

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

COMMITTEE *FOR* HOME AFFAIRS

PREPARATION OF A NEW ELECTORAL ROLL

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of the Policy Letter entitled 'Preparation of a New Electoral Roll' dated 30th January 2024, they are of the opinion:-

1. To approve the compilation of a new Electoral Roll for the 2025 General Election of People's Deputies.
2. To direct the drafting of legislation to provide for:
 - (i) the creation of the new Electoral Roll in Proposition 1;
 - (ii) the validity of the current Electoral Roll to cease at 23:59 hours on 30th November 2024; and
 - (iii) the closure of the new Electoral Roll 7 weeks before the date of the 2025 General Election.

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The Presiding Officer
States of Guernsey
Royal Court House
St Peter Port

30th January 2024

Dear Sir

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 A General Election of People’s Deputies will be held in June 2025 (“the 2025 Election”). The preparation for, and successful delivery of, the 2025 Election must be a priority for the States of Guernsey as a whole.
- 1.2 Any islander who wishes to vote in the 2025 Election must be registered on the Electoral Roll. A key objective for the Committee *for* Home Affairs (“the Committee”) is encouraging a high percentage of those eligible to vote to register their details on the Electoral Roll.
- 1.3 In 2019 working with the States’ Assembly & Constitution Committee the Committee identified the following measures which contributed to the success of an Election, which remain pertinent:
 - i. a high percentage of those eligible to vote are registered on the Electoral Roll;
 - ii. a good number of candidates stand for election;
 - iii. the majority of those on the Electoral Roll cast their votes; and
 - iv. there is a fair, efficient and democratic election.
- 1.4 In preparation for the previous three General Elections the States acknowledged that it was inappropriate for an Electoral Roll to be carried forward for use in subsequent General Elections as the base data inevitably becomes increasingly inaccurate during the intervening years. As such, new Electoral Rolls were created for the 2012, 2016 and 2020 Elections.

- 1.5 The Committee similarly considers that the data currently held on the Electoral Roll is insufficiently accurate to deliver the 2025 General Election. The Committee therefore proposes the creation of a new Electoral Roll ahead of the 2025 Election and the necessary legislation be drafted to this effect.

2. The Electoral Roll

- 2.1 The Committee is mandated *“to advise the States and to develop and implement policies on matters relating to its purpose including... the Electoral Roll”*.
- 2.2 Any islander who wishes to vote must be registered on the Electoral Roll. Registration on the Electoral Roll is not compulsory. Islanders who fulfil the eligibility criteria in the Reform (Guernsey) Law, 1948 as amended (the Reform Law) (namely through age and residency) may submit an application to the Registrar-General of Electors to be listed on the Electoral Roll. There are currently 30,411 individuals listed on the Electoral Roll.
- 2.3 The current Electoral Roll was compiled ahead of the 2020 General Election of People’s Deputies, with the enrolment campaign running from September 2019. The base data contained within the Roll will therefore be over five years out of date at the time of the 2025 General Election. It is, therefore, not considered appropriate to use this Roll for the 2025 General Election.

3 Automated Electoral Roll

- 3.1 There are limited mechanisms to effectively update the Electoral Roll to remove individuals who have left the Island or to identify those who may have moved and re-registered. The Committee is under States’ resolution [Billet VII 25th April 2019](#) to pursue the automated compilation of the Electoral Roll from government held information. It was recognised that this would negate the need for the public to re-register for each election and reduce the associated costs.
- 3.2 There are two levers to delivering this resolution: the statutory ability to share information between government departments for that purpose; and the availability of a reliable data source on which to draw on.
- 3.3 The statutory powers could be delivered through the creation of an Ordinance under the [States' Register of Contact Details \(Guernsey and Alderney\) Law, 2019](#). However, at this time there is not a reliable data source which could be drawn upon to create a Roll and provide for it to be automatically updated.
- 3.4 In the absence of a data source which could be used to automatically generate and update an Electoral Roll the Committee proposes the creation of a new Electoral Roll ahead of the 2025 Election. The Electoral Roll will be populated

through a voter registration process, mirroring the approach taken ahead of previous recent elections.

- 3.5 The Committee is considering ways to further improve the online registration process to ensure that the registration process is easily accessible and secure. The Committee recommends that the Registrar-General of Electors encourage applicants to provide their date of birth when registering as this will assist in ensuring the accuracy of the Electoral Roll.

