

3.13 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the benefit to tourism generated by the Festival of Motoring:

Would the Minister advise whether the benefit to tourism generated by the Festival of Motoring has been calculated and state what assistance, both financial and practical, that the Economic Development Department gives to this event?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean (The Minister for Economic Development):

The Festival of Motoring was first launched in 2001 by some motoring enthusiasts.

[11:30]

The principal sponsor is RUBiS, the fuel distribution company, and the event is now professionally organised by an event management company. In the past it has received financial support from the Tourism Development Fund but not since 2010 and no funding was requested in 2013, although I understand that a commercial sponsor did withdraw regrettably at the last minute. The principal benefit to the economy is derived from those who come to Jersey to attend and participate in the festival. The organisers estimate that between 200 to 400 non-resident visitors may have attended the event in 2013. The Tourism Department helps to promote the festival in a number of ways, including websites and other calendars that are distributed to visitors and elsewhere.

3.13.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

As the Minister rightly says, this event brings hundreds of visitors to Jersey. What I would like to know, in the first instance, is why did the department wait until last Friday, following the lodging of my question, before attempting to quantify the benefit of this event to tourism? Why have they not done this before on the several occasions that the organisers of the event approached the department but were turned away?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I am not, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, aware that the department was approached on a number of occasions. If the Deputy would like to provide further information I am more than happy to look at that. The only approach that I am aware of was with regard to the future where I believe the organisers have an interest in trying to raise the profile of this particular event. There has been a discussion about putting together an investment and business case to support that. That I would welcome and I think indeed the source of funding for that would be the Tourism Development Fund, where Members will be aware now has some £500,000, is open to the private sector working with Economic Development, and a suitably put together business plan, should - I would imagine - seek some support.

3.13.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Is the Minister aware that in fact the event is not likely to run next year because it is costing the organisers money?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I am not beyond the facts that some of the organisers have approached the department, as I have said, and there is an intention to work with them to put together a business plan, an investment proposal, to make a valid approach to the Tourism Development Fund. That is all I am aware of at this moment and I certainly hope that progresses. I think there is some merit in it and look forward to seeing that proposal in due course.

3.13.3 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Is the Minister aware that Jersey is almost unique in holding motor racing on public roads, courtesy of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and the Parish of St. Helier? Will

he allocate resources to explore the potential to develop a Jersey road-race revival along the lines of the Goodwood Festival?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

It is interesting that the Connétable mentions the Goodwood Festival. Obviously it is extremely well known. It is a significant investment and it has been built up over a long period of time. The aspiration I think perhaps is that the event we are referring to would like to get somewhere towards that and I would welcome it. I think it is a good idea. Clearly, there is a lot of work to be done in order to get there and in a community of our size there would need to be a great deal of buy-in to support an event of that nature. I am certainly happy to pass that thought across to, for example, the Shadow Tourism Board that are now in place as of April. They are looking at a new tourism strategy for the Island and I think events of this nature should have very serious prominence in their thoughts and considerations in that regard.

3.13.4 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Is the Minister aware that as late as last year the organisers applied to Tourism and were told that apparently all the budget goes to T.V. (television) and consumer advertising in the national press and niche publications such as *Walking* and they were unable to help?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I can understand if that is indeed what the organisers were told going to Tourism. Of course, one of the primary aims of Tourism is destination marketing, in other words, selling and promoting the Island to get people to come here. The other issue is, of course, having valued events for when visitors do arrive. It is as much to do with not just capture but retention in the future, ensuring that the visit and the experience and the range and variety of activities are as broad as they possibly can be. As I have said, there are different areas where funding should come from. In my view, T.D.F. (Tourism Development Fund) is certainly one of those that we should be looking to support, with the funds available now, some of these types of initiatives.