.

Fear of failure runs through government, business and society, and it holds back risk-taking at work and in life. In a small community a failure is visible and the cost feels high. Leaders can help change that by backing one idea they might once have declined, and by lowering the personal cost of failing for the people around them.

Fear of failure was raised in 14 of 17 focus group discussions and six of 15 interviews, and it appears at every level. Next-generation leaders and students described caution as a rational choice, because a secure, well-paid job in finance is often the route to owning a home. Participants also noted that decisions in off-island-owned firms are often made elsewhere, so local leaders lack the mandate to decide, and asked for compliance to be involved at the start of new ideas. Parent groups can help by giving local boards more agency to decide.

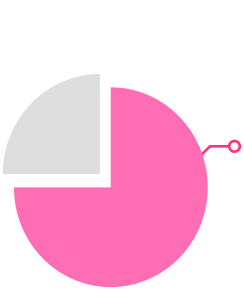
Directors describe this issue more often than they prioritise it, which is why this recommendation asks each leader to act personally. The Guernsey Financial Services Commission was among the organisations most often named by survey respondents as getting innovation right, which shows that a considered risk can work well here.

IoD Guernsey's 2024 social capital research points the same way: 86% agreed that the island's independence and stubbornness can foster resistance to change, and one participant reflected that if the next big opportunity arrived today, "I don't think we'd seize the day. I think we've lost that."[1]



82%

of workshop focus group discussions (14 of 17) raised fear of failure.



3 in 4

student focus groups said a failure follows you here.

"The cost of failure is so high."

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

Ideas for what could happen next

Individuals

- Back one new idea you would once have declined, and allow side projects with clear guardrails.
- Share a lesson from something that did not work, with your team or your peers.

Government

- Regulators review what is over-regulated and give early, proportionate guidance on new ideas, building on existing sandboxes.
- Public bodies share what they learned from projects that did not work.

Business

- Involve compliance and risk teams from the start of new ideas.
- Boards set a clear appetite for controlled experiments, with a small budget and agreed limits.
- Encourage the workforce to suggest new ideas, back some, and build a culture of experimentation.
- Celebrate entrepreneurial pursuits and success stories from every sector, to demystify what is possible.

Proposed measurement

- Leaders signed up to the commitment.
- Examples shared at the next IoD Annual Conference.
- Number of boards with a budget for experiments.
- Fewer focus groups raising fear of failure in the next workshops (baseline: 14 of 17).

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

"Businesses allowing staff, side hustles, or setting up a new business … whilst also working. I think that mindset needs to change."

Business leader, Workshop 1

"The judgement thing's almost a bit more in the head and a lot less than people are talking about."

Student, Workshop 5

Individuals

9

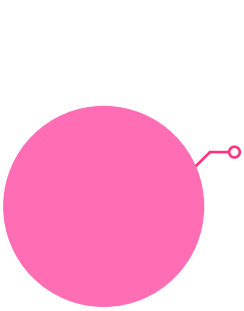
Recommendations 7 to 9 • What every individual commits to

Help develop the next generation.

Young people want to build their future in Guernsey, and many of those who leave would like to return. Much is already under way, including Grad Routes, apprenticeships and on-island learning, but it is not yet clear how well resourced and joined up these efforts are. Leaders can help by building on what exists, opening doors early and making it easier to come back.

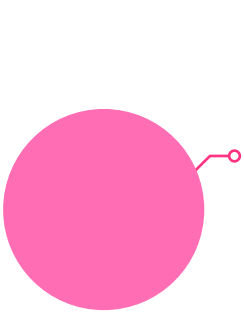
Students argued that leaving for a time is normal and that more people return than expect to, while next-generation leaders said the cost of coming back deters many. Employers described recruiting graduates through UK offices because they could not bring them to Guernsey, and the island's own projections show the working-age population shrinking before the total population peaks in the mid-2030s.[6]

Every existing strategy expresses concern about young people leaving, yet none gives them a voice where decisions are made. The survey did not ask about the next generation, so this recommendation rests on the workshops and interviews, and it was shaped directly by the young people who took part. In the 2024 social capital research, no respondent under 35 disagreed that Guernsey society is divided between locals and newcomers, and by wealth and generation.[1]



100%

of student focus groups raised housing, cost of living and careers beyond finance.



5 of 5

workshops raised the next generation, as did 7 of 15 interviews.

"A lot of people will go to uni and then just not come back."

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

Ideas for what could happen next

Individuals

- Back existing projects such as Grad Routes and apprenticeships, and open up careers information beyond finance.
- Keep in touch with those who leave, and help them come back.

Government

- Tackle housing and cost of living, including homes for young people and financial support for first-time buyers (Recommendation 1).
- Give under-25s a voice on States advisory panels.
- Provide longer-term funding for Grad Routes, apprenticeships and on-island higher education, including the investment the Guernsey Institute needs.

Business

- Offer apprenticeships, graduate schemes, bursaries and degree-while-working routes, and consider an incentive for returners who come back within five years.
- Build pathways with the Guernsey Training Agency, schools and local entrepreneurs.
- Bring a next-generation voice onto your board or leadership team.

Proposed measurement

- Leaders signed up to the commitment.
- Work placements and graduate roles offered.
- Returners to the island each year.
- Next-generation observers on boards.

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

“Children aren’t coming back to the island. They’re getting trained and staying away.”

Business leader, Workshop 2

“Considering we are like the next generation, I think that’s an important thing that we are represented and that we do have [a] say.”

Student, Workshop 5

Coordination

10

Recommendation 10 • Bringing Recommendations 1 to 9 together

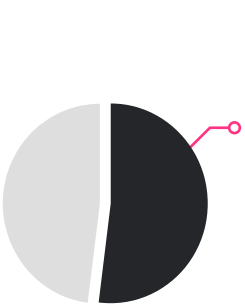
Cross-sector Growth Taskforce.

