

STATES OF JERSEY



ORAL QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE: REVISED BALLOT PROCEDURES

Lodged au Greffe on 29th June 2009
by Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) to agree that Standing Order 14 in relation to the ballot that is held by the Greffier of the States to determine the order in which oral questions with notice are listed on the Order Paper should be amended to provide for a revised ballot procedure as follows –
 - (i) any member of the States submitting 2 oral questions with notice for any meeting of the States may, when submitting the questions to the Greffier, indicate which of the questions is his or her ‘first priority’ and, in the absence of any such indication, the Greffier shall classify the first question submitted (or the first listed if 2 questions are submitted at the same time) to be the member’s ‘first priority’;
 - (ii) when the deadline for the submission of oral questions with notice has passed, the Greffier shall, in the presence of another person, undertake a first ballot in relation to the approved questions classified as ‘first priority’ and any questions submitted by members who have submitted only one question for the meeting concerned and the Greffier shall then list these questions first on the Order Paper in the order resulting from the ballot;
 - (iii) the Greffier shall then, in the presence of another person, undertake a second ballot in relation to the remaining questions and list these questions on the Order Paper in the order resulting from this second ballot after those already listed following the first ballot;
- (b) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward for approval the necessary amendment to Standing Orders to give effect to the proposal.

DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE

REPORT

The reasons for this proposed amendment to the balloting process is simply to try and make the system fairer and more efficient for all members who submit oral questions.

What is wrong with the current system?

The States recently agreed to extend the allocation for oral questions with notice from 90 minutes to 2 hours. This, in my view, is to be welcomed. However, there may still be occasions on which some questions remain unanswered.

By adopting this slight change to the selection process for the **order** in which questions are asked we are doing two things –

- (1) Ensuring that those members who submit *two* questions are not given an advantage over those who only submit one.
- (2) Allowing those members who do submit more than one question to effectively *prioritise* questions.

This is desirable for the following reasons –

- (i) It would mean that someone submitting only one question would be much more likely to get his/her question answered.
- (ii) It would also stop the possibility of a member having *both* of his/her questions appear at the end of the order paper, with the risk of getting *neither* answered.
- (iii) The ability to prioritise questions in order of their perceived importance gives more flexibility to members and would enable topical (or ‘time-critical’) questions to be given priority.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications arising from the adoption of this proposition.