

Dear Sirs

You have invited comments on the current proposals to reform the States Assembly. In the recent public meetings, those attending were invited to comment on the main proposal and also on the 2 amendments (P.18/2017). But no information was given to explain what it is that the proposals are trying to achieve. In the absence of this information it is difficult to decide whether any will be an improvement on the current position.

The report to P.133/2016 says the proposal is “to consider a new proposition which is largely based on the results of the referendum, but also takes into account concerns about voter equity.” The referendum in 2013 supported Option B (12 Connétables, 6 districts each electing 5 Deputies, total of 42 States members); but the current proposals (P.133/2016 and P.18/2017) do not reduce the number to 42 (there is only a reduction of 1 or, possibly, of 5 with the second amendment to P.18/2017). In fact P.133/2016 could be regarded as being closer to Option C (8 Senators, 29 Deputies and 12 parish Constables) which fewest supported in the referendum.

Further, the proposals do not address voter equity – that is my equity with other electors to be able to elect the same number of States members. Currently electors vote for between 10 and 13 States members (depending upon whether one is able to vote for 1 or 4 Deputies). The proposals in P.133/2016 and in P.18/2017 do not provide equity as electors will vote for between 4 and 6 Deputies. I believe it was one of the principles set out by the Electoral Commission that all electors should have the same number of votes.

The Review summary distributed at the recent meetings held by Scrutiny refers to ‘Deputies per Parish’. It should be noted that 62% of Deputies do not represent a Parish – they only represent part of a parish. There are 18 Deputies (of a total of 29) elected in district constituencies for the Parishes of St Brelade, St Saviour and St Helier. Although commonly referred to as ‘Parish Deputies’ surely they can only claim a mandate to represent a small part of the parish electorate? These 3 parishes, as with the other 9, are however all represented by the Connétable.

Whilst I have no objection to larger constituencies per se, I have always considered that if the island is to be divided into districts for the election of members then no one district should consist solely of one parish or a part of one parish. This principle should be applied when considering district boundaries and is not met by any of the current proposals.

I do not consider the current proposals address the public views previously expressed when there has been wider consultation. As previous debates did not result in any change I suspect that many islanders (myself included) expected the current proposals to be rejected by the Assembly; I therefore took little notice of the debate earlier this year and did not bother to contact States members about my views which clearly I should have done. I hope my comments to Scrutiny will be taken into account and that the current options are all rejected by the States.

Kind regards

**S de Gruchy**