

**THE STATES OF DELIBERATION**  
**of the**  
**ISLAND OF GUERNSEY**

**REQUÊTE**

**THE GOVERNMENT REFORM (2024) REQUETE**

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of the Requête entitled 'The Government Reform (2024) requete dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 they are of the opinion:-

1. To approve the reduction of the number of members of the States Assembly by 10, down to 28 Guernsey Deputies in total, such reduction to be implemented in time for the general election to be held on the 18th June 2025; and
2. If proposition 1 is approved, to direct the States Assembly and Constitution Committee to return to the States as soon as possible, and in any event not later than April 2025, with a policy letter containing such consequential and other recommendations as to committee memberships, representative numbers, rule changes and other considerations as it may consider necessary.
3. To direct the preparation of such legislation as may be necessary to give effect to the above decisions.

**Rule 4(1) Information**

- a) The propositions contribute to the States' objectives and policy plans by;
- reducing annual repeating expenditure;
  - reducing time (and cost) spent in unnecessary and time consuming debate;
  - creating shorter and clearer decision-making lines;
  - creating leaner committee memberships;
  - enabling easier team and consensus working;
  - discouraging candidates who seek election for primarily personal financial reasons;
  - requiring all deputies to contribute to effective government through Committee and other government work;
  - creating greater competition for places as a States Deputy and thereby improving overall quality of candidate.

- b) In preparing the proposition, consultation has been undertaken with the States Assembly and Constitution Committee. A copy of this requete (in draft) has been provided to the Policy & Resources Committee for comment.
- c) The proposition(s) have been submitted to His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.
- a) The financial implications to the States of carrying the proposal into effect are the reduction of more than £470,000 in direct annual costs (over £4.7 million in the first 10 years, not allowing for pay increases and inflation), plus the reduction of several hours of time at each States and committee meeting (based on a conservative assumption that an average member will make speeches of about 15 minutes per session, approximately 2.5 hours per States meeting, often much more). There are no financial implications to the States of carrying the proposal into effect other than drafting time, which is minimal and in any event less than the indicated savings.

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THE HUMBLE PETITION of the undersigned Members of the States of Deliberation  
SHEWETH THAT:

1. The Policy & Resources Committee created a Governance sub-committee shortly after the 2020 election. In or about early September 2024, to the great disappointment of many States members and members of the community, it was shelved having reached no conclusions – rather ironically reported as being “unable to reach consensus” - a microcosm of the problems which our government system faces in being able to move in any direction whilst the financial and other issues and external pressures we face become ever more and more difficult and pressing.
2. Guernsey’s governance and constitution has long been recognised by many of its senior members and by external organisations as failing and unable to deliver effective policy and decision making. Whilst a consensus system enables change to be conservative and gradual, our times require clearer and crucially faster decision making which can only be delivered by an executive based system. The best example of how efficiently and quickly an executive system works is undoubtedly the operation of the Civil Contingencies Authority during the Covid pandemic.
3. The failure of the current government system to make binding decisions and move forward without being consistently challenged by a disaffected minority who lost a particular vote<sup>1</sup>, and to prioritise effectively has led to a growing and unaffordable log jam of capital projects<sup>2</sup> which cannot be paid for from reserves or from revenue and which, when (rather than if) they eventually fail, will certainly cost more to fix and will, as finances are currently structured, remain unaffordable.
4. All too often years of work are also being undermined by ill considered, sectarian and highly irresponsible amendments which are brought without consultation or proper financial consideration. Rule changes for such matters (which could and arguably should have formed the basis of P&R’s

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<sup>1</sup> For example, recent reruns of mooring fees, fixed penalty fines, reversal of the decision to save costs by closure of the Herm school, amendment to introduce NICE drugs incurring annual expenditure which cannot be met from revenue income.

<sup>2</sup> Viz – harbours, runway, dairy, sixth form, hospital, second cable link etc.

governance review) fall outside the scope of this requête. Damaging and irresponsible amendments have even been contemplated in the middle of a tender process (Alderney runway), generating significant political and reputational risk to the Bailiwick whilst in the attempted negotiation and conclusion of a substantial multi-million contract.

5. The need for effective leadership and decision making and the failings of our political system have been recognised in a long sequence of reports ranging from the Conseiller's debate to the Harwood review and the more recent PAC report on governance during the 2008-2012 term. A seminal turning point in Guernsey's governance arguably occurred when it was decided to pay States Deputies a relatively substantial salary, which is now some way above Guernsey's median earnings level. This relatively high salary encourages politics as a career choice rather than a public duty and discourages collective responsibility and accountability.
6. It is the view of the requêrants and a statistically significant sampled proportion of Guernsey's public<sup>3</sup> that the number of States deputies is currently too high, leading to and contributing to many of the destructive behaviours described above – wasted costs, time wasting debate, a lack of accountability and inability to be decisive in its decision making process, which is mirrored in the service which supports it.
7. We have a system with a committee of 38 deputies who make (or in many cases fail to make) all of the main decisions of government, with few delegated executive functions. Despite this structure, some deputies, it is bizarrely self evident from their speeches, regularly consider themselves to be outside government rather than an integral part of it.
8. The lack of a central and enforceable decision making capability in government, for example in the setting of budgets and imposition of cuts, has over time become reflected in the capability and accountability of the civil service, which in turn is unable to determine at any point in time who it is responsible and accountable for reporting to. The Civil Service can aid the development of policy with its nominated committee structure but then often finds itself ordered by the States to do (or not do) something completely different from its often highly detailed, well researched and costly, consulted policy<sup>4</sup>. As a result over a course of years the service has regrettably grown to reflect the lack of accountability, and lack of authority within Guernsey's political system. If Guernsey's government system cannot create settled long term policy, it certainly cannot deliver and execute timely

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<sup>3</sup> A social media poll, also widely distributed across conventional media, polled 588 votes per the 24<sup>th</sup> September, of which 95% voted to "try and reduce the number of deputies by ten". The minimum sample size for a survey of this type with a population of 63,000 with a 95% confidence limit level is 382, so this widely distributed survey sample significantly exceeds that level.

