

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025): THIRTY- FOURTH AMENDMENT (P.70/2025 AMD.(34)) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 4th December 2025
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

PPC opposes the amendment of the Comité des Connétables and believes there are a number of unresolved questions regarding both the Comité's rationale and the implications of the amendment being adopted.

PPC was surprised to see the amendment as there had been no engagement with PPC prior to the amendment being lodged. PPC has not been given any further calculations or information regarding the Comité's proposals beyond the report accompanying the amendment. The fact there was no such engagement makes it surprising the Comité can conclude that there are no staffing or resource implications for the States; because the Comité has not heard from PPC about the impact the amendment would have on the States Assembly budget. It is hard not to read the Comité's amendment as essentially opposing the proposal that the elections be held on a Sunday; yet the comments on P.17/2025 (to which the amendment makes reference) started off very clearly: "the Comité des Connétables fully supports the move to a Sunday polling day for the 2026 ordinary elections for Connétables and Deputies".

The States Assembly budget is not the budget used to cover the costs of elections under the Elections (Jersey) Law 2002. As the report accompanying the amendment highlights, it is the Judicial Greffe which is provided with budget to cover those responsibilities. PPC does not therefore understand why the Comité has proposed an amendment that affects the States Assembly budget, rather than that of the Judicial Greffe.

The Judicial Greffe has by convention provided funding to Parishes towards the establishment of each of the polling stations, in accordance with Article 15, and a total of £57,000 has been set aside for this purpose for 2026. PPC has no record of the Comité expressing disquiet in previous elections as to the adequacy of this sum nor any requests for additional funding. The election in 2026 will not be any different to previous years, other than the fact that it will be held on a Sunday.

The report accompanying the amendment is also ambiguous about what exactly the funds would be used for. Reference is made to comments previously presented on P.17/2025, in which indications were made to potential increased costs for staff time; the availability of helpers; refreshments; and the hire of premises. Yet the report to the amendment stated that "the Parishes have sought to quantify those costs in more detail and provided an estimate in the region of £125,650 for staffing costs for all Parishes, excluding other costs. The sum which the Comité cites therefore appears to relate solely to staff costs. As a comparison, PPC would highlight that no overtime will be paid to States Assembly staff who work over the week-end of the election (to deliver on PPC's responsibilities regarding public engagement and to administer the Jersey Electoral Authority) and, indeed, other week-ends or evenings during the election period; rather, any staff will factor that work through a flexible working policy to claim back the time – and there will be no increased expenditure from the public purse.

It is clear that from the amendment that, were it adopted, the States Assembly budget could only be used for additional expenditure arising explicitly because the 2026 elections are to be held on a Sunday; anything that would otherwise normally be incurred by the Parishes for elections would not be covered and would not be paid from the ring fenced sum. It would therefore be necessary for the Parishes to demonstrate clearly how the expenditure to be met by the States Assembly budget met those

criteria. The absence of any calculations underpinning the amendment means no assessment in that regard can be made at present. PPC anticipates the Greffier of the States, as Accountable Officer for the States Assembly budget, would also be required to engage with the Parishes to ensure that any expenditure incurred represented value for money. As an example, if there were indeed a desire for Parish salaries to be paid from the States Assembly budget (which, in itself, would be unusual), PPC anticipates that it would only be any overtime owed that would be paid – as the standard rate would have been owed anyway, before a Sunday was assigned as the election date. As Accountable Officer, the Greffier of the States would be required to take responsibility for Parish spending when there is no contractual relationship between the States Assembly and the Parishes and she has no authority over them or their expenses. It would therefore be very difficult for her to ensure the propriety, regularity, value for money and feasibility of the expenditure in accordance with her responsibilities under the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (PFL). The Parishes would be required to provide audited accounts in order for the Greffier to be able to comply with the PFL, otherwise she would be regarded as being in breach of that Law.

PPC understands that the Greffier and Judicial Greffier had discussed the provision of financial support to meet Parish overtime costs arising from the Sunday election date with Treasury Officers and that a letter of comfort had been sent to the Parishes advising that funding would be found once the amount required was known and both Greffiers repeated this commitment at a meeting of the Comité des Connétables on 17th November 2025. PPC does not consider that this amendment is therefore necessary.

PPC undertakes to bring forward changes to the Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 in advance of the 2030 elections, in order to ensure that the responsibility for funding the administration of the elections is appropriately identified, rather than simply referencing ‘the States’ as currently provided.

If the amendment were adopted, it would be necessary for £130,000 to be set aside within the States Assembly budget. This would inevitably have an impact on other functions. PPC does not anticipate that a sum of this amount could be easily accommodated within the budget without that being the case. It might be a requirement, for instance, to reduce the amount of funding available to Scrutiny Panels for the appointment of expert advisors. The Committee would remind Members that it has already been required to accommodate unbudgeted funding of £35,000 in 2026 for an Election Observation Mission.

In conclusion, the Comité’s amendment is misdirected; represents an equivocation on the part of the Comité from its previous position; and provides little to no calculation of how costs have been estimated. It would place pressure on the States Assembly budget that could impact on key services to the Assembly and to Members and could potentially place the Accountable Officer for the budget in an awkward, if not impossible, position.