

KS/SB/20

PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

(53rd Meeting)

(Business conducted by electronic mail)23rd December 2019**PART A (Non-Exempt)**

All members were present.

Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier, Chairman
 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier
 Connétable C. H. Taylor of St. John
 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour
 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier
 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier
 Deputy J.H. Perchard of St. Saviour

In attendance -

L.M. Hart, Deputy Greffier of the States
 K.L. Slack, Clerk to the Privileges and Procedures Committee

Note: The Minutes of this meeting comprise Part A only.

Election
 Observers Sub-
 Committee –
 draft Report
 and
 Proposition.
 465/1(216)

A1. The Committee, with reference to Minute No. A1 of its meeting of 17th April 2019, recalled that the Election Observers Sub-Committee, which comprised the Chairman and Deputies S.M. Wickenden and C.S. Alves of St. Helier, had been working on proposals for electoral reform. That work had been in direct response to the report and recommendations of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Election Observers Mission to Jersey ('the Election Observers'), following the 2018 general election in Jersey.

The Committee was mindful that the Election Observers had described the local electoral system as overly complicated and cumbersome; had found that the constituency boundaries were not drawn in line with international standards and had expressed concern over the number of uncontested elections, the disparity in the equality of the vote across districts and parishes and the low voter turnout.

With a view to achieving compliance with international best practice and to introduce fairer representation and equality in voting power, the Sub-Committee had previously prepared a draft Proposition, entitled 'Reform of the composition and election of the States' (P.46/2019). This had mooted that the States Assembly should comprise 46 Members, who would represent 9 constituencies, the population of each of which would be broadly within the maximum variance of 15 per cent, as permitted by the Venice Commission's 'Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters guidelines'. P.46/2019 had been lodged '*au Greffe*' in April 2019, but withdrawn in August 2019, in order to enable additional consultation to be undertaken.

An 'Electoral Reform Explained' presentation, including the showing of a video, which set out the findings of the Election Observers, had been made by the Sub-Committee in

all 12 Parishes. 6 focus groups had been facilitated by an independent company and the proposals for reform had been explored with participants and by undertaking a survey.

The Committee received and noted an updated Report and Proposition, which had been prepared, following the receipt of the consultation feedback. As previously, it proposed that there should be an Assembly of 46 Members, elected from 9 districts, each of which would be represented by 5 Members, with the exception of St. Saviour, whose constituents would be able to vote for a maximum of 6 Members, because of the size of the population.

It further proposed that an independent Boundaries Commission should be established. This would comprise a Chair and 3 members from outside Jersey, together with 3 Jersey residents, with the relevant skills and experience. The Commission would commence work after the elections in 2022 to ensure that the 9 aforementioned districts continued to provide fair representation and equality in voting weight and power.

Whereas the previous Proposition had mooted that the Connétables should cease to become automatic Members of the States by virtue of holding that office, the revised Proposition suggested that if they chose not to stand for election as Deputy, they could remain in the States as *ex officio* Members, who would be able to contribute to debates and be involved in non-Executive committee work, but without the ability to vote.

The revised Proposition also proposed that the change to the composition and election of the States Assembly would only come into force if the majority of Islanders, who participated in a Yes / No referendum in 2020, agreed.

The Committee approved the Proposition and requested officers to arrange for it to be lodged '*au Greffe*' for debate by the States Assembly on 4th February 2020. Connétable C.H. Taylor of St. John and Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier requested that their dissent should be recorded.