Guernsey has many plans and bodies but few places to come together and agree what to do. The Growth Taskforce, representing the G8 stakeholders, would better enable decisions on the key growth priorities, fill intelligence gaps and support the wider ecosystem, including States Committees.

What it is: An enabler, supporter, adviser and partner, not a new authority. It replaces no one and adds no new voices. It works through the G8 framework, across sectors and committees, to advise, share insight and coordinate the Action Plan recommendations. Each keeps its own named owner, and the Taskforce does not own delivery. It will also build the data the island lacks, benchmarking Guernsey against comparable jurisdictions, and collaborate with Jersey, the UK and other partners where there is clear shared benefit.

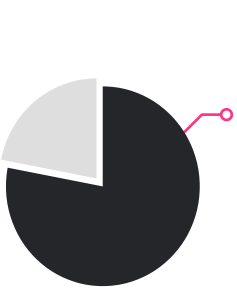
How it will work: Six seats, with four nominated by the G8 bodies and two chosen by the IoD, modelled on the Adult Skills Board but without a budget of its own, and a light in-kind secretariat from the IoD and the G8 bodies. It starts light-touch and focused on the priorities in this report, then iterates as it proves useful. A review point at the end of 2028 would decide whether to continue and build out more dedicated capability (possibly with private-sector funding), refocus, move any intelligence function to an existing body or an independent economic observatory, or disband.

Who benefits: Government gets joined-up advice, business gets one place to be heard, and individuals and the next generation get a stronger voice.



52%

want a joint government and industry delivery board; only 13% would leave it to Policy & Resources.



78%

agreed in 2024 that few forums exist for constructive dialogue and consensus-building.

> “We’re still living in a world where committees are writing letters to other committees.”
>
> Senior interviewee

Ideas for what could happen next

Individuals

- Confirm initial terms of reference by the end of 2026, and constitute the six-seat Taskforce, with a chair, by 31 January 2027.
- Agree a short list of named deliverables, each with an owner.
- Bring the owners of each recommendation together to share views.
- Build the island's data and intelligence by benchmarking against comparable economies.
- Start with in-kind insight and benchmarking. In its first year, publish a first horizon scan and an audit of where Guernsey is missing from the datasets investors use.

Government

- Key States Committees are asked to provide an interface to the Growth Taskforce, naming a counterpart and sharing data.
- Scope the decision-making review with the Taskforce (Recommendation 3).

Business and leaders

- Nominate members and share evidence, and sign up to Recommendations 7 to 9.

Proposed measurement

- Taskforce constituted by 31 January 2027, with terms of reference agreed.
- Each recommendation has an agreed owner taking it forward.
- Insight and views shared with the public and private sector bodies it supports.
- Intelligence findings acted on by named owners.
- Business confidence that the actions are moving, in the next business survey.

Suggested measures, to be confirmed with those responsible.

In their own words

"We've got lots of reports. And how do we have action?"

Business leader, Workshop 1

"What we do need is some sort of specific accountability structure and sort of disclosing who owns what and when are they going to do it by, and what are the consequences if they don't?"

Business leader, Workshop 3

Action Plan

To contents

Part A: Proposed action plan

Everyone has a role to play: this is a collective responsibility. The recommendations will only happen if the public sector, business and individuals each act, and many can start now, without waiting for the Growth Taskforce. The table below shows how the Taskforce will help: by offering insight, perspectives and views that support better decisions, and by helping fragmented stakeholders work together. This is a proposed plan that has not yet been fully tested, and owners and timings will be agreed. Setting up the Taskforce itself comes first, so it is listed at the top of the table.

How the Growth Taskforce will support implementation

	Recommendation	What it means	Proposed first step for the Growth Taskforce
10	**Cross-sector Growth Taskforce.**	31 January 2027	Confirm initial terms of reference by the end of 2026, constitute the six-seat Taskforce by 31 January 2027 and agree its first insight and benchmarking priorities.
1	**Build more homes and open a faster route in for talent.**	By Nov 2027	Share business insight on housing and permit barriers to inform the housing roadmap, and bring employers, developers and the States together around it.
2	**Set a long-term vision, growth plan and the fiscal framework to fund it.**	2027 to 2029	Offer a business perspective on the growth ambition and plan, and share evidence to help build one multi-year fiscal view.
3	**Fix government decision-making effectiveness.**	Starts now, beyond 2029	Share evidence on where decisions stall, and help the independent review draw on the views of those affected.
4	**Unify Guernsey's messaging, with sharper positioning, clearer segmentation and better pathways in.**	By Nov 2027	Bring the G8 and promotional bodies together to share views and agree one brand story.
5	**Strengthen upskilling, AI and talent programmes.**	2027 to 2029	Gather and share insight on AI's impact on the workforce, and connect employers and education providers around shared skills priorities.
6	**Better pathways and support for corporate innovation, entrepreneurship and R&D.**	Starts now, beyond 2029	Map existing support, share what founders and investors say is missing, and connect them with those who could fill the gap.
7	**Build your AI skills and bring your team with you.**	By Nov 2027	Share good practice on AI adoption, encourage leaders to commit, and report how many have signed up.
8	**Take one considered risk at work and in life each month.**	2027 to 2029	Gather and share examples of considered risks and what was learned, to build confidence across sectors.
9	**Help develop the next generation.**	Starts now, beyond 2029	Bring next-generation views into the conversation, and connect leaders, employers and schools around local career routes.

How the Growth Taskforce could develop

The Taskforce starts light-touch and focused on the key priorities in this report, then iterates over time. It is an enabler, supporter, adviser and partner, working through the G8 framework across sectors and committees to support and enable decision-making and help fragmented stakeholders collaborate better. It sits alongside the G8 bodies, Policy & Resources and the existing strategies listed in Appendix E, and does not replace them. The stages below are indicative. A review point at the end of 2028 would decide whether to disband, refocus or build out more dedicated capability. Competitor intelligence support is a possible later idea, and could move to a permanent home if the Taskforce closes.

