

Summary of Public Consultation Responses

Elections (Keys and Local Authorities) (Amendment) Regulations 2026



**Isle of Man
Government**
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1. About the Consultation

This consultation on the Elections (Keys and Local Authorities) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 was open between 01 December 2025 and 12 January 2026. It offered an opportunity for the public to express their views on the development of updated regulations for the conduct of both local and national elections.

The amendment regulations will be required if the Elections (Keys and Local Authorities) (Amendment) Bill 2025 (the Elections Amendment Bill), which is currently being considered by the branches of Tynwald, is passed and receives Royal Assent.

The consultation sought views about how we should make changes to three parts of the election process: publishing candidates' declarations of relevant interests; arranging pre-election meetings; and pre-verifying postal votes.

2. Responses

Who responded?

In total 132 people responded to this consultation. Of those, 120 responded as individuals and 12 responded on behalf of an organisation or as part of a professional group. Of those who responded on behalf of an organisation or as part of a professional group:

- 6 represented local authorities
- 4 were deputy returning officers
- 1 represented a political party
- 1 was a member of Tynwald

Publication of declarations of relevant interest

If the Elections Amendment Bill is passed and receives Royal Assent, then it will be mandatory for candidates' declarations of relevant interests to be published so that voters can see them – this would apply to both local and national elections.

We asked whether you thought it was appropriate for these declarations to be published online – 124 people said yes, this would be appropriate, and 8 people said no, this would not be appropriate.

We asked whether you thought there was anywhere else these declarations should be published, and 75 people gave a range of answers. The top 5 recurring suggestions were:

- They should be published in newspapers or local press (30 comments)

- They should be included on candidates' own election materials, e.g. manifestos, webpages, or social media sites (19 comments)
- They should be published in public notices, e.g. at public meetings, polling stations, or local authority offices (9 comments)
- They should be available for physical inspection, e.g. at Government Office or the Tynwald Library (8 comments) – 5 people stressed the importance of meeting accessibility requirements
- They should be included alongside ballot papers (2 comments)

We asked whether you thought it was acceptable to publish these declarations as soon as practicable after the close of nominations – 111 people said yes, this would be acceptable, and 20 people said no, it would not be acceptable.

The people who told us they thought the regulations should specify a different timeframe gave a range of suggestions. The common theme was that the regulations should set a specific timeframe for publication, in the interests of transparency and to ensure people have adequate opportunity to scrutinise the declarations before election day. Suggested timeframes ranged from 24 hours after the close of nominations, to within a week of election day.

Finally, we asked if there was anything else you wanted to tell us about publishing declarations of relevant interests. In total, 41 people gave response. The overwhelming majority of these related to what should count as a relevant interest, and how relevant interests should be defined to ensure consistency across declarations.

Pre-election meetings

If the Elections Amendment Bill is passed and receives Royal Assent, then the Cabinet Office will be able to arrange a maximum of one pre-election meeting per constituency – this will apply to national elections only.

We asked whether you thought the Cabinet Office should arrange one pre-election meeting per-constituency for House of Keys elections; 108 people said yes, and 23 people said no.

Under the Elections Amendment Bill, any meetings arranged by the Cabinet Office would have to be arranged in accordance with standards set out in regulations. The draft regulations say that pre-election meetings must be held in accordance with the principles of equality, accessibility, and transparency.

The draft regulations also say that pre-election meetings must be chaired by someone independent, that the date and venue of the meetings must be published as early as possible, and that the Cabinet Office must issue guidance about how meetings will be held, and how venues and chairpersons will be selected.

We asked whether you thought there are any other principles it would be important to consider, anything else that should be included in the regulations, or anything else you wanted to tell us about arrangements for pre-election meetings.

A total of 59 people responded with varying suggestions. The top 5 topics were:

- The importance of accessibility, both in terms of the venues for the meetings and the times at which they are held (16 comments)
- The importance of advertising the meetings widely and well in advance, so that people have opportunities to plan (16 comments)
- That it would be beneficial to record or stream the meetings, so that people who can't attend in person can still follow what happens (12 comments)
- That the Cabinet Office / central government should not be involved in arranging pre-election meetings (10 comments)
- The importance of impartiality, including suggestions that Chairpersons should have to declare conflicts of interest (7 comments)

Pre-verification of postal votes

The draft regulations set out a procedure for the pre-verification of postal votes. The procedure would be optional (deputy returning officer would not have to pre-verify ballots unless they chose to) and stipulates that: postal votes must be pre-verified in the presence of candidates' counting agents; candidates must be given no less than 48 hours' notice of this happening; and postal ballots themselves must not be opened until the counting of the vote.

We asked whether you agreed that allowing pre-verification of postal ballots was a sensible way of making the vote count quicker on election day – 114 people said yes, they did agree, and 17 people said no, they did not agree.

We asked whether you thought 48 hours' notice was sufficient for candidates – 105 people said yes, and 24 said no.

We asked whether there was anything else you wanted to tell us about the pre-verification of postal ballots – 36 people responded.

The top 5 topics were:

- General support for giving deputy returning officers the option to pre-verify postal ballot packs (7 comments)
- Concerns about the security of the vote and public confidence (5 comments)
- Suggestions of different notice periods to be given to candidates before any pre-verification (3 comments)
- Assertions that appropriate controls would be needed if pre-verification was introduced (2 comments)
- Suggestions about digital voting (2 comments)

3. Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to this consultation. The feedback we have received will be used to inform the final drafting of the Elections (Keys and Local Authorities) (Amendment) Regulations 2026. If the Elections Amendment Bill is passed by the branches of Tynwald and receives Royal Assent, we hope to seek Tynwald approval for the Elections Amendment Regulations in April 2026.



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