

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE BY
DEPUTY R.G. LE HÉRISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20th JANUARY 2009

Question

Is the Minister satisfied with the current budget allocation to Culture and with the manner in which the funds are disbursed?

Answer

The States Cultural Strategy, approved in 2005, sets out a vision for expanding cultural provision on the basis of the many benefits which such expansion would bring the Island. To that end, it clearly identifies the need for increased resources to support the Island's funded cultural organisations and to encourage some of the wider benefits which the strategy sets out.

No such resources have been made available; in fact, the value of support to the cultural sector has diminished rather than increased since the States adopted the strategy. The Department is unable to provide such funding without cutting core services elsewhere. I do not regard this as a satisfactory state of affairs. It presents serious difficulties in a number of areas: the revenue grants on which the principal organisations depend to deliver the services which the Island expects and deserves are not currently adequate; there is insufficient funding to maintain the cultural estate; and there is no local equivalent of the National Lottery Fund upon which UK organisations depend to secure much of their capital investment.

Although some aspects of our cultural life are not dependent on financial support, to the extent that I am asked about the budget allocation to culture, I am not satisfied that the current level of support is consistent with the ambitions the States set out in its strategy. I shall, therefore, be seeking ways to address what I regard as an important issue during my term of office. It will also be important to review the Cultural Strategy, with the involvement of the cultural organisations, to focus efforts as effectively as possible.

The disbursement of funding is governed by partnership agreements between Education, Sport and Culture and the organisations concerned. A small amount of funding, less than 2% of the budget, is spent on the recommendation of the Council for Culture core group members to encourage joint-working and to address specific projects within the Cultural Strategy. The Department is exploring a mechanism to devolve some of this funding to the group under criteria agreed with the Department.

The partnership agreements which govern the majority of the budget, have been the subject of much work by the Department and the cultural organisations to ensure that they comply with States Financial Directions. It is important that these organisations provide a strong foundation for achieving the wider success of the Cultural Strategy. However, this is also dependent to a large degree on providing those organisations with the necessary resources, for without those resources, these organisations will struggle to deliver their objectives.