Timeline	Potential focus areas	Potential benefits
2026 /27 Start small and credible.	• Share business insight with States committees on the first actions. • Bring the G8 bodies, promotional bodies and government together around shared priorities. • Track progress on Recommendations 1 to 9, and begin benchmarking Guernsey against comparable jurisdictions. • Publish a first horizon scan and an audit of Guernsey's visibility in international datasets.	• Better-informed decisions. • One place where business views are heard. • Faster alignment on first actions.
2028 /29 Build the evidence.	• Widen the voices heard, across every main sector and the next generation. • Build a shared evidence base: workforce and AI assessment, finance competitiveness work and an annual scorecard. • Connect the strategies and bodies that work in parallel.	• Facts that all sides recognise and trust. • Clearer sight of what is working. • Stronger collaboration across sectors.
2030 /31 Established voice, if needed.	• Keep the benchmarking up to date and extend it. • Publish research and input to States reviews. • Add independent leadership and expert advice. • Intelligence function established in a permanent home.	• A recognised, neutral voice on competitiveness. • Advice that outlasts any one political term. • A lasting habit of working together.

The first twelve months

- **18 November 2026:** the report and action plan are presented at the IoD Conference 2026, with first commitments and owners announced where agreed.
- **By the end of 2026:** initial terms of reference confirmed. By 31 January 2027: the Growth Taskforce constituted.
- **First priority:** the Taskforce agrees its scope, named deliverables and their owners.

Proposed measurement

Each recommendation has a small set of measures on its page. The Taskforce will confirm a baseline for each and agree targets with the owners.

Building on existing work

This report builds on, and does not replace, work already under way, including the strategies and reports in Appendix E.

What IoD Guernsey will do

- Convene the Growth Taskforce and, with the G8 bodies, provide a light secretariat (Recommendation 10).
- Repeat the business survey in 2027 and report progress against the measures in this report.
- Report progress at the next IoD Annual Conference, including what has and has not moved.

Part B: Risks to delivery

No plan of this kind is free of risk. These are the main risks we see and how the recommendations respond to them. The Growth Taskforce would keep them under review as it agrees owners, measures and costs.

Risk	What could go wrong	How the recommendations respond
Agreed plans are reopened.	The tax debate shows how decisions can be revisited, and priorities reset with each political term.	Recommendation 2 sets a plan that holds across political terms. Recommendation 3 reviews critical decision-making processes and systems. The Taskforce helps momentum carry across terms.
The 2029 election resets priorities.	A new States could set a different direction before the first results show.	The decision-making review reports about nine months before the 2029 election, so that every candidate can commit to it (Recommendation 3).
The Taskforce lacks authority.	It works through influence and relationships, so it relies on goodwill and on the quality of its insight.	It starts small, with six seats, and works closely with the G8 bodies and government. It engages stakeholders informally, offers practical advice, insight and intelligence, and spotlights the critical priorities.
Volunteer time runs out.	Members give their time, and many people have already given years to similar conversations.	A light secretariat from the IoD and the G8 bodies, a short first agenda (scope, deliverables and owners) and a small set of measures. Insight and benchmarking start small, drawing on the IoD and the G8 bodies, and competitor intelligence support or funded research capacity is a later decision that could draw on private-sector funding.
Costs and funding are unclear.	Costs have not yet been modelled, and views differ on the size of the gap in the public finances.	Scope, deliverables and owners are the Taskforce's first priority, and costs are agreed with the owner of each recommendation. Recommendation 2 sets a funding model within one multi-year fiscal framework.
Effort stays fragmented.	More plans and bodies could add to the separate pockets of activity the island already has.	The Taskforce builds on existing strategies and bodies and does not replace them (Appendix E). Recommendation 4 joins up how the island promotes itself.
Evidence gaps.	Population and employment statistics have been suspended since July 2025, which makes baselines harder to set.	Recommendation 5 asks for the statistics to be restored, and the Taskforce confirms a baseline for each measure.
Intelligence without action.	Horizon scans and benchmarks are produced but not acted on.	Each finding is routed to a named owner through the Taskforce, and adoption is tracked as a measure (Recommendation 10).

Part C: Make your commitment

Recommendation 7

Build your AI skills and bring your team with you.

- Build your own AI and digital skills this year.
- Give your team time and permission to learn and experiment.
- Put AI on your board's agenda, with clear oversight.
- Share what works with your peers.

Recommendation 8

Take one considered risk each month.

- Back one new idea you would once have declined.
- Involve compliance and risk teams from the start.
- Allow side projects, with clear guardrails.
- Share a lesson from something that did not work.

Recommendation 9

Help develop the next generation.

- Back existing projects such as Grad Routes, apprenticeships and on-island learning.
- Open up careers information beyond finance.
- Keep in touch with those who leave, and help them come back.
- Bring a next-generation voice onto your board or leadership team.

Every individual on the island can act on Recommendations 7 to 9 this year, whatever their role.

Most Guernsey businesses are small. You do not need a formal programme to act on this report, and you do not need to act on all 10 recommendations. Start with one of our four questions below. Choose one action, write it down and bring your team with you. Delivery of the action plan depends on all of us.

Four questions to help you choose

1. **What is one decision we have been putting off?**
   Settle it, or ask who can.
2. **Where are we short of people, skills or space to grow?**
   Tell the Growth Taskforce, and say who could help.
3. **How are we using AI, even in a small way?**
   Start with one task and one person.
4. **How are we telling Guernsey's story to customers and recruits?**
   Tell one consistent story.

Scale your response to your size. What matters is that you start.

My commitment

I will

By when

Name and organisation

Share it with the IoD, and work with us through the Growth Taskforce so that government, business and individuals move forward together.

