

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

(13th Meeting)

26th February 2007

## NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS

PART A

## Members present -

Deputy S.C. Ferguson, Chairman  
 Deputy A. Breckon  
 Deputy J.G. Reed  
 C. Evans  
 M. Magee

## Apologies received from -

Senator J.L. Perchard  
 Connétable T.J. du Feu of St. Peter  
 Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville  
 R. Bignell  
 A. Grimes

C. Swinson, O.B.E. - The Committee noted that the Comptroller and Auditor General was unavailable to attend as a result of his involvement as an expert witness in a case before the courts in the United Kingdom.

## In attendance -

P. Monamy, Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee

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

“Battle of  
 Flowers  
 Association -  
 financial grant  
 for 2006”;  
 “States Property  
 Plan”; and  
 “Monitoring of  
 sickness levels”:  
 Hearings - edited  
 transcripts  
 uploaded to  
 website.  
 530/6(13)  
 1447/1(8)

A1. The Meeting, with reference to Minutes B2 and B3 of the Public Accounts Committee of 29th January 2007, noted that edited transcripts of the “Battle of Flowers Association - financial grant for 2006” and “States Property Plan” Hearings (held on 4th and 11th December 2006, respectively) had been uploaded to the States Assembly (Scrutiny) website. The Chairman reported that action was being taken to establish a separate website for the Public Accounts Committee so as to separate it from the Scrutiny website, although there would be links between the 2 sites.

In addition, it was further noted that the transcript for an earlier Hearing (held on 22nd May 2006) relating to “monitoring of sickness levels” had also been uploaded to the website.

Battle of Flowers  
 Association -  
 grant for 2006:  
 report of Public

A2. The Meeting considered a draft of the Public Accounts Committee report on the “2006 Battle of Flowers.”

The Chairman, Deputy Breckon and Mr. Magee declared an indirect interest insofar

Accounts  
Committee.  
530/6(13)

as they were each members of an organisation (Battle of Britain International Air Display, Consumer Council and Jersey Domestic Violence Forum, respectively) which received grant funding from the Economic Development Department (E.D.D.).

Deputy Breckon outlined the difficulties which the new E.D.D. requirements arising from the aftermath of the 'Battle of Flowers' debacle were causing grant-aided organisations. Applicant organisations now received for completion a 40-point questionnaire as a pre-cursor to any consideration of an application for funding. This process was proving to be time-consuming for the organisations concerned, many of which did not have adequate expertise available to them. In the case of the Consumer Council, it was reported that grant-aid had not yet been paid to the organisation, even though certain financial commitments were being demanded by some suppliers.

Deputy Reed asked whether firm recommendations in the Committee's report would be preferable to the present "conclusions" referred to under the section "Steps taken by E.D.D." and whether a more direct reporting line back to the Committee would be desirable. It was further contended that formal Ministerial Decisions should be recorded at the time that the decisions were made, and not subsequently.

Mr. Evans suggested that in the event that compliance were to be imposed in respect of grants over a certain amount, it was apparent that some cost would arise. The recommendation of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C.&A.G.) that an Internal Audit report should be requested in respect of each grant-aided project/scheme at the end of 2007 was supported, and it was agreed that pressure should be maintained on the Chief Executive, E.D.D. for the production of a report specific report on the outcome of the negotiations for the 2007 Battle of Flowers grant, with particular emphasis on compliance with the C.&A.G.'s recommendations.

It was agreed that E.D.D. should support compliance from individual grant-aided bodies without imposing an undue burden upon the smaller organisations through unrealistic guidance involving too onerous requirements.

**The Meeting accepted that the report covered all the points which needed to be made and, subject to consideration by the Chairman of a number of suggested minor alterations, it was agreed that the final version should be published without further delay.**

The Clerk was directed to take the necessary action for the report to be presented to the States in due course.

Review of the  
first 12 months of  
Ministerial  
government:  
P.P.C. Sub-  
Committee -  
comments.  
465/1(77)

A3. The Meeting considered a request from the Privileges and Procedures Committee for the views of the Public Accounts Committee on matters covered by the review of the first 12 months of Ministerial government which was being undertaken by a Sub-Committee.

**The Meeting decided that, in addition to any views individual members might wish to convey to the Sub-Committee, it would wish the Public Accounts Committee to submit a number of comments to the review based on a draft list which had been prepared by the Chairman which would be distributed to members for their consideration as soon as possible.** The Meeting noted that P.P.C. had indicated that it wished to receive the Committee's comments no later than the end of February 2007.

Annual report for  
2006 of the  
Public Accounts

A4. The Meeting considered a draft of the annual report on its work during 2006 for inclusion in the annual report to be produced by the Privileges and Procedures Committee, which was required under the terms of Standing Order 143(d) of the

Committee for  
inclusion in  
P.P.C. annual  
report.  
512/1(6)

States of Jersey.

The Meeting noted the format which had been adopted for the Public Accounts Committee's annual report, which included an introduction, together with references to its relationship with the Comptroller and Auditor General and its procedures and powers; sections on the operation of the Committee, its structure, its membership, and the meetings it had held; details of public hearings on the topics of "States of Jersey Monitoring of Sickness levels", "The Battle of Flowers Report" and "Methodology of the States Property Plan"; as well as a reference to the "Annual Accounts of the States"; and the Chairman's concluding comments.

**It was agreed that the Chairman should approach C.&A.G. regarding the possible inclusion of a reference to "G.A.A.P. (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) Accounting", following which the Meeting decided that the Annual Report should be sent to P.P.C.**

The Clerk was directed to take the necessary action for the report to be forwarded to the Privileges and Procedures Committee in due course for inclusion in the annual report of the activities of the States Assembly which would be presented to the States in due course.