

2.5 Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding criteria for the allocation of funding from the Drug Trafficking Confiscation Fund:

What are the criteria used to allocate funds for the purposes allowed by the Drug Trafficking Offences (Jersey) Law 1988 to bodies wishing to receive grants in the Drug Trafficking Confiscation Fund?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

The criteria laid down by Article 14(a) of the Drug Trafficking Offences (Jersey) Law 1988 stipulate that the monies from the Drug Trafficking Confiscation Fund are under the control of the Treasury and Resources Minister and may only be used for the following 3 purposes: promoting or supporting measures which will prevent or suppress drug trafficking or the misuse of controlled drugs; dealing with the consequences of drugs misuse; or facilitating the enforcement of any enactment regarding drug trafficking or misuse. Applications for funds are assessed by a steering group comprising of the Chief Officers from Health, Customs, Police, Probation, Prison, Education and the Treasury. The criteria adopted by the steering group to whom I have delegated the ability to approve funds for drug-related projects in accordance with the law are that they are non-recurring in nature, they are non-contentious and they cannot be funded from the existing States' department budgets. The group also assesses those applications with regard to other possible options for funding, the timescale and the viability of the proposal.

2.5.1 The Connétable of Grouville:

Would the Minister not agree that having read the list of grants that have been given, the private sector in controlling drug misuse has appeared only once? Out of £2,346,000 allocated in this sector, £1,158 has been allocated for private and charitable causes.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Yes, that is in accordance with the figures that I have presented.

2.5.2 The Connétable of Grouville:

Does he not believe that more of this money should be in fact channelled outside of the States' system in order to assist voluntary groups who are working very hard indeed in this area?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I am sure that if there are convincing cases to be made by voluntary groups outside the public sector they will receive a sympathetic hearing from the steering group. I suspect that if their applications are made they would be well received.

2.5.3 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

Could the Minister please elaborate upon what he meant by his definition within the policy of "non-contentious"? Funds will be given to people who apply to the Chief Officers' Steering Group and Ministry as long as... there was a list that he read out and then part of it was "non-contentious". Could he be a little bit more specific about what he means in regards to "non-contentious" so that we can establish what is contentious and try to level that against what a private sector group or individual might be willing to put forward as a request?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I am happy to do that. In delegating my authority to that group I delegated on the basis that the applications were non-contentious. Should there be an application which the Panel consider contentious - the way that I consider it contentious - the decision would revert to myself as the person who is legally responsible for making those decisions. So I only delegate to the extent that the delegation is for non-contentious matters.

2.5.4 The Deputy of St. John:

I was wondering if the Minister could answer, does he think it is appropriate that such funds should be used for revenue items such as the payment of civil servant salaries as in the case of the Law Officers?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

That decision is ultimately by the States, and not by myself, when it agreed to the States' spending plans. I think that in fact the use of the Law Officers is a very basic part of the whole aspect of dealing with drugs misuse and drug trafficking. Without those officers and without the support of the Law Officers' Department we would not get the funds in the first place.

2.5.5 The Deputy of St. John:

Would the Minister agree though that this is not necessarily sustainable as how long can we pay certain salaries for, not knowing how much money will be in the Confiscation Fund?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

This is indeed, Sir, dealt with on a year by year, case by case, basis. It would not be a necessarily sustainable item, I agree.

2.5.6 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Would that practice of paying for revenue items from these funds be acceptable under the principles of F.R.S.17 (Financial Reporting Standard 17) Accounting Practices or is that not applicable in this type of a scenario where the States are looking to move towards a more understandable and international compliant accounting practice? Is this not something that is not needing to be addressed and would it not fall outside of those practices if they apply?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I do not believe this has anything whatsoever to do with F.R.S.17 or indeed any other accounting principles. It is a matter of policy of the States and how it applies its funds.