

## **STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

### **5.1 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville (Assistant Minister for Education Sport and Culture) regarding the formation of the Jersey Council for Culture:**

I have today presented to the States a report about the Jersey Council for Culture. Members will recall that on 20th September 2005 the States adopted the vision and detailed aims and objectives of the Cultural Strategy. The Assembly also approved the structure set out between the cultural organisations and Education Sport and Culture and it approved the creation of the Council for Culture as set out in the report. Both the Minister for Education Sport and Culture and I, as Assistant Minister with responsibility for culture, have been very aware of the different shades of opinion which exist as to the way in which a council might best assist in achieving the wide-ranging objectives of the Cultural Strategy. To take account of this, we elected to hold 2 public meetings earlier this year and invite written responses to elicit those views as clearly as possible. It is customary to thank those who have participated in an exercise of this kind, and I do so so very warmly. But I wish to emphasise that those thanks are not a matter of pure formality. This is an instance where views expressed in the process have strongly influenced the report which I present to the States today. This is, I believe, entirely proper. "Culture", as was noted when the Assembly debated the strategy last year, is a difficult word. It means different things to different people at different times. Confusingly, it sometimes means different things to the same people at different times. However, what one can say with some confidence is that the notion of cultural development is not something which Education Sport and Culture, or indeed the States as a whole, can impose on the Island. Members might wish, at leisure, to remind themselves of the broad sweep of the aims and objectives of the Cultural Strategy. They involve so many bodies; professional and voluntarily, that those aims can only be achieved as a result of co-operation between a number of different groups; the major cultural providers, members of the voluntary community, the individuals who make up the fabric of Jersey's cultural life and, indeed, other States' departments. Not least Economic Development, whose role involves the encouragement of event-led tourism, the creative industries and agriculture. Similarly, Environment and Planning, which is involved in developing policies to enhance the visual quality of our built environment. One must also recall the emphasis placed by the Cultural Strategy on the Parishes. The structure set out in the report is intended both to provide the flexibility and wide engagement of the community, and at the same time to provide a framework within which specific aims and objectives can be addressed and achieved. I shall not summarise the report in this short statement. I do however draw attention to the general shift away from the hierarchical structure involving a relatively small number of participants towards a combination of an open forum and smaller working groups set up for specific tasks. Education Sport and Culture attaches particular importance to the annual conference, which will draw together work done in these smaller groups and also afford the opportunity for the wider constituency of those involved in cultural activity to raise matters and to develop themes of interest and relevance to them. It seems in this way to be inclusive; to respect the obligations of the many existing organisations working in the cultural sector, and equally to value the contribution of the wider community. It is a curious but perhaps an inevitable characteristic of the cultural sector that its creativity and expressive freedom inspires many different and sometimes opposing views. They are often held with passion. I cannot claim that this report incorporates all the suggestions made in the consultation process, nor that it will ultimately satisfy all those who have contributed. It is, however, very strongly influenced by the process in which they have participated. I hope it will be broadly welcomed and that it will constitute a solid foundation for achieving the goals of the cultural strategy and its continuous development.

#### **5.1.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

May I congratulate the Assistant Minister and the Minister for bringing forward another piece of our strengthening of our culture. May I ask at the same time, because the paper has been tabled

to us today, and I have tried to read it in between questions, but I have not managed to find what I am looking for, if maybe she could clarify as to what the constitution will be of the council, how it will be made up and if it is going to move away from a hierarchical system who will head the council, will it have political association or membership, and what kind of a budget will it have and where will that come from?

**The Deputy of Grouville:**

There are quite a few questions there. The framework of the proposed council is in the document I have presented to the States today, and it can be seen probably most clearly on page 6 in the form of a diagram. It is not going to have a hierarchical structure, as I said in my statement. It puts the emphasis on working in groups initially throughout the year, and all those groups can voluntarily come together in an annual conference where all their views will be taken on board and a framework for the coming year proposed. The budget at present for the council is £50,000 which it is hoped will drive some of the aims in the Cultural Strategy forward and the political involvement will be not direct but as politicians are E.S.C. we will seek advice from the different groups in the council.

**5.1.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

Could I just ask one last thing? Thank you very much, to the Assistant Minister, very helpful and obviously we will have time to study it, if it is going to be a voluntary association with groups coming forwards, I just wondered, during the annual council, how does the Assistant Minister envisage it being chaired? Who would head that council?

**The Deputy of Grouville:**

The annual conference: I do not know who will chair it, it will be organised in such a way whereby the views of the different groups can be put forward in a coherent manner and discussed in an appropriate way and there might even be, well hopefully, a speaker of some description that we can bring over to create sort of an inspiring day, if you like.

**5.1.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Thank you, Sir, I would also, having been a critic in early days, like to congratulate the Assistant Minister on moving this very difficult issue forward, but there is the issue, Sir, of the ghost of, in a sense, Banquo, who is not at the feast and I would like to ask, Sir, what proposals does ESC (Education Sport and Culture) have in order to bring about a greater rationalisation of the roles of the Jersey Arts Centre and the Opera House? This of course is where a lot of the money is going. What proposals does it have and how exactly will the service level agreement be arrived at, given the highly sensitive nature of this arrangement?

**The Deputy of Grouville:**

Sir, it is our intention to split the Jersey Arts Trust. There will be service level agreements between E.S.C. and each of the cultural providers which will come under all the financial direction, as is proposed now, for anybody who is receiving grants. As I say, we will have service level agreements with each of them and ensure that governance arrangements are in place when they receive the grants.

**5.1.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

I thank you, Sir, if I could ask a supplementary? What, for example, would be the involvement of E.S.C. in telling the Opera House that there needed to be a certain proportion of almost guaranteed money making shows versus sort of more risky or innovative shows? What sort of role will E.S.C. play in that regard?

**The Deputy of Grouville:**

Well, I think the Opera House is its own company, it is not really for E.S.C. to go in and start programming shows for it and the Deputy might have read in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* this weekend, the new Director is fully conversant with the running of a theatre and, as she pointed out, there will be a variety of shows and if there are some that make money, then there will be the more risky, challenging-type performances that she can bring over to broaden the variety that is shown there. But, at the end of the day, the financial direction has got to be followed and the organisations have got to come within budget and if they want to take on or show more challenging-type performances then it might be up to them to raise their own funds in order to do this, to remain solvent.

**5.1.5 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

Sir, I would just like to emphasise I wholeheartedly support the initiatives of the Assistant Minister and the Minister for the Cultural Strategy. I just wanted to ask at this important outset, if the Assistant Minister could just clarify, for certainty, twice now the Assistant Minister has mentioned that this is not a hierarchal structure, so therefore there is no top down to the bottom management or pecking order. I just feel that, looking at page 2, where the diagram of the structure has been set out in a hierarchal form, perhaps it might have been better drawn in a more fractural system? For the removal of any future doubt and for the removal of any future pecking order, would the Assistant Minister, once again, just ensure Members and indeed the public and the groups that are going to be involved, that all will come to the table and that table will be a round table of equals?

**The Deputy of Grouville:**

The Deputy is looking at the diagram on page 2, which was setting out the background and the proposed structure in the Cultural Strategy. In actual fact what is being proposed today is on page 6. I appreciate that the Deputy **[Interruption]** has not had time to look at this in depth, which is why the timetable for this is... if there are any comments we would welcome them by the end of January.

**Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

That is true. I am sorry, I beg your pardon. I apologise for that, Sir, I have seen the other diagram and I do appreciate the Assistant Minister's advice. Thank you.