

2025.06.24

3.9 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade of the Chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding cost-reduction options discussed for the States Greffe (OQ.144/2025):

Will the Chair provide 2 examples of cost-reduction measures implemented by the States Greffe that have been discussed and officially recorded by the Privileges and Procedures Committee?

Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

Using the parameters provided by the Deputy in her question, there is one example. For the 2025 Budget P.P.C. agreed to £80,000 of savings identified by the States Greffe through a reduction in the overall budget for the States Members Pension Scheme; that is additional budget not being required on the basis of the take-up of the scheme. I would like to point out that any cost reductions which can be made are dependent on the Greffe's ability to maintain the service provision for Members, especially those which support Scrutiny and Back-Benchers to provide as much as practicable a level playing field with colleagues serving on the Executive. Every effort is made to ensure efficient and effective budget management by P.P.C. and the States Greffe, which is demonstrated by underspends against total budget in recent years.

3.9.1 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Given that the Greffe's revenue expenditure between 2022 and 2024 increased by £2 million to £9,497,000 and its final approved budget for this year was £10,350,000, how does the chair feel that the impact of the cost savings she has mentioned are working in terms of value for money for the public?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I do feel that we give very good value for money when you think of all the services which the Greffe provides with Secretariat services, we have taken Youth Service under our belt. As you say, there have been increases in the States Assembly Budget in recent years. As I have said, as well as transfers into States Greffe in respect of the Jersey Youth Parliament, and a small amount of funding for a case worker to support the States of Jersey Complaints Panel, there have been growth bids approved by this Assembly to provide more capacity to service an increased number of government bodies by the specialist Secretariat team, and to establish a team which now assists elected Members for constituency work. Funding was also agreed to address the determination of the States Members' remuneration reviewer. If you see the list of all the services which the Greffe provides, it is good value for money. We do look at the Budget and we do try to work within our means but there is a huge call on the Greffe.

3.9.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Would the chair of P.P.C. give consideration to abolishing the "none of the above" vote in uncontested elections as a potential area of cost saving?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I do not think that is relevant to the question; that is legislation.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Could we have a ruling on whether it is relevant? I think the question is about cost saving, what areas of cost saving are being identified, and this is a potential suggestion for another area of cost saving that seems to arise.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well the chair said it is a matter for legislation and not of the Assembly, so I think she is correct in giving that answer. Have you a supplementary?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I do not see how I can have a supplementary if my first question is not valid.

The Deputy Bailiff:

All right; there we are.

3.9.3 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

Would the chair agree that the services provided by the Greffe, not only to Scrutiny but to Back-Benchers in the provision of their propositions, Back-Bench propositions, are essential and have improved the performance, if I can call it, of the States over the period during which that has been in place?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Yes, I would absolutely agree with the Constable. The level of support that Back-Benchers receive has really improved over the years. We do need to be kept on a level playing field with the Executive so, yes, I would agree.

3.9.4 Deputy M.R. Scott:

Given the budgetary pressures that are going round in all aspects of Government, how sustainable is the rate of spending that I have described and what has the nature of P.P.C.'s discussion been given future budgets for special advisers?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I do believe that there was a huge call on the Greffe, as I have just said, for taking on the Jersey Youth Parliament, we have taken on case workers, we have really improved the constituency, we have improved so much more. It has been agreed I think that the budgets we have asked for have levelled out. As I said in my previous answer, every effort is made to ensure efficient and effective budget management by P.P.C. and the States Greffe, which is demonstrated by underspends against the total Budget in recent years. We have had underspends in recent years, so I am not quite sure what the Deputy is searching for.