

# Public Accounts Committee

## MEETING

### Record of Meeting

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Meeting 41

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Present       | Senator B.E. Shenton (Chairman)<br>Connétable J.M. Refault (Vice-Chairman)<br>Senator A. Breckon<br>Mr. M. Magee<br>Mr. K. Keen |
| Apologies     | Senator J. Perchard<br>Mr A. Fearn  |
| Absent        |   |
| In attendance | Mr C. Swinson O.B.E, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG)<br>Mrs. M. Pardoe, Public Accounts Committee Officer                |

| Ref Back                 | Agenda matter  | Action   |
|--------------------------|--|----------|
|                          | <p><b>1. Records of Meetings</b></p> <p>The records of the meetings held on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1<sup>st</sup> July and 9<sup>th</sup> July 2010 were agreed as a true account of events and were accordingly signed.</p>  |          |
| Item A1<br>01.07.10      | <p><b>2. Jersey Heritage Trust</b></p> <p>The Committee noted the publication of its report on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010. It was agreed that broadly speaking, the report had been received positively and had been taken seriously by the Jersey Heritage Trust. One criticism had been that the Committee had not given the Trust sufficient credit for the work it had already undertaken (since the C&amp;AG's original report) to improve its financial state. The Committee agreed to re-visit this subject in a year's time.</p> | MP       |
| Item B2 viii<br>28.06.10 | <p><b>3. Historical Child Abuse Enquiry (HCAE)</b></p> <p>The Committee noted that a report regarding spending in light of the above was now in the public domain. Members recalled that the Minister for Home Affairs had not allowed the Committee sight of the audit before it was made public. The Committee resolved to write again to the Minister to request why this had been the case.</p>  | MP       |
|                          | <p><b>4. Draft Annual Business Plan</b></p> <p>The publication of the above was noted. Whilst acknowledging that the scrutiny of forward looking policy was outside of its remit, the Committee nonetheless considered that some discussion of the Annual Business Plan was necessary in order to place its work in context. The Committee expressed concern that the Annual Business Plan showed an increase in spending, despite the rhetoric about cuts.</p>  |          |
| Item A5<br>28.06.10      | <p><b>5. Procurement</b></p> <p>The Committee noted the public hearing arranged for the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 in this regard with the Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer for Resources. The C&amp;AG agreed to assist in preparing a question plan.</p>   | CS<br>MP |

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| <p><b>Item A6</b><br/><b>28.06.10</b></p> | <p><b>6. Financial Report and Accounts 2009</b></p> <p>The Committee noted the public hearing arranged for the 16th August 2010 with the Chief Executive. The Committee was informed that the Deputy Treasurer would also be attending, instead of the Interim Treasurer who would be on annual leave. The C&amp;AG agreed to assist in preparing a question plan. The Committee agreed to invite the Interim Treasurer to a Public Hearing in September, as well as the Chief Clerk, Law Officers' Department.</p>  | <p><b>CS</b><br/><b>MP</b></p> |
| <p><b>Item A9</b><br/><b>24.05.10</b></p> | <p><b>7. Public Employees Contributory Retirement Scheme (PECRS)</b></p> <p>The Committee noted that it had so far received a 'holding reply' from the PECRS Committee of Management to its letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> June 2010.</p>  |                                |
| <p><b>Item A5</b><br/><b>24.05.10</b></p> | <p><b>8. Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)</b></p> <p>It was considered that the Council of Ministers was placing too much emphasis on tax rises rather than on savings and efficiency cuts. The Committee was advised that Mr. Magee had attended the public tax consultation and he had put it to the Minister for Treasury and Resources that his proposed weighting towards tax was greater than it was in the United Kingdom, where there was more of a 50 / 50 split between tax and cuts. It was noted that in the midst of the debate about where the taxes would come from, the real question had not been raised (i.e. maybe savings should have been made rather than raising taxes.) It was agreed that very real structural changes would be required to fill the deficit and for meaningful savings to be made, and that these structural changes were not happening. Also, the Committee believed that some of the 'savings' proposed were not real savings, such as the loss of posts which were already vacant. The Committee expressed its surprise that there was not more public concern about impending and inevitable tax rises, and noted that any rise to Goods and Services Tax (GST) would be met with considerable public opposition.</p> |                                |
| <p><b>Item A4</b><br/><b>28.06.10</b></p> | <p><b>9. Inter-Island co-operation</b></p> <p>The Committee recalled that it had agreed to meet with the Guernsey Public Accounts Committee before the end of 2010, and it was agreed that the scheduled meeting in Jersey on November 22<sup>nd</sup> would be the most convenient date for this. The Officer was authorised to take the necessary action.</p>  | <p><b>MP</b></p>               |
|   | <p><b>10. Home and Lifestyle Exhibition 2010</b></p> <p>The Committee was apprised that it had been assigned a section of the Scrutiny stand at the forthcoming Home Life Exhibition between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Members were asked to consider which review it wished to promote at this event in order to discuss at the next Committee meeting.</p>  |                                |
|   | <p><b>11. Future meetings</b></p> <p>The Committee noted that its next meeting was scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 in the Blampied Room, States Building. The dates for the Committee meetings for 2011 were also agreed.</p>  |                                |

Signed

Date:



23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010

Chairman, Public Accounts Committee

26<sup>th</sup> July 2010