

STATES OF JERSEY



PUBLIC ELECTIONS: ELECTRONIC VOTING (P.10/2016) – AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 14th March 2016
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee

STATES GREFFE

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After the words “to vote electronically,” delete the words “in the 2018 elections” and insert the words “as soon as practicable”.

PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

REPORT

Online voter registration

The Privileges and Procedures Committee is committed to pursuing the introduction of electronic voter registration in time for the 2018 public elections to the States Assembly.

The Committee is currently working with the Comité des Connétables, Social Security Department and the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) to compare the data held on the Names and Addresses Register with that held on parish Electoral Registers, in order to establish how best to approach electronic voter registration. The results of the data comparison will be analysed by Mr. John Turner of AEA, who will report back to the Committee on the integrity of the data and provide recommendations for the introduction of an electronic registration system.

The UK Cabinet Office recently conducted an Electoral Registration Transformation Programme and voters are now able to register online, with local authorities able to check their electoral registers against Department for Work and Pensions data. The Committee believes that the comparison of the parish Electoral Registers against the Names and Addresses Register is a necessary element of the work required to ensure that the Island moves to a fit-for-purpose, secure system for voter registration.

It is the intention of the Committee to introduce an efficient and secure system for electronic voter registration in advance of the 2018 elections; however, the integrity and security of the vote is being prioritised by the Committee at all stages. Should the need to prioritise these elements result in a delay in the implementation of an electronic voter registration system by 2018, the Committee will notify the States Assembly and will continue to work towards its introduction as soon as practicable.

Electronic voting

The Committee does not believe that it is feasible to introduce electronic voting in the 2018 elections either in polling stations or online.

The timescale available to complete research; assess the benefits, challenges and likely impact of electronic voting; agree a recommended approach; tender for systems; trial and test the system and implement the new approach is far too short.

Electronic voting may well be a natural progression from the provision of electronic voter registration, and both of these research projects are currently being undertaken in conjunction with the States' e-Government team. Personal data held by the States of Jersey is currently held in a variety of formats and on a range of different databases, and the e-Government programme is working to ensure that data-sharing is used to improve services and prevent duplication.

Online voting gives rise to concerns in respect of the risks of electoral fraud and how the secrecy of the ballot can be guaranteed, given that people will be voting outside of the supervised environment of the polling station. An alternative option would be to introduce electronic voting within polling stations. In jurisdictions where this has been introduced, voting machines also print a paper receipt every time a vote is registered electronically, so that re-counts can be conducted and the electronic count can be compared with a paper count.

The Committee is in agreement that electronic voting should be considered and researched; however, a significant amount of work needs to be undertaken prior to its introduction in order to ensure that any such system processes data accurately and securely, and to ensure that the electorate and candidates can be confident of the integrity of the voting process.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no additional financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this proposed amendment.