<sup>4</sup> Vis – education policy generally, or closure of the Herm School

and cost effective infrastructure developments which require many terms of stable government to develop.

9. It is patently beyond argument that Guernsey's government system is unfit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a rudderless, leaderless system at the mercy of political ideologues and egotists.
10. In order to provide an improvement we must start somewhere, and that in the view of the requêrants should be in reducing the size of the assembly. There are several strong arguments in support of such a proposition;
  - a. Smaller groups are easier to manage in terms of meetings and communication – it is therefore easier to build consensus within a smaller group than a large one.
  - b. Smaller groups are proven by management and social science to be less likely to factionalise for the same reasons – they have to work together to secure outcomes.
  - c. Small teams perform better - they allow for greater accountability, less inequality, more autonomy and flexibility both in terms of scheduling and idea based changes and they foster greater trust among team members and less fear of failure. They also tend to outperform larger teams – there is a plethora of management and social science output which supports this assertion<sup>5</sup>.
  - d. A smaller group of politicians (reduced by 10) will require all members to be part of committee government and therefore work more frequently and closely with colleagues and be more aware of issues across government.
  - e. A smaller group of politicians will reduce cash costs in salaries paid.
  - f. A smaller group of politicians will reduce “pure” debate time but also be better informed through being actively involved in government work.
  - g. Individuals can more easily make a difference in a small group, and this is likely to encourage more well qualified and experienced candidates to stand.
  - h. A smaller number of places at election will increase the competition for places, likely reduce the number of speculative candidates and reduce the amount of time the electorate must spend reviewing manifestos and selecting their choices.
  - i. A smaller number of Deputies will make them and their actions or inaction more visible and thereby more accountable to the public.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2015/04/15/why-smaller-teams-are-better-than-larger-ones/>  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0167923622001853>  
[https://revistia.org/files/articles/ejme\\_v3\\_i2\\_20/Osmani.pdf](https://revistia.org/files/articles/ejme_v3_i2_20/Osmani.pdf)  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1368430219871620>

- j. Smaller groups encourage rationalisation of tasks and better delegation – there are several examples of committees which could be recommended for merger by SACC and proposals to encourage better performance if these proposals are accepted, for example;
  - i. Disbandment of scrutiny, moving the process to an external non-political board;
  - ii. Merger of revenue raising by merger of ESS and P&R revenue raising functions;
  - iii. Disbanding STSB and moving shareholder function to P&R;
  - iv. Making Overseas Aid an external function and States Transport Licensing Authority an ad-hoc committee (only required when a decision is made);
  - v. Making pay performance based.

### Conclusion

- 11. Guernsey's political and administrative system is clearly and obviously failing the public. Over many years States Deputies have clung to a mythical consensus model which is unable to deliver in the modern world and there has been a persistent refusal to allow any one individual or group to lead government and to make executive decisions. We aren't even able to call our chief minister chief minister when in the island. For Guernsey's sake, we must move forward and away from clinging to a governmental system which does not work.
- 12. The public very clearly wants to see change, clear and effective decision making and leadership and an end to time wasting and endless unproductive circular debate. The first step towards delivering leaner Guernsey government is to reduce its numbers prior to the next election.

**THESE PREMISES CONSIDERED, YOUR PETITIONERS** humbly pray that the States may be pleased to resolve:

- 1. To approve the reduction of the number of members of the States Assembly by 10, down to 28 Guernsey Deputies in total, such reduction to be implemented in time for the general election to be held on the 18th June 2025; and
- 2. If proposition 1 is approved, to direct the States Assembly and Constitution Committee to return to the States as soon as possible, and in any event not later than April 2025, with a policy letter containing such consequential and other recommendations as to committee memberships, representative numbers, rule changes and other considerations as it may consider necessary; and

3. To direct the preparation of such legislation as may be necessary to give effect to the above decisions.

AND YOUR PETITIONERS WILL EVER PRAY  
GUERNSEY

This 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September 2024

Deputy M A J Helyar

Deputy P T R Ferbrache

Deputy R C Murray

Deputy N G Moakes

Deputy D J Mahoney

Deputy S E Aldwell

Deputy R G Prow

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**ISLAND OF GUERNSEY**

**REQUÊTE**

**THE GOVERNMENT REFORM (2024) REQUÊTE**

The President  
Policy & Resources Committee  
Sir Charles Frossard House  
La Charroterie  
St Peter Port

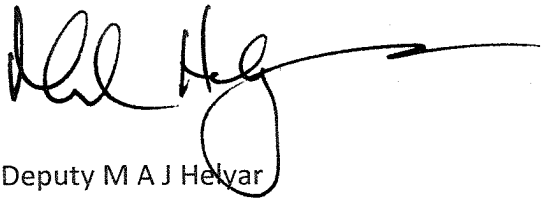
3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2024

Dear Sir,

**Preferred date for consideration by the States of Deliberation**

In accordance with Rule 4(3) of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees, the seven Members listed below request that the Propositions attached be considered at the States' meeting to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Yours faithfully,

PP 

Deputy M A J Helvar  
Deputy P T R Ferbrache  
Deputy R C Murray  
Deputy N G Moakes  
Deputy D J Mahoney  
Deputy S E Aldwell  
Deputy R G Prow