

19.2 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin of the Chief Minister regarding the Automatic Voter Registration Project. (OQ.53/2026)

Will the Chief Minister commit to the Government's continuing support of the A.V.R. (Automatic Voter Registration) Project until the system delivers the functionality necessary to meet the requirements of the Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 to the satisfaction of the parishes and to ensuring that sufficient funding is provided to achieve that functionality?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Chief Minister):

As part of the Automatic Voter Registration Project a formal lessons-learned exercise is currently underway. That includes feedback from those involved in delivering the system together with an independent review workshop facilitated by the chair of the Jersey Electoral Authority. That work will help identify any areas where the current system can be improved to better meet both the requirements of the Elections (Jersey) Law and the operational needs of the Parishes. Can I just take this opportunity to thank the Parishes for the excellent work they did under pressure [Approbation] on the run-up to the election. The objective of the Automatic Voter Registration was to remove unnecessary barriers to democratic participation by replacing the previous manual registration process with a modern automatic system. In respect, the project has already helped deliver a significant benefit. The number of registered electors increased from 60,701 in 2022 to 85,470 for the 2026 General Election; a sizeable increase. However, ongoing refinement, support and continuous improvements are necessary to ensure the system continues to meet the needs of users and maintains that close consistency between government data and the Parish electoral register. In short, the answer to the question is, yes, any funding requirements will of course need to be considered through the normal Budget process and Assembly approval. The Government is committed to working with the Parishes and all stakeholders to ensure the Automatic Voter Registration system continues to evolve and delivers functionality required to strengthen and encourage participation in our democratic process.

19.2.1 The Connétable of St. Martin:

I am delighted that the Chief Minister has made that commitment, so it is almost redundant but it was just to get it out. Lots of people think that the A.V.R. is only used every 4 years but A.V.R. is not only needed every 4 years, it is needed on a weekly basis in the Parishes and it is especially needed for Centenier elections and Procureur elections. That is why it is so imperative that we do not close the project down.

The Bailiff:

Sorry, was there a question there?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Would he agree that this will be needed for those?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I agree.

[15:15]

19.2.2 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

Can the Chief Minister commit to considering future candidates in the general elections as one of the user groups in this and ensure that the data provided is clear and easier for candidates to follow and understand?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure how appropriate it would be to have candidates involved in the process but certainly no objection to all relevant stakeholders being involved. That will probably be a decision for the Jersey Electoral Authority at the appropriate time.

19.2.3 Deputy T.A. Coles:

Maybe it is more to set on record rather than to ask the Chief Minister himself, but some of the data that was provided through the A.V.R. and then via the Parishes had addresses that did not line up because of flat numbers, house numbers and things like that. Stakeholder engagement would include candidates from an election, so would the Chief Minister do what he can to ensure that they are considered?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

As I said previously, the Government will do everything it can do to ensure the data that is shared between the Government and the Parishes is as accurate as possible. I think we have made a good start but there is still quite a way to go.

19.2.4 Connétable I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

As the Connétable of St. Martin explained, the data is required for Parishes ongoing during this 4 years because this data is used at the Parish Assembly, for example, or committees or others. Would the Chief Minister advise if the ongoing A.V.R. project will ensure that once a change of name and address is provided to one of the government departments it will be rolled across immediately to the Parishes system as well because we are using the A.V.R. system as our to-go system now?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, that certainly is the intention.

19.2.5 Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:

I also welcome the Chief Minister's mention of the great work that was done in the Parishes, particularly by the electoral administrators and all the adjoints who worked on the day. The Chief Minister mentioned feedback. Can the Chief Minister confirm who has been asked to provide that feedback?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I cannot list that because I do not know. The work on the feedback is being facilitated by the chair of the Jersey Electoral Authority, and I am sure they will share all of their findings with the Government when they have finished that piece of work.

19.2.6 The Connétable of St. John:

I can tell the Chief Minister that the feedback has been requested from a very small group of people. I would ask him to consider extending the breadth of the feedback and also the time allowed for the feedback.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I thank the Connétable for alerting me to that fact. I will certainly follow that up.

19.2.7 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

My question follows on nicely from the question posed by the Constable of St. Helier because it relates to the Tell Us Once process, because the Automatic Voter Registration will only work properly if there is a Tell Us Once process in place whereby when somebody reports their change of circumstances, change of address, it goes across all systems, all departments and the Parishes. Will the Chief Minister commit to providing that project with the resources that it requires so it can be finally done properly?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, I understood it did have the resources required but I will make sure it does. I think it is important to reiterate the importance of involving the public as much as possible in the democratic process, so that will be a high priority.

19.2.8 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I will take this opportunity, because I know that we have quite rightly thanked all of the Parishes, but could the Chief Minister also extend his thanks to the civil servants that worked very hard on this project as well?

[Approbation]

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Yes, and I thank the Deputy for reminding the Assembly of the work, the huge amount of dedication required to make sure we had a successful election should be recognised. I join her in that recognition.

Connétable M.O'D. Troy of St. Clement:

My question has been answered through the Constable of St. John.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I would just like to thank the Chief Minister for his assurances that A.V.R. will continue.