

STATES OF JERSEY



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION ELECTION OBSERVERS (P.74/2025): COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 7th November 2025
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Privileges and Procedures Committee is prepared to implement the proposition of the Connétable of St. Helier, if it is the will of Members to adopt it.

It is correct, as the Connétable has highlighted, that PPC previously decided not to invite an election observation mission from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA); that decision was taken in April 2025 by the Committee as previously constituted. It is not an obligation to invite election observers. The Committee of the time was mindful that there had already been observation missions in 2018 and 2022 – from which recommendations had been received and, in many cases, implemented – and of the budgetary implication of inviting a further mission in 2026. PPC therefore decided at that time that the next observation mission should be invited for the 2030 elections.

Even without an observation mission from the CPA, there is independent oversight of elections in the Island. 2026 will be the second set of elections with the Jersey Electoral Authority (JEA) in place. The JEA does not include any elected Members and has a number of responsibilities under the Elections Law. Those responsibilities include the publication of a code of conduct for election candidates and dealing with complaints from candidates. JEA members are themselves able to observe the proceedings of elections, including attending polling stations, and the JEA is required to prepare a report after the elections with its conclusions on the administration. There will be such a report after the 2026 elections.

The Connétable has highlighted there will be financial implications of inviting an election observation mission; on the basis of the costs incurred in 2022, PPC estimates a mission in 2026 could amount to a cost of £35,000. The preparation of the 2026 budget for the States Assembly did not take into account this expenditure; however, PPC would endeavour to manage any outlay within the Assembly's existing head of expenditure for the year.

Whilst PPC understands the rationale for the Connétable's proposition and the benefits that can accrue from an observation mission, the Committee would highlight that an invitation from the Assembly for the 2026 elections would raise an expectation that the mission's recommendations would be followed. That has not always been the case. For example, in 2022 the observation mission stated that "substantive amendments to the election law should be adopted well in advance of the next election and never less than a year before". The current Assembly did not follow that recommendation. It is therefore entirely possible that future Assemblies will take a similar approach to the recommendations of any observation mission in 2026.