



# Scrutiny Management Committee

## GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### **Key Findings from the Snap Public Hearing held 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

The episode raises important questions regarding committee governance and a number of issues are worthy of comment.

1. The process around the decision by the Policy & Resources Committee to allocate an additional ninety three thousand pounds to investigate the two school model has not yet been fully explained and remains a matter that may attract additional scrutiny.
2. The original decision made on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 by the Committee *for* Education Sport and Culture (CfESC) to follow staff advice not to engage a private public relations firm to carry out an external marketing campaign was rescinded on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November. This decision to rescind causes us concern and should have been managed more effectively by the CfESC. This matter was raised without notice being given to all Members and then discussed as an item under 'any other business' at a meeting when not all the Committee members were present.
3. There are clear dangers in delegating individual political members to act on behalf of a committee without appropriate officer involvement.
4. The decision to sign off inappropriate material and place the content within the public domain without CfESC agreement was a significant failure by Deputy Meerveld. Based on the evidence heard, the majority of the CfESC agreed at the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November that Deputy Meerveld had authority to engage with public relations companies regarding a potential campaign. He also had authority to commit a budget of up to ten thousand pounds for this purpose. That was the extent of his delegated authority. This authority did not extend to agreeing the content of any campaign or proceeding to place the content within the public domain.
5. The Panel cannot conclude on the evidence presented the extent to which each member of the CfESC (with the exception of Deputy Meerveld) intended the campaign to be covert, or in breach of States of Guernsey policies on the use of social media.
6. The lessons to be learned should include:
  - adhering to States of Guernsey guidelines on the use of social media;

- understanding the authority of individual committee members when given delegated powers;
  - committee members should be extremely cautious about excluding professional officers when delegation of authority has taken place;
  - putting in place measures to avoid corporate governance failures in the management of committee meetings.
7. The Panel has not sought to consider all issues of concern arising from this matter given the time available and the clear public interest for a swift determination of fact.

**-ENDS-**

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