

STATES OF JERSEY



DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF THE STATES AND PUBLIC ELECTIONS (JERSEY) LAW 202- (P.17/2021):THIRD AMDENDMENT - COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 16th April 2021
by the Scrutiny Liaison Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Scrutiny Liaison Committee, by majority view, draws attention to the potentially detrimental impact on scrutiny work that PPC's proposed June election date could have on the work of Scrutiny, most notably in respect of the Government Plan. It notes that PPC's amendment to its main Proposition (P17.2021) 'has been lodged following liaison between Privileges and Procedures Committee and the Council of Ministers', with the express intention 'to mitigate, so far as is possible, the time lost to the incoming Council of Ministers as a result of the proposed change in Election date'. Whilst this is understood, there is concern that there will be no corresponding mitigation on the time lost to the work of Scrutiny Panels, and in practice already challenging timeframes for their work will be subject to increased pressure, raising the risk of significantly compromised output.

In principle, a number of the additional challenges faced by the Council of Ministers in establishing themselves in both their individual and collective roles in the reduced time afforded by a June, as opposed to May, election are similar to those faced by Scrutiny Panels and the PAC. Time is extremely limited and the tasks at hand are complex and pressurised, compounded by many of the participants being in unfamiliar roles and surroundings. With specific reference to the Government Plan, past experience and public comment by various scrutiny bodies and representatives have clearly and publicly highlighted that, even in non-election years, the current official lodging period of 12 weeks is inadequate for effective scrutiny to be undertaken of such a vital document, one which PPC highlights is 'a significant political, technical and operational undertaking'. However, even less lodging time - 10 weeks - is now proposed by PPC, potentially compounding the limited time afforded to Scrutiny and Assembly Members by a June election date.

Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]

The date of the Committee's monthly scheduled meeting, at which it was able to discuss the amendment, occurred the day before the stipulated timeline for presentation of Comments under Standing Order 37. The Committee was subsequently unable to complete the necessary administrative process to meet the noon deadline and therefore wishes to apologise for submitting late comments.