

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF THE PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES
COMMITTEE BY SENATOR S.Y. MÉZEC
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2020**

Question

Will the Chair state, in relation to the trial 3-weekly sitting cycle of the States Assembly starting in January 2021 –

- (a) what the criteria are for measuring the relative success or failure of the 3-weekly sitting cycle trial, and how these criteria have been developed;
- (b) how members will be engaged with reviewing the trial, and how the Chair will ensure a balance between the feedback of executive and non-executive members; and
- (c) if the trial is deemed a success, what the proposed timescale is for adopting the 3-weekly sitting cycle permanently?

Answer

- (a) Criteria for measuring the success or otherwise of the 3-weekly sitting cycle trial are in development. PPC has not had the opportunity to meet and discuss this issue since the Assembly adopted P.106/2020 on Friday, 25th September. Its next scheduled meeting is on Monday 5th October at 2:30pm, after the submission deadline for this written answer.

The trial does provide the Assembly, perhaps for the very first time in its history, with the opportunity to measure any impact on performance during the course of a new model of operation against that which has been operating unchanged for many years.

Starting with elements of our procedures the Assembly traditionally wishes to avoid: last minute or late filing of comments papers or amendments; suspension of standing orders requests to allow debate on propositions not lodged for the requisite time; written answers which avoid the question; protracted adjournment debates at 5.30pm; sitting late; debates held overnight; sitting on unscheduled continuation days and so on. It will not be difficult to measure the frequency of these against those for an equivalent period - though 2019 might be more accurate given the extraordinary circumstances of 2020.

No doubt PPC will consider other indicators in due course from both executive and non-executive/private members' perspectives. As mentioned in the debate, Scrutiny Panels will have their own criteria which may include availability of interviewees and late cancellations.

Comparing and contrasting measurable data is one factor, another is the personal perception of each Member as to the success or otherwise of the trial.

- (b) All members will be individually surveyed at the six-month stage. In addition, collective evaluations will be sought from the Council of Ministers, Scrutiny Panels and other Committees. A balance between the feedback of executive and non-executive members must be struck for the trial results to achieve validity.
- (c) PPC will lodge a proposition in time for debate in July, before the summer recess, placing before the Assembly data collected and survey results and seeking its view on any continuation on a permanent basis or reversion. The 2022 dates for States sittings will be then be published in accordance with the wishes of the Assembly.