Conclusion

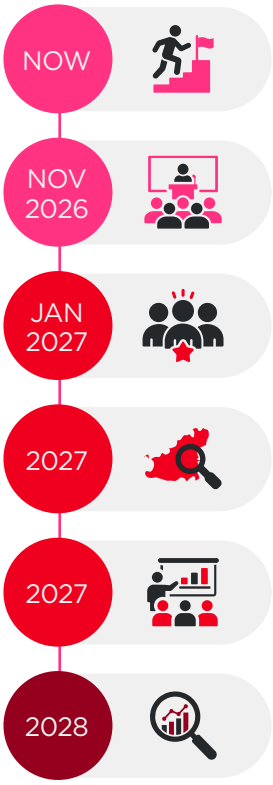
Guernsey has real strengths, held back by slow decisions, a shortage of homes and talent, fragmented effort and too little planning for the changes AI will bring.

That is what business leaders, next-generation leaders and students told us. The prize for fixing it is significant. Had Guernsey matched Jersey's growth over the last decade, it would have produced around £643 million more output in 2023 alone, enough to help fund public services, homes and opportunities for the next generation. The island has real strengths and a strong reputation. It now needs to say so with confidence and act together to unlock more growth.

We have deliberately focussed the recommendations so that each can be delivered, and each gives a clear role to government, business and every individual. Three sit with government, and we will keep making the case for them through the Growth Taskforce. The other six, for businesses and individuals can begin straight away.

Just as important is how we work together. Guernsey is well placed to build on its social capital and rebuild trust between business, government and individuals. The steps we take in the next few years will shape the island for the next 15 to 20 years. This report and the 18 November IoD Conference 2026 start a multi-year effort. We fix the immediate priorities first, then build towards sustainable growth over the long term.

The IoD will convene the Taskforce and invites everyone with a role in these recommendations to join us.



From now
All 10 recommendations start now: government, business and individuals take their first steps.

18 November 2026
Report and action plan presented at the IoD Conference 2026, with first commitments and owners announced where agreed.

31 January 2027
Growth Taskforce constituted, with initial terms of reference confirmed by the end of 2026.

During 2027
The Growth Taskforce works through its named deliverables, including a first horizon scan and an audit of Guernsey's visibility in international datasets.

Next IoD Annual Conference
Business survey repeated, with progress reported against the measures in this report.

End of 2028
Taskforce review point: continue, adapt or close.

The island does not lack ideas.
What it needs now is for each of us to act.

Appendices

A to H

- A Methodology
- B Survey headlines
- C Other growth ideas we heard
- D The 2024 social capital research
- E Where this report fits
- F Future research areas
- G In their own words
- H Notes and sources

Supporting method, evidence and sources for readers who want to see how the report was built.

To contents

A: Methodology

Every recommendation in this report is grounded in what participants told us, combined with wider research evidence. We listened widely, used thematic analysis[19] to identify themes in the data from the workshops, interviews and survey, tested each theme across the three data collection methods (survey, workshops and interviews), and then tested the draft with stakeholders and the Research Advisory Group.

1

Listen widely

Survey of 127 respondents; five workshops with 150+ participants across 17 focus group discussions; 15 one-to-one interviews on and off the island. Three voice groups: senior leaders, next generation, students.

2

Sort into themes

Every recorded interview, focus group discussion and survey question coded using thematic analysis against 25 common themes. Counted by source, so one loud voice cannot skew the picture.

3

Confirm findings

Each theme graded A, B or C on agreement across methods and voice groups. Disagreements reported alongside.

4

Choose

The findings led to 23 possible actions, mostly participants' own proposals, checked against existing strategies and scored on five criteria. Any departure from score order is recorded.

5

Test and review

Shared in draft with Economic Development officers, industry leaders and next-generation participants, then reviewed in full by the IoD Research Advisory Group.

What we did

Between April and September 2026 we ran five workshops with more than 150 participants across 17 focus group discussions, from directors to post-16 students. We held 15 one-to-one interviews with decision-makers on and off the island, and surveyed 127 business leaders through the IoD and the G8 bodies. 72% of survey respondents hold senior roles and 59% serve off-island or mixed markets.

How we analysed it

We used AI and data-analysis tools to transcribe, sort and code transcripts, notes, interviews and survey data against 25 common themes in one evidence register. The research team reviewed every theme, and every quote was checked against the original transcript.

Each theme was graded A (strong), B (supported) or C (indicative), depending on how many methods and voice groups confirmed it.

Limitations

- The survey was self-selecting, mainly IoD members and senior leaders, and does not represent the whole island.
- Some voices are under-represented, including local owner-managed businesses in retail, hospitality and trades, recent arrivals and the public sector workforce. 63% of survey respondents have lived on the island for over 20 years.
- Multi-select answers are reported as the percentage of all 127 respondents who selected each option.
- Workshops were held under the Chatham House Rule; points first raised by a facilitator are excluded as evidence.

How we got to this report

Themes emerged from the analysis, and these findings led to 23 possible actions, mostly participants' own proposals. Each was checked against existing strategies and scored on evidence, materiality, deliverability, breadth and additionality. Ten were taken forward as recommendations, including the Growth Taskforce, seven were merged into them and six were held on a long list in the evidence register.

Steering and input came from States of Guernsey committees and senior civil servants, the IoD steering committee, the G8 bodies, large employers, and emerging leaders and students. Emerging findings were shared with Economic Development officers, senior chief executives and next-generation participants. The IoD Research Advisory Group then reviewed and stress-tested the full draft, giving feedback and challenging the evidence, the method and each recommendation before publication.

Caveats on the recommendations

- The research focused mainly on problems. The recommendations combine that evidence with wider research evidence, including examples from other small economies.
- Costs, funding and feasibility have not yet been modelled. Costs will be agreed with the owner of each recommendation. The Growth Taskforce's first priority is to agree its scope, deliverables and owners.
- Owners and timeframes are indicative and not yet agreed.
- Student evidence comes from four student focus groups, about 30 students in all.

