

2019.06.18

4 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour of the Minister for Education regarding the provision of funding to the charity Music in Action for its event, Jersey Sings 2019: (OQ.162/2019)

Will the Minister update the Assembly on the situation regarding the provision of funding to the charity Music in Action for its event, Jersey Sings 2019?

Senator T.A. Vallois (The Minister for Education):

I am pleased to advise the Deputy that the Jersey Sings 2019 event will be going ahead, as planned, this Wednesday and Thursday. Generous individuals and organisations have donated and pledged funds to support the event. This has significantly reduced the original deficit predicted by the organisers of the event, Music in Action. I have also agreed with Government of Jersey officers to underwrite any remaining deficit to a maximum of £6,000. This is subject to receiving full accounts that meet the requirements of Financial Direction 5.5 on the management of grants.

3.4.1 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

I thank the Minister for her answer. Could also the Minister provide us with some clarity following the announcement of the news that the organisation was claiming they only heard about the lack of funding a few days before the event, which then the Minister responded with a statement saying this was incorrect; that notice was given 9 months ago. Will the Minister be able to provide some clarity of the detail of what happened here?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In actual fact, the organisers were advised in a meeting in April 2018 that funding was not going to be available to them in 2019. I have been advised that Music in Action were hopeful of funding if the overall budget position of the Jersey Music Service changed to allow it, but that did not happen. When questioned by them in April 2019, we confirmed again that funding would not be provided this year.

3.4.2 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

Does the Minister have any concerns, or share my concerns, of the grant application process here and what has broken down in an unnecessary incident very close to when the performance that young children were taking place happened?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I have generally had concerns before being a Minister and currently as a Minister with regards to the grants process in the public sector. We need to ensure that we have got proper compliance around grants and ensuring that we are spending money in the appropriate way and that we are holding the very relevant organisations to account, if we are providing public money. I have to stress though, of course, that it is not just money that the Education Department have provided previously, but they have provided a lot of support in terms of benefit in kind. The Music Service provides a lot of their staff to support the event in such a case. That would amount to a great deal of quantifiable, in terms of money, to assist them in putting on this event. I am hoping in the next month, or so, to be able to have a conversation with Music in Action about how we progress things further and the future of Jersey Sings.