

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

(33rd Meeting)

14th July 2008PART A

All members were present. Mr. T. Grimes was present for item A5

Deputy S.C. Ferguson, Chairman
 Senator L. Norman
 Connétable D.J. Murphy
 Deputy A. Breckon
 Deputy J.G. Reed
 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier
 R. Bignell
 C. Evans
 M. Magee
 T. Grimes
 Advocate A. Ohlsson

In attendance -

N. Guillou, Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee

Note: The Minutes of this meeting comprise Part A only.

Comptroller and Auditor General: unable to attend

A1. The Committee noted that Mr. C. Swinson, O.B.E, Comptroller and Auditor General, was regrettably unable to attend the Committee's meeting.

Minutes.

A2. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th June 2008 (Part A only), having been previously circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed.

Appointment of Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier.

A3. The Committee, with reference to its Minute No. A2 of 16th June 2008, welcomed Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier, who had been appointed to the Public Accounts Committee in place of Connétable T.J. du Feu.

States of Jersey 2007 Financial Report and Accounts - Individual members' responsibilities 512/2(13).

A4. The Committee, with reference to its Minute No. A3 of 16th June 2008, considered the allocation of individual members to responsibility for certain accounts for the upcoming hearings regarding the States of Jersey 2007 Financial Report and Accounts.

It was noted that the previous allocations decided at the Meeting held on 16th June 2008 would remain, except that Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier had been allocated responsibility for the accounts of the Housing and Social Security Departments.

Matters for information.

A5. The Committee noted the following matters for information -

(a) correspondence dated 11th July 2008 from Advocate C.G.P. Lakeman, Chairman of the Jersey Opera House, addressed to the Comptroller and Auditor General, regarding the response of the directors of the Jersey Opera House to the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report on States' spending, entitled "Emerging Issues". In this regard, the Committee noted e-mail correspondence received from the Comptroller and Auditor General, who had stated that -

“The point made in my report concerned all of the performance spaces supported financially by the States: not any single one of them. The question that was raised was whether in supporting all of the spaces, the States are supporting a wise policy. The points mentioned by Advocate Lakeman should of course be taken into account in considering any reaction to that point.”

- (b) correspondence dated 11th July 2008 from Senator T.A. Le Sueur, Minister for Treasury and Resources, addressed to the Committee Clerk, regarding the rationale behind Ministerial Decision TR-2008-035, regarding delegation of approval of budgetary transfers within the Treasury and Resources Department. The Committee gave reference to its Minute No. A6 of 14th April 2008, and recalled that it had requested that a rationale be given at this point in time, due to concerns that Financial Direction 5.26, the requirement for a Ministerial Decision as supporting documentation for internal budget transfers, was to be undermined. In this regard, the Committee noted e-mail correspondence received from the Comptroller and Auditor General, who had expressed his opinion that -

“the Minister’s response of course avoids the principal consequence of his decision which is that there will be no public report that there has been a transfer of budgets within a department. If the transfer had been approved by Ministerial decision, there necessarily would have been.”

States of Jersey
2007 Financial
Reports and
Accounts: Private
hearing on 14th
July 2008 -
representatives
of Education,
Sport and Culture
and Social
Security.
512/2(13)

A6. The Committee noted that immediately following this meeting, a private hearing would be held at which Messrs E. Sallis, Principal of Highlands College, P. Robinson, Finance Director of Education, Sport and Culture, M. Lundy, Director of Education, Sport and Culture, and R. Bell, Chief Officer of Social Security, would be interviewed regarding the States of Jersey Accounts for 2007.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier wished it noted that whilst he was not an employee of Highlands College, he had been teaching at Highlands College as an employee of the University of Plymouth. Consequently, the Deputy declared an interest and noted that he would withdraw from the hearing involving Mr E. Sallis, Principal of Highlands College.