B: Survey headlines

To test what we heard in the workshops and interviews, IoD Guernsey surveyed business leaders between 2 and 27 June 2026, through the IoD and the G8 business bodies, open beyond IoD members. 127 people responded: 72% hold chair, non-executive, chief executive, partner, founder or senior executive roles; 41% work in financial services and 59% outside it; 49% of organisations employ 50 or more people; and 59% serve off-island or mixed markets. Figures are the share of all 127 respondents; for multi-select questions, the share selecting each option.

Urgency

91%
say Guernsey is at an inflection point; 47% say decisive action is needed now.

64%
are concerned about Guernsey's competitive position.

57%
have lost business, talent or investment to a competitor in two to three years; 68% of them for structural reasons.

What holds Guernsey back

57%
say government decision-making speed and ambition (most-selected constraint).

54%
say housing supply and planning, rising to 62% in financial services.

50%
say lack of a clear long-term economic direction.

49%
say skills, talent and workforce participation.

What to do first

57%
put housing and infrastructure delivery through public and private vehicles in their top three interventions.

46%
want a single jurisdictional story and vision.

45%
want a growth and competitiveness duty across public bodies.

40%
want a binding multi-year economic strategy.

The big choices

66%
say Guernsey needs fiscal reform and more growth investment; only 4% say the current model is enough.

36%
say a direction that survives political cycles is the single biggest change needed.

20%
want government to act more as facilitator than controller.

AI and skills

39%
of organisations have not yet deployed AI, rising to 63% of mainly local firms.

46%
name a lack of in-house skills as a barrier to AI.

29%
say they face no significant barrier and are moving at the pace they want.

Action plan

52%
want delivery owned by a joint government and industry board.

58%
say a small number of priorities would make the plan credible.

34%
want named owners; 28% published milestones with annual reporting.

C: Other growth ideas we heard

The research generated more ideas than could be taken forward as recommendations. The eleven ideas below appeared in the survey, workshops or interviews but did not meet our evidence threshold, or were not distinct enough, to make the final 10 or, in the case of tax, have been settled by a States of Guernsey decision. Several are reflected within the recommendations, and all remain worth pursuing.

1

Air and sea connectivity

Reliable, competitive links came up as a constraint across workshops and interviews. The Committee for Economic Development is already acting, so we have not created a separate recommendation, but it underpins Recommendations 1, 4 and 6. A national infrastructure plan now forms part of Recommendation 2, which names air and sea connectivity within it.

2

A growth and competitiveness duty

45% of survey respondents put a duty on public bodies to consider growth and competitiveness in their top three interventions. It could form part of the reforms in Recommendation 3.

3

Faster licensing and law-making

Participants described slow licensing and a long queue for legislation as a drag on new business, especially in the finance sector.

4

Proportionate financial crime and data rules

Several participants felt that rules designed for higher-risk activity are applied to low-risk business, adding cost without improving outcomes.

5

The best place to do finance business

The finance sector remains the island's engine but has grown very little in real terms since 2017. A competitiveness benchmark against Jersey, the Isle of Man and Luxembourg would show where to focus.

6

Energy, digital infrastructure and banking

Energy costs, digital connectivity and banking services were raised, but the evidence was too thin to carry a recommendation. All three are potential topics for future research.

7

Transparency on public spending

Participants asked to see how public money is spent and what it delivers. This is reflected in Recommendation 2, which asks for one view of income, spending and reserves.

8

Putting island capital to work

31% put a sovereign wealth or stimulus fund to co-invest on the island in their top three interventions. Views were mixed, so co-investment is folded into Recommendation 6.

9

A digital and tech transformation hub

30% put a digital and tech hub in their top three interventions. With the Digital Greenhouse closing, the idea is now more pressing and is reflected in Recommendation 6.

10

Buying local and talking Guernsey up

Some participants asked leaders to buy local where it makes sense and to act as ambassadors for the island. Both support Recommendation 4, but the evidence came from a few focus groups.

11

Tax: implement GST-plus and stick to it

Tax came up in 10 of 17 focus group discussions and five of 15 interviews, and 66% say Guernsey needs fiscal reform and more growth investment. It was the first recommendation in earlier drafts. The States of Guernsey has since voted for a GST-plus package, so the decision has been taken and what matters now is implementation: sticking to it and using part of the new revenue to fund growth (Recommendation 2). The States Treasurer's measure of the underlying gap in the 2025 accounts was £50m, against a headline surplus of £113.5m that included about £119m of largely unrealised investment gains.[20]

D: The 2024 social capital research

Strengths to build on

98% say people in Guernsey are generally helpful.

83% agree the island has a strong sense of community spirit and collective responsibility.

77% agree skilled people, especially from the corporate sector, lead its clubs, charities and community groups.

What holds change back

87% say Guernsey is not adapting quickly enough to its economic, social and environmental challenges.

86% say independence and stubbornness can foster resistance to change and an insular mindset.

82% say Guernsey can feel like a "glass half empty" place to live.

Trust and dialogue

90% hold strong negative perceptions of the system of government and politicians.

78% say few forums exist for constructive dialogue and consensus-building.

45% say people are cautious about collaborating with those they do not know (39% disagree).

In 2024 IoD Guernsey commissioned the Institute for Social Capital to study the strengths and weaknesses of social capital in Guernsey, which the report defines as "the ability and potential for people to cooperate and work together". Its central finding is the starting point for this plan: the island has strong social capital that it is not yet using to drive change.

The research drew on three group discussions and 21 interviews with 27 residents, followed by a survey of 126 adults testing 24 statements. The survey was open to all and self-selecting, and about half of respondents were IoD members, so the figures below, like our own, should be read as indicative. They show the share who strongly or somewhat agreed.

How it supports this plan

- Collective responsibility: the community spirit exists, and this plan directs it at growth (Introduction).
- Decision-making: low trust in the system strengthens the case for an independent review (Recommendation 3).
- One island story: the story must be backed by delivery, not slogans (Recommendation 4).
- Innovation and risk: caution about collaborating and resistance to change support (Recommendations 6 and 8).
- Next generation: the views of under-35s match what we heard from students and next-generation leaders (Recommendation 9).
- A forum for dialogue: the Growth Taskforce helps to fill a gap the research identified (Recommendation 10).

