

Public Accounts Committee

Record of Meeting

Date: 18th March 2013

Meeting No: 24

Present	Deputy T. Vallois, Chairman Senator S. C. Ferguson, Deputy R. Rondel Deputy G. Baudains Mr J Mills
Apologies	Mr I. Ridgway
In attendance	Mr M. Robbins, Officer to Public Accounts Committee.

Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
Item 1 04.02.13	1. Records of Meetings The records of the meetings held on 4 th , 11 th , 12 th and 22 nd February 2013 were approved and signed.	
Item 2 04.02.13	2. Previous PAC Recommendations A document containing every Public Accounts Committee recommendation between 2007 and 2013 was received by the Committee. It was the intention of the Chairman to follow up some of the recommendations with the Chief Minister during a meeting which was to be held during the afternoon of the 18 th March 2013. The recommendations were to be considered by the members in time for the next meeting.	TV / MR
	3. Conflicts of Interest Deputy Rondel declared a conflict of interest in the area of grants as he was in receipt of a rural grant due to the nature of his business. It was agreed that were the rural grants to be discussed he would retire from any such proceedings.	
	4. Third Westminster Workshop on PAC The Committee heard that three names had been submitted to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in application for places at a workshop in London relating to Public Account Committees throughout the Commonwealth. As it had been heavily oversubscribed, only one place had been accepted from the Jersey Committee. It was decided that the Chairman would be the most appropriate representative to attend.	TV
	5. Car Park Trading Fund The Chairman raised the topic of service charges made to the public	

	<p>and after discussion, the Committee decided that it had a particular interest in the Car Park Trading Fund. It was aware that money collected from parking charges was held in a ring-fenced account, the Car Park Trading Account, but that money was being used from that account on a regular basis for matters not directly connected with car parks.</p> <p>The Committee decided to have some background work done on this subject to establish if there were sufficient concern for a review into the subject. It was stated that the use of funds intended for maintenance of Car Parks for other projects was a stealth tax and was not transparent.</p> <p>Consideration of more details about this were to be considered at the next meeting.</p>	MR
	<p>6. Back to Work Programme</p> <p>The Committee considered the 'Back to Work Programme' which was created within the Economic Stimulus Package and therefore subject to the '3Ts', being Timely, Temporary and Targeted. As this programme was still in operation two and a half years later, it seemed it may not have been subject to the '3Ts'.</p> <p>The Committee was in agreement that there may be value in examining the Economic Stimulus Package to establish if it were value for money. It was decided that this was a suitable subject for the future and there was value in discussing the project with the Comptroller and Auditor General later in the year.</p>	MR
	<p>7. Sixth Form Education</p> <p>The Committee discussed examination of the corporate governance in sixth form education. As highlighted within the Financial Report and Accounts report (PAC 1/2013), sixth-formers were moving from school to school with duplication of curriculum in many cases.</p> <p>It was recognised that this may be a symptom of a deeper problem and it was worth trying to establish the cause of the symptoms. It was agreed that this was an area that was worth future discussion with the Comptroller and Auditor General as she became more informed of the circumstances surrounding such issues.</p>	
	<p>8. Health Consultants</p> <p>The Committee received information relating to concerns over the value for money provided by consultants working within the Health Department. The Committee agreed that there was concern over the amount of time that consultants were providing for their role as employed consultants for the States of Jersey, compared to the amount of time invested in their private practice. The Committee elected Senator Ferguson to act as lead member and it was agreed that she would liaise with the officer to provide some background information about the subject.</p>	SF / MR
Item 3 18.06.12	<p>9. Public Finance (Jersey) Law 2005 Amendments</p> <p>The Committee considered an invitation from the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel to consider the suggested amendments to the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2005 which were being proposed by the Treasurer of the States. Whilst the Scrutiny Panel recognised that the</p>	

	<p>proposed amendments to the Law were beyond the remit of the PAC, being that they were proposed future legislation changes, they invited the Committee to consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to examine the recommendations from the Treasury to establish if, in their view, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are any areas of concern from the viewpoint of the PAC. • there is anything controversial contained within the proposals • whether PAC would recommend that CSP should review the amendments and 2. to advise the CSP of their considerations. <p>The Committee discussed each of the articles contained within the amendments and found concerns with the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed changes were based on recommendations within a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General “Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2005 – A review in the light of experience”, however, the amendments contained other changes as well. • Article 9.- • Article 14. • Article 15, • The PAC had requested the briefing notes to the law draftsman and the minutes relating to the changes at relevant meetings. There were none. None of the briefings with the lawdraftsman had a record. An audit trail from 2007 needed to be done to establish the reasoning behind the amendments. • There was no clear necessity for the amendments. • Article 56A • Article 56C <p>A letter containing the considerations of the Committee was to be sent to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel.</p>	MR
	<p>10. Lunches for States Members</p> <p>The Committee recalled that following the approval in the States of an amendment to the 2010 business plan, lunches for States Members and Scrutiny Members had been stopped. It was noted that the Committee was a particular victim of these cuts as due to having a membership made up of both States members and independent members, it was most convenient to hold its meetings over the lunch period.</p> <p>Since the imposition of the ban on lunches, a light sandwich lunch had been provided at personal cost to the States Members on the Committee. The Committee agreed that as this was strictly States business, it was unreasonable to expect the light lunches to be purchased by the States Members. It noted that the ban on lunches did not extend to the executive and whenever Members had attended meetings of the Ministers over a lunch period, it was usual for a light sandwich lunch to be provided.</p>	

	The Committee wished to record that it considered it was reasonable for a light sandwich lunch to be provided for the Committee when it was working over a lunch period.	MR
Item 6 04.02.13	11. Procurement It was noted that the closing date for public submissions was 18 th March 2013. The Chairman, as lead member, was to examine the submissions with the officer and report back to the Committee at its next meeting.	TV / MR
Item 2 22.02.13	12. Canbedone Productions Limited Grant The Committee reviewed the work undertaken to date and considered the public hearing held on 11 th February 2013 with the Chief Officer of the Economic Development Department. It recognised that the review had been the subject of various articles within the Jersey Evening Post. The subject was of particular interest to Islanders. Correspondence had been sent to the Chairman of the Tourism Development Fund and a reply received, stating that no application was received from Canbedone or on their behalf either for a grant or to discuss a grant. The Committee received a draft of the report which was discussed. The Committee was content with the progress and members would consider the draft and inform the officer of any further amendments. Drafting was to continue.	RR / MR
Item 9 04.02.13	13. Financial Report and Accounts 2011 The Committee noted that its report on the Financial Report and Accounts 2011 had been published on 1 st March 2013 and it looked forward to the response from the departments at the appropriate time.	MR
Item 1 22.02.13	14. Grants and Subsidies A briefing on 22 nd February 2013 from Economic Development Department officers was well received by the Committee and had proved useful in assisting understanding of a complicated process. The Lead Member reported on a meeting with the Education, Sport and Culture officers. It was recognised that there were some concerns with grants becoming smaller over time but similar resources being required to administer them. The Committee agreed that the lead Member was to progress the review by meeting with the officer.	JM / MR
	15. Briefing from Comptroller and Auditor General The Comptroller and Auditor General gave a presentation to the Committee outlining how she intended to structure the new office.	
	16. Future Meeting The Committee agreed that the next scheduled meeting was to be at 12.30 pm on Monday 15 th April 2013 in the Blampied Room of the States Buildings.	MR