

Privileges and Procedures Committee: Diversity Forum

Meeting 12: 30 March 2021

Members present: Deputy L.M.C. Doublet (Chair), Senator K.L. Moore, Senator S.Y. Mézec, Connétable R. Buchanan of St. Ouen, Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin and Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier.

Apologies: Connétable R. Vibert of St. Peter, Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville, Deputy K. F. Morel of St. Lawrence, Deputy J.H. Perchard of St. Saviour, Deputy K. Pamplin of St. Saviour and Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier.

1. Minutes of the meetings on 26 January and 1 February

The minutes of the meeting on 26 January and the email meeting on 1 February were approved. The Chair welcome the Constables of St. Martin and St. Ouen who had joined the Forum and said that the Constable of St. Peter had also joined, although he was unable to attend the meeting. She also announced that Deputies Alves and Morel had been appointed as co-Vice Chairs and she thanked them for putting themselves forward.

2. Forthcoming States business

The Chair said that there would now be a standing item at Forum meetings to discuss forthcoming business of the States so that the Forum could consider whether to propose comments for PPC to lodge. It was also agreed that this discussion should also cover consideration of current scrutiny reviews, in connection with which the Forum asked the Greffier to put the terms of reference for the Democratic Accountability and Governance Sub-Committee on the Teams channel so Forum members could consider inputting to the review from the diversity context.

The Forum agreed to propose a comment in respect of P.22/2021 "Draft Eligibility for Election (Amendment of Laws)(Jersey) Law", which would increase the number of years residency required before a person can stand for election. The Forum wished to express its opposition to the draft Law on diversity grounds.

Deputy Alves said that the Social Security Minister had organised a briefing for the relevant scrutiny panel which appeared to concern possible changes to the discrimination law. She agreed to report back to the Forum, particularly in respect of any plans to add new protected characteristics to the law, and to ask for confirmation that the minister now holds broad responsibility for equality matters.

The Chair said she would be speaking to Senator Moore shortly about the future work of the gender pay gap review panel, in view of challenges with Member availability.

3. Achieving candidate diversity: review of campaign launch, training proposal and the timing of a summer civic engagement event

The Greffier drew attention to an update from the Greffe's Head of Digital and Public Engagement on the launch of the candidate diversity campaign. The main highlight was that 22 people had registered on vote.je as interested in the assistance the Greffe can offer in respect of standing for election. He said that the next stage of the campaign would occur after the Assembly had reached a

decision on the composition of the Assembly (P.17/2021), which was scheduled for debate at the 20 April meeting.

Deputy Alves said that the Facebook live event she had participated in with the Chair had gone very well and had been viewed over 600 times. It was agreed, in principle, that there should be a regular schedule of such events and that Members should be invited to volunteer to take part. The Greffier agreed to raise this with the Head of Digital and Public Engagement.

Emily Thomas, Research and Project Officer, briefed the Forum on plans for a programme of training and assistance to candidates, focusing on how the States works; manifestos and campaigns; how to deliver a message and build confidence; media skills; and social media. The Chair and the Constable of St. Martin agreed to act as sounding boards for this work to ensure that everything offered is relevant to aspiring candidates. Members suggested that there should be another open day in the States Building for candidates to meet States Members and non-government organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce. It was agreed that this should be included in the planning for pre-election events.

The Forum returned to the subject of an Island-wide civic participation event, having previously deferred such an event until the summer because of Covid-19 restrictions. Following recent reconnection announcements the Forum agreed to plan for the event to take place on the evening of 21 or 22 June. The Greffier agreed to send out placeholder invitations to Forum Members. The event would be based on a Women in Public Life event in Guernsey which the Chair and Deputy Alves had attended in 2019. There would be an opportunity for members of the public to meet States Members, Constables, parish officers and honorary police and organisations such as Citizens Advice and the Complaints Board. It would also be useful to focus on informing the public about civic life, as well as seeking to interest people in standing for election or volunteering for such roles. It was agreed to set up a sub-committee comprising the Chair, the Constables of St. Martin and St. Ouen, and Deputy Alves to plan the event. Deputy Morel would also be invited to participate.

The Forum also recalled its intention to write to the Comité des Connétables about civic participation events in the parishes, which the Constable of St Ouen said would be welcomed. The Greffier agreed to prepare a letter from the Chair to the Comité on this point. The Forum also agreed that a women's only event should be considered as a follow up to the main event.

4. Achieving candidate diversity: follow up to the Members' briefing from Professors Childs and Dittmar

The Forum invited the Chair to ask Helen Pankhurst to speak at a States Members' briefing which would provide an opportunity to draw attention to the candidate diversity toolkit and the plans for assisting candidates in standing for election.

The desirability of hearing from members of minority communities about what approaches would be most effective in encouraging more candidates to come forward was discussed. The Forum agreed to invite the relevant Honorary Consols and a range of people from those communities in positions of responsibility, such as honorary police, to a meeting to discuss their experiences of becoming involved in the Island's civic life.

5. Update on naming rooms in the States building

The Greffier said that the installation of information boards on Caroline Trachy and Ivy Forster (as well as for Blampied and Le Capelain) required a planning application and one had now been submitted.

6. Nationality requirement for election candidates

Deputy Alves said that there were continuing discussions about whether a way could be found of removing the citizenship requirement for election candidates which would command the support of a majority of States Members. The Greffier noted that, ideally, election law should not change within the last year before an election and delay beyond the summer would be problematic in terms of putting out clear communications about who could vote. He agreed that the Greffe could assist Deputy Alves in publishing a survey to States Members about the different options which could be put forward to see which, if any, might command widespread support.

7. Culture in the States Assembly

Members discussed instances of poor behaviour they had experienced and how it should be documented and dealt with. One option would be assertiveness or empowerment training to enable people to call out poor behaviour more effectively, although it was recognised that this did not tackle the causes of such behaviour. The link to PPC's forthcoming review of the Code of Conduct was also noted. The Greffier agreed to seek advice on best practice in dealing with poor behaviour in contexts where the people working together are not employees and to build this into the review of the Code of Conduct, the outcome of which he hoped to bring to the next meeting of the Forum.

8. Any other business

Deputy Doublet said that there had been feedback from the Facebook Q&A session about ensuring there was a focus on political representation of the black community. In response it was agreed that the proposed meeting with the Consuls and other community representatives would include representatives from the black community.

Next meeting: Tuesday 25 May, 2.30pm.