What the research concluded

- The preconditions for collaboration are strong, but there are perceived barriers to working together, and strong social capital is often under-used.
- Almost every participant felt not enough was being done to address the island's challenges. The author warned that social capital may be approaching a tipping point and that a lack of action is itself a major threat.
- Under-35s felt social divides most sharply: none disagreed that society is divided between locals and newcomers, and by wealth and generation.
- Slogans without delivery can backfire. Some saw the "Guernsey Together" message during COVID-19 as disingenuous.
- The best results come "when all levels take an active role". Its recommendations include intergenerational dialogue, more spaces to meet, support for volunteering and responsive institutions.

Who can affect change (2024)	Their role	Where it sits in this report
Institutions and policymakers	Shape the enabling environment.	**Government, Recommendations 1 to 3**
Organisations	Shape how people connect and access.	**Business, Recommendations 4 to 6**
Individuals	Build connections and goodwill.	**Individuals, Recommendations 7 to 9**

E: Where this report fits

Various reports and strategies focused on growth already exist, so it is fair to ask where this report fits and what value it adds. It supports and builds on them, and adds what none of them covers alone.

1

Whole economy

Cross-sector: finance, tourism, construction, retail, digital and hospitality in one picture.

2

Everyone's part

What government, business and individuals can each do.

3

Wide evidence

Over 280 contributions from business, young leaders and students.

4

A route to delivery

A Growth Taskforce to help move agreed actions forward.

Strategy or report	Key things to know	How this report fits	
Economic Development Workplan 2026 to 2029 Committee for Economic Development	It is "not an economic strategy in itself" and the Committee controls few of the levers. The Economic Strategy is due in 2027.	**Supports**	Its priorities on connectivity, finance, AI and innovation, regulation and a joined-up approach across government.
		Builds on	It is industry-agnostic and the Committee controls few levers, so we set out what business and individuals can do outside government, including talent, risk-taking and promotion.
		Extends	Our evidence from over 280 contributions can feed the 2027 Strategy, which needs a long-term plan, named delivery owners and clear measures.
		Adds	A Growth Taskforce to join up the Workplan with the other strategies and keep agreed actions moving.
Finance Sector Growth Strategy 2035 Oliver Wyman, for the States of Guernsey and finance bodies	Completed Q1 2026. The Growth Forum continues, and the Fund Foundry starts in November.	**Supports**	Used as evidence, and backed through the Fund Foundry and founder concierge in Recommendation 6.
		Extends	Applies the same growth thinking to the whole economy, so other sectors have a plan as well as finance.
		Adds	Talent, promotion and decision speed, which the finance strategy depends on but does not control.
Government Work Plan 2026 to 2029 States of Guernsey	Agreed January 2026. Committee work plans sit beneath it.	**Supports**	Recommendations 1 to 3 back its priorities: housing, infrastructure and public finances.
		Builds on	The Work Plan sets what government will deliver this term, and we add roles for business and individuals.
		Adds	A measurable growth ambition and a plan that lasts beyond one political term.
Innovation Report INSO, March 2026	Drew on 45 industry leaders. Proposes a Digital Sandbox and an innovation education programme.	**Supports**	Same diagnosis on housing, talent, decision speed and complacency.
		Builds on	Recommendations 5, 6 and 9 draw on its skills, start-up and youth findings.
		Extends	Turns its ideas into business-led delivery, such as a private incubator and graduate routes.
		Adds	A forum to share insight and coordinate action through the Growth Taskforce, with each recommendation keeping its own owner.
Digital and AI Framework States of Guernsey	The 2021 to 2025 framework has ended. An updated Framework is due in 2026, with an Innovation Plan in 2027.	**Supports**	Recommendations 5 and 7 on skills and AI adoption.
		Builds on	AI adoption led by leaders and boards, ahead of the 2026 Framework and the 2027 Innovation Plan.
		Adds	A business-led route to deliver, such as a private incubator following the Digital Greenhouse tender.

[Economic Development Strategy and Work Plan workstream detail to be checked before publication.]

F: Future research areas

This report draws on a broad evidence base, but it cannot answer every question. There are many other areas of research that could be initiated by third parties, with or without the cooperation and support of the IoD. The first three address gaps across the whole plan; the rest are further ideas.

Area	What it would cover	Why it matters
Global dataset visibility	Which international datasets, indices and rankings used by investors, advisers and international bodies omit Guernsey or fold it into the UK.	**Guernsey can drop off screens before any comparison is made, and visibility supports inward investment.**
Growth ambition and pathway	What real growth target is right for 2030 to 2035, what it would take to reach it year-on-year, and the costs and benefits of doing so.	**Gives the plan a measurable goal.**
Cost, funding and the fiscal position	Costing, funding options and cost-benefit analysis for each recommendation, and an independent reconciliation of the different views of the underlying public finance gap.	**Owners need this to test feasibility and priority, and to fund growth investment within balanced public finances.**
Population and productivity	Scenarios comparing managed population growth with productivity gains, and what each means for public finances. A first view within 12 months, to inform housing and permit targets in Recommendation 1.	**The island needs a clear stance; 52% want managed growth.**
Economic growth benchmark	A detailed benchmark of growth performance against comparable jurisdictions such as Jersey, the Isle of Man and Luxembourg.	**Explains the growth gap and informs targets.**
Skills and human capital	A survey and benchmark of key skills, talent and human capital capabilities in the private and public sectors.	**Gives Recommendation 5 a baseline.**
AI readiness and investment	An island-wide, ongoing survey of AI readiness and investment, with benchmarking and quarterly pulse checks.	**Guides better decisions as adoption accelerates.**
Connectivity and infrastructure	The effect of air and sea links, energy costs, digital infrastructure and banking services on competitiveness and investment.	**Critical for an island, but not covered in depth here.**
An independent economic observatory	Regular, independent economic data and analysis to inform government and business.	**Key statistics have been suspended since July 2025.**
Talent, housing and the route into Guernsey	Why young people leave and what brings them back, and how housing and permit timelines affect hiring and relocation.	**Quantifies the main constraints in Recommendations 1 and 9.**
Decision-making models	How other small jurisdictions organise decision-making and long-term planning.	**Informs the review in Recommendation 3.**
Entrepreneurship ecosystem	A map of start-up activity, early-stage funding and support, with comparisons elsewhere.	**Evidence for Recommendation 6.**

These ideas are illustrative and are not ranked. IoD Guernsey would welcome approaches from organisations interested in taking any of them forward.

