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6 Deputy K.F. Morel of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the recommendations of the strategic review by BOP Consulting into Jersey's culture, arts and heritage: [OQ.23/2019]

Following last year's publication of a strategic review by BOP Consulting into Jersey's culture, arts and heritage, has the Minister decided to accept any of the report's recommendations and, if so, which ones?

Deputy M. Tadier (Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Social Services - rapporteur):

I would like to thank the Deputy for his question. Like him, I am very keen to make sure that culture, arts and heritage are well supported and I am keen to make sure that the recommendations which have merits are not just accepted but that they are acted upon. I am inclined to accept all the recommendations in principle. Some thought will need to be given to the manner in which a number of the recommendations are implemented. I am also minded that a number of the recommendations require a cross-governmental approach to implement them properly. It may be helpful to tell the Deputy that some of the recommendations are already being done, one of which I could cite is recommendation 8, which asks to make culture, arts and heritage more visible through key events and anniversaries. For example, this year we have the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, which is being enacted upon by the Greffe and the Jersey Archive and other civil society groups. Liberation 75 of course next year but I have already had meetings to try and commemorate the 250th anniversary of the corn riots which will take place in September. Very big anniversary, very significant, which of course gave rise to the democratic changes which we now enjoy in Jersey. Some of the recommendations are perhaps more simple and immediate to be acted upon.

3.6.1 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour:

It seems like an opportune moment for Members to congratulate Jersey born Michael Pearce for his outstanding debut B.A.F.T.A. (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) win at the weekend. This Jersey-born resident has gone on to achieve great things already in his short career and will go on, I am sure, to do more to represent the Island in his field. Does the Assistant Minister agree with me that this is an opportune moment for the Island and the department to look at investment in the terms of movie making and the availability of funds to those who want to continue and be inspired by Michael's success?

[10:30]

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, I would like to join the Deputy in his very eloquent words; I do not need to reiterate them. I do share his sentiment and I know the Minister for the department has already commented on this yesterday. I fully agree and that is why when considering the bid that was put forward by ArtHouse Jersey to develop the commercial arm of their operations we were very pleased to support that. That will enable more of these things to be coming forward in future, for them to provide seed funding and support for these kinds of initiatives. We would like to see a lot more of that in Jersey and I am keen to make sure that all of the cultural organisations that exist in Jersey, whatever their specific remit, are sufficiently funded in the same way. But a very good example of how some investment and some encouragement can lead to great success, very visibly in this case, on the international stage.

3.6.2 Deputy R. Labey:

Does the Assistant Minister think that the Arts Centre and the Opera House are funded to an acceptable level as compared with similar organisations, say, in the U.K., given that operating here is more expensive in terms of taking in tours because of the stretch of water?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Deputy for that question. It is very pertinent because while we know that one of the bids that was put in to Treasury was accepted, the other 2 are still pending and the longer that they pend - if that is the correct word - one tends to think that they may not be accepted. I have been in talks directly with the Arts Centre to make sure that we, as a department, can support them and I have made it very clear, robustly, to my officers and I hope the Minister for Treasury and Resources will also be listening, that if monies are not available very soon for the likes of the Arts Centre, which is suffering from both capital expenditure needs and operating expenditure... they have seen pay freezes in their grants for years on years and it has come to the point where it is going to affect their operating model. I would not want to see any reduction in their artistic programme. I would hope that these things could be done at a departmental level, talking with the Treasury, but if not I certainly have the told the department I would be prepared to come to the States Assembly to ask for more money and perhaps take it from the Chief Minister's budget. I hope it does not come to that. I think conversations can be had and we should all be supporting the arts across the piece, not just in words but by giving them appropriate funding.

3.6.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

If the department ventures into movies again, can we have assurances that the lessons that were learned from the previous foray will be noted and the correct protocols, controls and checks will be applied?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am now on the other side of the table and I can assure the Senator, with her very good question, that as far as I can see, the lessons have very much been learnt. I think the clue is in the name Canbedone. I think somebody certainly did get done on that one. Nonetheless, we do need to be a can-do government and there is a risk that we can become too risk averse because there are very good ideas out there which do need some sort of level of support from Government. It may be funding, it may just be encouragement or things that we can do for the industry, because it is an industry as well as a sector. I think the lesson has been learned but let us not be too risk averse when it comes to investment either.

3.6.4 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I just wanted to get the Minister's view on the second recommendation in the BOP report which is about improving the integration of culture, arts and heritage with skills and education. I just wondered whether work has already begun on this and, if so, is the Assistant Minister's view that culture, arts and heritage should have similar standing to sciences, or the S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects in our education system?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Very much so. I think that sometimes almost derogatorily these are termed as the soft skills but they are very much the important skills. What we have seen is that students who either entirely or partly, as part of their ongoing studies, focus on the arts, whether it is music, performing arts or the plastic arts, find that it gives them confidence, it allows them to think in different ways, especially when they are able to go away and get experience and perhaps come back to the Island. It is very important and I think that is also appreciated by employers. So very much so. I think there is a

bigger piece of work that can be done between our department and Education because clearly culture sits very much between the 2 and there will be an overlap that needs to be bridged in those 2 departments.