



## Press Release

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020

### Island Law amendment proposes freedom of speech and emergency powers

Freedom of speech and additional powers for Alderney when dealing with emergencies are proposed in the draft Government of Alderney (Amendment) Law 2020.

The Amendment has two parts.

The first part would allow Alderney's politicians to speak freely in the States without fear of proceedings against them. This 'full privilege' will bring Alderney into line with other global legislatures.

The second part would permit, in times of emergency such as a second Covid-19 wave, the reintroduction of virtual meetings and those other measures put in place during the height of the coronavirus crisis that allowed the continued functioning of the island's Government.

These second part amendments would also allow the postponement or bringing forward of an election, or the flexibility of calling a full postal ballot.

The second part measures would only be implemented if the Civil Contingencies Authority (CCA) declared an emergency and the President supported the action.

The proposed Amendment was discussed by the island's Policy & Finance Committee (P&F) last week when it was agreed that the draft amendment will be placed before the full States at its meeting in September. As with all amendments to the Government of Alderney Law, at least nine of the 10 Members must be present to form a quorum, and a two-thirds majority will be required for it to pass.

Given the importance of these changes and the continuing threat from coronavirus, the draft text has now been passed to the Ministry of Justice for pre-vetting. Vetting is required prior to any presentation to the Privy Council.

“If all goes well, it is hoped that the Amendment could be on the statute book in time for the November elections,” said P&F Chairman James Dent. “Islanders will, of course, hope that the provisions in the second part will not be required – neither this year, nor for many years to come.”

**Ends**