G: In their own words

These are some of the voices behind each recommendation. Quotes are taken from workshop transcripts, one-to-one interviews, written contributions and survey free text, and are trimmed only where an ellipsis is used. All workshops and interviews were held under the Chatham House Rule, so quotes are attributed by role only.

1 Build more homes and open a faster route in for talent generation, students.

"Change the planning laws to open up more land...and dramatically speed up the planning approval process."
Survey respondent

"In finance, there's vacancies that can't be filled because there's nowhere to put them."
One-to-one interview

"We're thinking, right, we're going to have to subsidise rent in some way, which seems very unfair against the local guys."
Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

2 Set a long-term vision, growth plan and the fiscal framework to fund it.

"Cultural inability to commit to long-term infrastructure spend."
Survey respondent

"It's all joined up. You can't do any of this, housing, talent, regulatory environment, unless we have a system-wide, coherent approach, long-term vision and short-term execution linked to growth and prosperity. Just tinkering won't get us there."
Workshop 2, property and infrastructure sector

"A Swiss private equity firm set up here in the 90s when there was a direct link to Zurich. They've mostly all gone now."
Workshop 2, funds professional

3 Fix government decision-making effectiveness.

"We are terrible at making decisions for the long term that cost us money today."
Workshop 1 participant

"Accountability for inaction. Words don't get things done, actions do."
Survey respondent

"The risk of inaction is now greater than the risk of action, but we haven't adjusted to that framework change."
Workshop 2, education sector

"We've been in limbo for 33 years."
Workshop 1 participant

4 Unify Guernsey's messaging, with sharper positioning, clearer segmentation and better pathways in.

"If we can get onto the list in the first place, we often look quite good. Our problem is not the comparison, it's getting on the list."
Survey respondent

"We're guilty of underplaying our strengths. And we keep publicly airing our laundry. We've lost business that way."
One-to-one interview, industry body member

"In Luxembourg, the whole industry just backs the same message, whether it's an industry body or an individual member. We don't have that kind of joint approach."
One-to-one interview, funds administrator

5 Strengthen upskilling, AI and talent programmes.

"Up until three years ago, there's absolutely no government funding for adult skills."
Workshop 2 participant

"Child care provision in Guernsey is absolutely diabolical compared to Jersey."
Workshop 2 participant

"Upskill Guernsey citizens to be at the forefront of AI opportunity."
Survey respondent

6 Better pathways and support for corporate innovation, entrepreneurship and R&D.

“ Nobody helped me spin out. It’s huge risk. ”

Business leader, Workshop 3

“ Sharp intakes of breath... It was just all too difficult...So I went to Jersey. ”

One-to-one interview, entrepreneur and non-executive director

“ Loosen regulation and bureaucracy to better enable entrepreneurs or investment in start ups. ”

Survey respondent

7 Build your AI skills and bring your team with you.

“ ...if we don’t do something soon, like immediately, we could be left behind in terms of jurisdictions and in terms of sort of our economic growth. ”

Survey respondent

“ Rather than going to consultants, we need to try and train up the [staff] that we already have. ”

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

8 Take one considered risk each month.

“ We’ve moved from entrepreneurial spirit to almost pure risk management. If you don’t do anything, nothing can go wrong. ”

One-to-one interview, entrepreneur and non-executive director

“ Guernsey has become skilled at avoiding visible failure, but less confident acting in uncertainty. We don’t sufficiently see the risk of not changing. ”

Workshop 3 participant

“ You can’t suddenly say you want people to take more risk when the system has spent years punishing them for it. That requires a cultural shift, not a press release. ”

One-to-one interview, senior legal professional

9 Help develop the next generation.

“ A lot of people will go to uni and then just not come back. ”

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

“ Build affordable shared housing designed for graduates / key workers. ”

Survey respondent

“ Moved here when I was 21 after university... the opportunities were really good, and I’ve ended up sticking around, but that doesn’t tend to happen that often. ”

Next-generation leader, Workshop 4

10 Stand up a cross-sector Growth Taskforce.

“ All the strategies are great. They make loads of sense. But how are we actually going to make it happen? ”

Workshop 2, financial services non-executive director

“ Not another plan! Between the Financial Growth Forum, the Innovation Plan, the Digital Steering group, it needs rationalising. ”

Survey respondent

“ Forget strategy papers, forget a happy smiley vision. We need practical action, we need collaboration, we need to take on board more people from the industries. ”

Workshop 2, senior financial services practitioner

“ Guernsey is two things, an economy and a community. I don’t believe you can have one without the other. ”

Written contribution, infrastructure sector

H: Notes and sources

Numbered notes refer to the superscript numbers in the text. Survey, workshop and interview figures are from our own research; external figures are listed below with their sources.

Notes

1 Claridge, T. (2024), The Strengths and Weaknesses of Social Capital in Guernsey, Institute for Social Capital, funded by the IoD Guernsey Branch. Survey of 126 adult residents, open to all and self-selecting, about half of them IoD members; figures are the share who strongly or somewhat agreed and should be read as indicative. Quotations are from research participants.

2 IoD Guernsey, Unlocking Economic Growth survey 2026 (n = 127), run through the IoD and the G8 business bodies. Percentages are shares of all 127 respondents; for multi-select questions, the share selecting each option.

