

STATES OF JERSEY



STATES MEETINGS: MOVE TO A THREE-WEEK CYCLE

Lodged au Greffe on 30th July 2021
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee
Earliest date for debate: 14th September 2021

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to refer to their Act of 25th September 2020, which authorised the trial of a 3-weekly sitting cycle of the States during 2021, and to agree that meetings of the Assembly should in future follow a 3-weekly cycle, with meetings in 2022 to be held in accordance with the schedule of dates contained in Appendix A of this proposition.

PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

REPORT

Background

In 2020, the States Assembly agreed to enter into a trial period for a 3-weekly sitting cycle for States proceedings through the Proposition entitled ‘States meetings in 2021: move to a three-week cycle’ (P.106/2020).

Part (b) of the Proposition requested that, having monitored the impact of the trial, PPC would bring forward for debate, before September, any proposals to permanently alter the frequency of future States Meetings.

The Committee agreed to undertake a consultation exercise during the 6-month stage in order to ensure a sufficient period of time had passed for Members to take an informed view on the new model.

Consultation exercise

The Committee wrote letters to the following stakeholders requesting their views:

- Council of Ministers [*response received from Chief Minister*]
- Scrutiny Liaison Committee [*advised that a collective view could not be determined but all Panels would be invited to respond*]
- Comité des Connétables [*response received*]
- Interim Chief Executive Officer [*response received jointly with the Chief Minister*]

The Committee also sent out a survey to all States Members asking whether the 3-week cycle should become a permanent fixture and whether they wanted to add any further comments.

Consultation results

In terms of the survey results, 25 members responded in total, 14 were in favour of the 3-week cycle and 11 were against.

In addition, the Committee received a range of views, both for and against the 3-week cycle. These views were collected through the survey, direct correspondence from Members and in response to the Committee’s letters. In summary:

- **For the 3-week cycle:** Some Members believe that the 3-week cycle enables more time to prepare for sittings and for scrutiny and constituency work in the weeks between sittings. Some Members also commented that the 3-week cycle has become a more formalised event with Members blocking out the entire week, rather than attempting to work around debates and question periods.
- **Against the 3-week cycle:** Some Members believe that the 3-week cycle has reduced the accountability of Government to both the Assembly and the public. Some Members commented that the time in between meetings has reduced the ability to raise important matters during question time and hold Ministers to account. From a Scrutiny perspective, one Panel commented that the 2-week

cycle was preferable in managing its work programme and offered more opportunity to call in propositions at a faster rate than under the 3-week cycle.

Permanent implementation of the 3-week cycle

Given the split results of the consultation exercise, PPC has lodged this Proposition asking Members to agree that the 3-week cycle should become a permanent fixture of States meetings. Should this be adopted by the Assembly, there is nothing to stop the next PPC from considering the frequency of States meetings again in the future.

The Committee has listed the proposed dates for 2022 in Appendix A in accordance with Standing Order 4, which requires the Committee, no later than the end of September in each year, to present a list of days for meetings of the States in the 1st and 2nd sessions in the following year.

In the event that the Assembly does not support this proposition, the Committee has also provided a list of dates for 2022 which represents the reversion back to a 2-week cycle (Appendix B).

When the Assembly adopted P.106/2020, changes to the systems of both Oral Questions and Written Questions were also agreed and amendments to Standing Orders were subsequently agreed; strictly speaking, simply for the period of the trial. If this proposition is agreed, those amendments to Standing Orders will automatically remain in place. If the proposition is rejected, however, and the Assembly reverts to a 2-weekly cycle, PPC will revisit those amendments to Standing Orders to consider whether or not they should nevertheless remain in place, or whether the systems for Oral Questions and Written Questions should themselves revert back to how they were before the 3-weekly cycle was trialled this year.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications associated with this proposition.

Appendix A

2022 SESSIONS (3 weekly)

First Session

Tuesday January 18th	Continuation (if necessary) January 19th, 20th and 21st
Tuesday February 8th	February 9th, 10th and 11th
Tuesday March 1st	March 2nd, 3rd and 4th
Monday 14th March	Island Plan debate (continuation if required, March 15th, 16th, 17th 18th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th)
Tuesday March 29th	March 31st, April 1st and 2nd
Tuesday April 26th	April 27th, 28th and 29th
Monday May 9th	Liberation Day meeting

First Session - New States Assembly

Tuesday July 5th	election of Chief Minister
Monday July 11th	election of Ministers and Scrutiny Chairs (continuation, if required, Tuesday 12th July)
Tuesday July 19th	election of Scrutiny Panels and Committee members (continuation, if required, July 20th and 21st)

Second Session

Tuesday September 13th	Continuation (if necessary) September 14th, 15th and 16th
Tuesday October 4th	October 5th, 6th and 7th
Tuesday November 1st	November 2nd, 3rd and 4th
Tuesday November 22nd	November 23rd, 24th and 25th
Tuesday December 13th	December 14th, 15th and 16th

2022 SESSIONS (2 weekly)

First Session

	Continuation (if necessary)
Tuesday January 18th	January 19th and 20th
Tuesday February 1st	February 2nd and 3rd
Tuesday February 15th	February 15th and 16th
Tuesday March 1st	March 2nd and 3rd
Monday March 14th	Island Plan debate (continuation if required, March 15th, 16th, 17th 18th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th)
Tuesday March 29th	March 30th and 31st
Tuesday April 26th	April 27th and 28th
Monday May 9th	Liberation Day meeting

First Session - New States Assembly

Tuesday July 5th	election of Chief Minister
Monday July 11th	election of Ministers and Scrutiny Chairs (continuation, if required, Tuesday 12th July)
Tuesday July 19th	election of Scrutiny Panels and Committee members (continuation, if required, July 20th and 21st)

Second Session

	Continuation (if necessary)
Tuesday September 13th	September 14th and 15th
Tuesday September 27th	September 28th and 29th
Tuesday October 11th	October 12th and 13th
Tuesday November 1st	November 2nd and 3rd
Tuesday November 15th	November 16th and 17th
Tuesday November 29th	November 30th and December 1st
Tuesday December 13th	December 14th and 15th

Re-issue Note

This Project is re-issued because the Appendix has been altered to accommodate the Island Bridging Plan debate on 14th March 2022.