4 Proposal for the way forward

- 4.1 The accuracy of the Electoral Roll is fundamental to the successful delivery of the 2025 Election. The Committee is of the opinion that the data currently held is insufficiently accurate to act as base data for the 2025 Election. Further, the Committee is not persuaded that the existing Electoral Roll could be satisfactorily updated so as to comply with data protection principles in the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2017, for example the principle of accuracy *“Personal data processed must be accurate and where applicable, kept up to date, and reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that personal data that is inaccurate (having regard to the purpose for which it is processed) is erased or corrected without delay”*.
- 4.2 Article 25 (3) of the Reform Law provides that the Electoral Roll shall remain valid *“until such date as the States may determine by Ordinance”*. The Committee recommends that the compilation of a new Electoral Roll commences in September 2024 and enters into force on 1st December 2024. The Committee therefore recommends that an Ordinance be enacted terminating the validity of the current Electoral Roll at 23:59 hours on 30th November 2024.
- 4.3 Article 34 (11) (a) of the Reform Law provides that the Electoral Roll shall be closed, in respect of an election for the office of People’s Deputy, from a date appointed by Ordinance of the States. Mindful of the work involved in the issuing of postal votes, the Committee proposes that, in respect of the 2025 Election, the Electoral Roll be closed 7 weeks before the date of the 2025 General Election.
- 4.4 The creation of a new Electoral Roll will require all eligible individuals who wish to be able to vote in the 2025 Election to register. The Committee is conscious of the need to actively engage and inform the public so as to ensure that no islanders are disenfranchised by failing to realise the importance of re-registering. A comprehensive publicity campaign will take place, with the aim of reaching as many islanders as possible and encouraging them to ensure their details are included on the Electoral Roll.
- 4.5. In summary, the data currently held on the Electoral Roll database is not considered sufficiently accurate to deliver the 2025 Election, and so the

Committee recommends that a new Electoral Roll is compiled ahead of the 2025 Election and the necessary legislation be drafted to this effect.

5 Availability of the Electoral Roll

- 5.1 Registration on the Electoral Roll locally is voluntary. The Electoral Roll shows the details of every registered individual who is eligible to vote, including first and last name, and full postal address. The exception being that where an individual has registered anonymously, qualifying individuals will be eligible to vote but their details will not appear on the Roll when it is published for the annual inspection or made available to candidates.
- 5.2 The distribution of the Electoral Roll is managed by the Registrar-General of Electors in accordance with Rules approved by the Committee as provided by the Reform Law. These Rules detail to whom, in what form and at what cost copies of the Electoral Roll will be made available. These Rules are remade ahead of each General Election.
- 5.3 The Committee is proposing the preparation of Rules ahead of the creation of a new Electoral Roll for the 2025 Election that will include the power for the provision of the Electoral Roll to credit reference agencies. This follows representations from the Committee *for* Economic Development in response to increasing concerns expressed by business and consumers, about the lack of access to certain banking services.
- 5.4 Providing the ability for credit reference agencies to access the Electoral Roll data will assist in the verification services which they provide to banks and credit card companies. This mirrors the UK framework, although registration on the domestic Electoral Roll will continue to be voluntary.
- 5.5 The Committee will ensure that the necessary protections and controls are in place to maintain the security of individuals' personal information before formalising the Rules.

6 Resources

- 6.1 The cyclical revenue costs associated with preparing an Electoral Roll have been included in the Committee's 2024 budget allocation and it will include associated revenue costs in its 2025 budget submission.

7 Compliance with Rule 4

- 7.1 In accordance with Rule 4(1):
 - a) The propositions contribute to the States' objectives and policy plans to

‘keep the island safe and secure’ by supporting improvements to the criminal justice processes and access to justice.

- b) The propositions have been submitted to His Majesty’s Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.
- c) The financial implications to the States of carrying the proposal into effect are as described in Section 6 of this Policy Letter.

7.2 In accordance with Rule 4(2):

- a) The propositions relate to the Committee’s responsibilities to advise the States and to develop and implement policies on matters relating to the electoral roll.
- b) The propositions have the unanimous support of the Committee.

Yours faithfully

R G Prow
President

S P J Vermeulen
Vice-President

S E Aldwell
L McKenna
A W Taylor

P A Harwood OBE
Non-States Member