3 IoD Guernsey, Directors' Economic Confidence Survey, May 2025 (draft; 139 responses, 19% of 734 members asked; net positive percentage measure). On the same measure IoD UK's April 2025 survey recorded -51% and Jersey's January 2025 survey -22%.

4 Guernsey: States of Guernsey, GVA and GDP Bulletin (gov.gg/gdp). Jersey: Statistics Jersey, Jersey's Economy 2024 (gov.je). OECD average: World Bank data for OECD members, as presented in Guernsey: State of the Nation (September 2026). Real growth is the compound annual rate, 2013 to 2023. [Bulletin edition to confirm.]

5 Illustrative calculation, not an official statistic: Guernsey's 2023 output uplifted by the gap between Jersey's (2.3%) and Guernsey's (0.6%) compound real growth over 2013 to 2023, about 18%. As calculated in Guernsey: State of the Nation (September 2026) from States of Guernsey and Statistics Jersey figures.

6 States of Guernsey, Long-term population projection 2024 (gov.gg/population).

7 States of Guernsey, population statement, 28 July 2025.

8 Edelman Trust Institute, 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report, "Trust Amid Insularity" (21 January 2026). Online survey of 33,938 respondents in 28 countries, fieldwork 25 October to 16 November 2025. Global figures are simple country averages, not population-weighted, and there is no Guernsey sample; the UK and Ireland are the nearest comparators. Some questions were asked of part of the sample or of fewer countries, as stated where used.

9 Guernsey: State of the Nation (September 2026), citing the Annual Residential Property Stock Bulletin 2025 and States housing statements (May 2024); States Strategic Housing Indicator 2023 to 2027 (gov.gg/SSHI-2023-2027).

10 BBC Guernsey, Backlog of 4,000 population permits 'sobering' (Jake Wallace, 2 October 2026), citing the Committee for Home Affairs; 3,886 population management and 324 immigration applications outstanding at 17 September 2026.

11 Arc4 housing review for the States of Guernsey, cited in P.2024/114, paragraph 7.23.

12 Review of the machinery of government by the Harwood panel, 2000.

13 States of Guernsey, Chief Officer for Economic Development recruitment, https://www.gov.gg/article/209647/Chief-Officer-for-Economic-Development-recruitment.

14 IoD Guernsey, Guernsey's Machinery of Government: Ideas to make a difference (2019).

15 Driving Growth for Guernsey: Finance Sector Growth Strategy 2035 (February 2026), page 42. Real GVA growth in finance and related professional services, 2017 to 2025 (expected).

16 Georgieva, K., AI Will Transform the Global Economy. Let's Make Sure It Benefits Humanity, IMF Blog (14 January 2024); World Economic Forum, The Future of Jobs Report 2025 (January 2025), 39% of workers' core skills expected to change over 2025 to 2030.

17 Driving Growth for Guernsey: Finance Sector Growth Strategy 2035 (February 2026), page 49; Guernsey Finance, Economic Development supports the Fund Foundry as Finance Sector Growth Strategy implementation continues (2026).

18 Guernsey Press, Digital Greenhouse to close as States turns to private sector (27 August 2026); Bailiwick Express, Digital Greenhouse talks begin with interested parties (2026).

19 Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Thematic analysis: A practical guide. SAGE Publications.

20 States of Guernsey, Group Consolidated Financial Statements 2025, States Treasurer's report (June 2026). The headline surplus of £113.5m included £119m of largely unrealised investment gains.

21 States of Guernsey, Government Work Plan 2026 to 2029, P.2025/143 (December 2025).

Primary research

- IoD Guernsey, Unlocking Economic Growth Survey 2026 (n = 127), run through the IoD and the G8 business bodies.
- Five workshops, April to September 2026: global decision-making; ecosystem growth enablers; innovation vs. risk; next-generation leaders; young voices (post-16). 17 focus group discussions in total.
- 15 one-to-one interviews with decision-makers on and off the island.
- All held under the Chatham House Rule. Transcripts and the evidence register are held by IoD Guernsey.

States of Guernsey

- GVA and GDP Bulletin (gov.gg/gdp).
- Government Work Plan 2026 to 2029, P.2025/143 (December 2025).
- Group Consolidated Financial Statements 2025, States Treasurer's report (June 2026).
- Long-term Population Projection 2024; population statement, 28 July 2025.
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- Review of the Machinery of Government (Harwood panel), 2000.

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- Guernsey Press, Sub-committee Backs GST-plus Over Business Taxes (13 May 2026).
- Guernsey Chamber of Commerce, Government Advances Tax Reform with GST-plus and Corporate Tax Workstreams (2026).

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- Local Government Association, Good Practice Guidance: Principles of Effective Decision-Making (local.gov.uk).

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- OECD national accounts, GDP at constant prices, via FRED.

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- Driving Growth for Guernsey: Finance Sector Growth Strategy 2035 (February 2026).
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- KPMG Islands Group, Beyond GDP – Sustainable Economic Growth in Island Economies.
- Guernsey: State of the Nation (September 2026).
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- Claridge, T. (2024), The Strengths and Weaknesses of Social Capital in Guernsey, Institute for Social Capital, funded by IoD Guernsey.
- IMF, AI Will Transform the Global Economy (January 2024); World Economic Forum, The Future of Jobs Report 2025.
- Edelman Trust Institute, 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report, Trust Amid Insularity (January 2026).

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- Center for Global Development, How Four Small Successful Economies improved Upon the Standard Growth Recipe (cgdev.org).
- Cambridge Centre for Business Research, Building economic competitiveness: lessons from small peripheral European states (jbs.cam.ac.uk).
- Isle of Man Government, Our Island, Our Future: Isle of Man Economic Strategy (November 2022), and annual reports.
- Government of Jersey, Future Economy Programme (gov.je).

To discuss the contents of this report, share your commitment with the IoD, or work with us through the Growth Taskforce so that government, business and individuals move forward together, please contact us on:

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