

2025.07.08

4.15 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding a grant to Jersey Battle of Flowers (Parades) Limited (OQ.176/2025):

Will the Minister state what officer advice he received, and from whom, regarding the grant of £1,580, and £750 as well, for Jersey Battle of Flowers ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

You said £1,000 ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Did I get that wrong? [Laughter]

The Deputy Bailiff:

It is £158,750. Minister.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I have not quite finished. [Laughter]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Oh, right. Sorry, I thought you had.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can we round it up to £160,000, just under £160,000, for the Battle of Flowers (Parades) Limited prior to issuing a letter of instruction on this matter?

Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

I thank the Deputy for the question. My officers have been working very closely with the Jersey Battle of Flowers (Parades) Limited who are organising this year's Battle of Flowers and have been supporting the team as they navigate the events process. In this instance, given the substantial grant to a brand-new entity, I have decided upon the advice of my officers to provide a formal letter of instruction to avoid any uncertainty around that grant. As with all grants, this is not a blank cheque, and key performance indicators have been set out. We do want to see them delivered and they will be assessed against them.

4.15.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

The letter of instruction, which is normally issued when officer advice has been refused and the Minister's decision is contrary to officer advice, says that the Minister carefully considered pros and cons of issuing the grant funding. Could the Minister say what the cons were that he took into consideration before issuing this grant?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not think it is entirely correct to say "normally issued" because the Minister's view is contrary to that of the officers. They are issued when there is any concern or ambiguity with regard to the Public Finances Manual as well. The advice on this case was very much because the entity is a brand-new entity. So we wanted to make sure, from an officer perspective, that they were able to feel comfortable under the Public Finances Manual that we would be providing a grant to a brand-new entity. I forget the rest of the question, to be honest, so I apologise.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, the question was essentially what were the cons, what were the risks about granting this?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Those risks are principally around it being a brand-new entity, although the members of this entity are members of the Battle of Flowers Association. It was that element around the brand-new entity is the key risk here.

4.15.2 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can the Minister advise how this amount of funding compares to funding given to similar events in the Island, one, for example, Channel Islands Pride? Could the Minister include the amount that was granted to Channel Islands Pride in his response, please?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am unable to do that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

This is a question about the grant to the Battle of Flowers, not about other grants.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do agree, I believe that that is out of scope.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I disallow that question.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

May I ask a different question?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you may.

4.15.3 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

What are the criteria used to determine the amount of grant funding for large events such as the Battle of Flowers and Channel Islands Pride?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Each event has its own criteria based on their business plan for that event. The business plan for the events will result in a request from the event organisers for a certain amount of money and then decisions are made according to that business plan.

4.15.4 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could the Minister please share that criteria with States Members? Also if there is a similar number of attendees and public benefit to large events, should a similar amount of funding not be allocated?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Such simplistic ways of thinking I do not think are appropriate for any events.

4.15.5 Deputy J. Renouf:

Can the Minister please just clarify whether all the money is going to the new organisation and not to pay off debts from the previous company involved and whether those books have been balanced?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The £160,000 that Deputy Tadier is referring to is entirely for the parade happening this year; it is entirely with regard to this new entity. I have to say that this has not been an amount that has been handed over in one go. To date, I provided a letter of assurance to the Chair of Jersey Battle of Flowers (Parades) Limited so that 80,000 stems could be ordered in time for this year's event. That was for a value of £32,800.

[12:15]

My officers have also recently released £17,569 for urgent payments for acts, marketing, glue, et cetera. The grant agreement between Jersey Battle of Flowers (Parades) Limited and the Government is yet to be signed by the department. This will not be signed and no further monies will be released until consent to host the event is received from the Bailiff's panel. We are staging the amounts of money and giving them on an as-needed basis to minimise any potential loss and risk that Deputy Tadier has well referred to.

4.15.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

I thank the Minister for that clarification. He has partially answered my follow-up but I wonder if he could give some assurance around due diligence that might have been conducted, in particular in relation to a new organisation. What process and assurances did he receive that they would be a good recipient of States funds, given what has happened in previous years?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is difficult in the sense from a process perspective, there is no set process on this. This is a matter of trust between Government and, as I have said before, trust in Islanders and Government is something that is really important. A low trust economy is a very expensive economy; and we have moved into a low trust economy, partly driven by the fact that Government is requiring constant sets of processes which make life much harder. That said, we are working very closely with the Battle of Flowers (Parades) Limited, to ensure that they are able to deliver what they said they would deliver. This is a case of working together with them to make sure we have a really good battle parade taking place this year. If Members are eagle eyed and look around town with a keen eye they will start to see the beginnings of that parade taking shape already. It looks very exciting indeed.

4.15.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

There are still lots of questions to ask and I think it may be something we follow up from Scrutiny. The ultimate question I think has not been answered so I will put it in my final supplementary; what was the advice that was given by the officer to the Minister and was that advice favourable ultimately to the grant being issued or was that advice coming down on the side that on balance this grant should not be issued at this time in this amount to this new entity?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

My recollection is that the advice and concern was about this being a brand new entity. But I, and other Ministers as well, want to see a Battle parade going ahead this year and so we need to back somebody to put on that Battle parade. In this case it is that brand new entity, and the people involved in that entity are experienced Battle of Flowers co-ordinators, members and volunteers. So we are trusting them to make sure they deliver the parade they want, but we are doing that in a responsible way by limiting the payments to them on an as-needed basis. Like I said, from now we need them to get the Bailiff's permission to go ahead with the event that they have planned and we hope that they will get that soon, and they will not receive further monies until that permission is granted.

The Deputy Bailiff:

There are only a few minutes left, and 3 questioners, so supplementaries only from the questioner in relation to the last 3 questions.