

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO  
THE CHAIR OF THE PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE  
BY DEPUTY M.J. MAÇON OF ST. SAVIOUR  
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022**

**Question**

Further to the response to Written Question 54/2022 in relation to hustings arrangements for the elections of June 2022, will the Chair advise –

- (a) the rationale for changing the filming arrangements offered for hustings;
- (b) what consultation, if any, was undertaken in reaching the decision on filming arrangements;
- (c) whether the change was identified as a cost-saving measure;
- (d) whether it is the Committee's assessment that not offering localised filming for hustings is seen as a reduction of service to the public; and
- (e) why the decision was not brought to the States Assembly for debate?

**Answer**

- (a) PPC is very keen to improve the level of participation and engagement by the public in the elections process, but having listened to public feedback, recognises that the format of hustings is a little tired. The rationale for the proposed changes was to try and broaden the reach of these valuable events. It was therefore decided that for 2022 we would offer candidates the chance to attend live broadcast hustings to which the public could submit questions both in advance and in real time. Given the uncertainty of the last 2 years we also recognised the need to Covid-proof opportunities for the public to hear from candidates and ask them questions about their views. This is especially important in those constituencies which are now quite large geographically, as the likelihood of candidates being able to undertake traditional door stepping across the entire area will be somewhat limited and could be seen by the public as an unwelcome transmission risk.
- (b) There was no direct consultation in relation to the filming arrangements apart from with the Jersey Electoral Authority. There is no legal requirement for the hustings to be filmed.
- (c) Vote.je started filming hustings in 2014 – prior to this date the public either attended hustings in person, or relied upon media reports of the events afterwards. In 2014 and 2018 each hustings meeting was filmed by an external provider and then uploaded onto vote.je the next day. This was at considerable cost as a professional camera person had to be employed to undertake the filming, dedicated individual microphones had to be used to ensure the sound quality was sufficient and the events had to be edited and uploaded the day after the event. Basing the online hustings in the Chamber, using the existing web casting equipment, will result in a considerable cost saving, allowing the vote.je team additional resources with which to promote and publicise the importance of registration and voting. However, as explained above, this change was motivated by a desire to increase public participation in hustings not by financial considerations.
- (d) Due to the rising number of Covid cases, Parishioners were invited to ask questions and watch the hustings meeting online via Zoom or the Vote.je Facebook and YouTube pages when the by-election was held in St. Clement in 2021. This enabled a small number of Parishioners to attend in person, but allowed others to view the event online in real time and to put forward questions to the candidates. The questions were selected randomly, so both those at home and in the venue had equal opportunity to ask questions, with priority given to residents of the district. This was extremely well received with 23 questions submitted of which 21 were asked and answered,

including 4 from young people, who were allocated a specific section of the event. Facebook had 61 peak live viewers and YouTube 39 and there have been 602 views since the hustings went live on Facebook, whilst 541 people have viewed the hustings on YouTube. The video of the event was also shown in the Parish Hall on a loop for people without digital access afterwards, before the election. Rather than reducing the service to the public, PPC considers this will actually extend the electorate's access to the events, as they will be able to submit questions in advance or in real time; still participate even if they cannot attend the meeting in person and they will be able to view the webcasts live and after the event. Candidates wishing to hold additional 'traditional' hustings are very welcome to do so, in fact this should be encouraged to provide further opportunities for them to engage with the electorate. We will be happy to publicise such events on [vote.je](http://vote.je) and provide links to any live streams or filming undertaken.

- (e) Hustings have always been a matter for the candidates to arrange and they are not prescribed in the Elections Law, so there would have been no provision for this matter to have been debated by the Assembly. PPC is not stopping candidates from holding additional hustings in Parish Halls or community spaces. We want to make the events as accessible as possible and we believe that the proposed way forward will only increase public engagement in the hustings process.