

Ministerial Response: S.R. 5/2011

Review title: Cultural Strategy review

Scrutiny Panel: Education and Home Affairs

Introduction

The Minister is grateful to the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel for its positive approach to the Cultural Strategy report. He also wishes to thank the cultural organisations which receive financial support from the DfESC for their contribution to the spheres of arts and heritage in the Island, and those organisations which, while not in receipt of States funding, are also crucial to the vitality of cultural life in the Island in so many different ways. The Minister also recognises the contribution which other States departments make to cultural activity and is committed to continuing to work closely with those departments and the cultural sector to their mutual benefit.

Recognising the challenging economic times which prevail, the Minister welcomes the closer working which has emerged from the annual Council for Culture conferences and, in particular, the successful changes which the Arts Trust has made to its role, reinforcing its status as the voice of the community sector. In the area of heritage, the close working between Jersey Heritage, the Société Jersiaise and the National Trust for Jersey is warmly welcomed and the Minister sees great potential in the projects agreed at the last conference.

Notwithstanding budgetary issues, increased funding has been provided for the Jersey Arts Trust, and political support was given to the application by the Jersey Opera House for Fiscal Stimulus funding to complete the refurbishment in Gloucester Street which will bring further public benefit when completed later this year.

However, it is important that such developments are not perceived in isolation. Work currently in progress with States Property Holdings will look at the wider cultural estate, including both the Jersey Archive and facilities available for the performing arts.

Findings

	Findings	Comments
1	Each of the partnership organisations of the Council for Culture commented on the open and constructive relationship with the DfESC in recent years under the current Minister. The Council has proved to be a strong voice for the cultural sector promoting a team spirit amongst the funded organisations	The Council for Culture has heralded increased co-operation between the cultural organisations and built a strong foundation for the future, particularly through the development of separate arts and heritage groups, united at the annual public conference. This structure has helped foster constructive relations between the cultural organisations and with the DfESC, and the Minister believes that it offers the platform for further achievement in the future.
2	The partnership organisations in the arts sector felt that the structure of the Council allowed for better co-ordination between groups as well as the maintenance of their individual identities. The new role of the Jersey Arts Trust has enabled it to foster grass roots activity	The aim of the DfESC in establishing a new structure within the arts sector was not only to provide a more direct and accountable relationship between the individual organisations and the DfESC but also to encourage closer constructive working relationships between those bodies. This is now evident in an increasing range of co-operative projects which have taken place or are currently in progress. The Minister recognises the importance of building upon this co-ordination between groups while respecting their individual identities, particularly through the encouragement of the distinct arts and heritage groups. The role of the Jersey Arts Trust in increasing arts development has been particularly significant.
3	It appears that the recent review of the operations of the Jersey Heritage Trust by the States of Jersey did not take into account the implications for the other two voluntary heritage organisations, in particular the potential for the fundraising target for the Jersey Heritage Trust to overwhelm the resources of the other groups. It is difficult at this stage to judge whether the impact of the Heritage Trust membership drive will have damaging effects on the National Trust for Jersey and the Société Jersiaise. Nevertheless the three principal heritage organisations in the Heritage Alliance have committed themselves to collaborative working, including reaching a joint solution over Hamptonne.	Discussions between the DfESC and Jersey Heritage have emphasised the importance of the relationship between the Trust and its partner organisations; particularly the Société Jersiaise and the National Trust for Jersey. The Minister recognises the roles undertaken by the third-sector heritage organisations, particularly the National Trust for Jersey and the Société Jersiaise. The three organisations meet regularly and agreed a number of joint activities at the 2010 conference. While obligations placed on the Heritage Trust to generate additional income could affect the fund-raising efforts of organisations not themselves in receipt of States' funding, dialogue is taking place with the Economic Development Department over the future use of lottery proceeds for heritage to help allay any such fears. In relation to Hamptonne, the Minister applauds the progress which has been made to date in restoring significant public access and exploring further opportunities for self-generated income to sustain the site in the future.
4	The issue of developing a coherent and comprehensive approach to funding our performance centres remains to be solved. The DfESC review acknowledges that, despite	The Minister accepts that additional revenue funding was not provided by the States at the time, in spite of the comments in the Cultural Strategy, and that securing significant additional funding in the present economic climate will be difficult. However, he will continue

	<p>the warning contained in its own Strategy, little additional funding has been identified on a permanent basis; it has been necessary so far to address the strategy largely on the basis of existing resources. This has inevitably led to cuts in services.</p>	<p>to explore opportunities to work closely with other bodies, and encourage further co-operation between the cultural organisations to maximise the value of resources in the sector. In addition, he welcomes the property review being undertaken with Property Holdings and the involvement of the partner organisations to review requirements for the arts. He also notes the benefits to the public which will result from the upgrading of parts of the Jersey Opera House not modernised in the original refurbishment.</p>
5	<p>Once the constitutional position has been resolved with the Jersey Arts Trust it will be possible for a service level agreement between Jersey Opera House Limited and the DfESC to be negotiated, setting out expectations and responsibilities on both sides.</p>	<p>The Minister is already planning to replace the existing partnership agreements between the DfESC and the bodies in receipt of grants with a new SLA which sets out the obligations on both parties.</p>
6	<p>To date the States system of budgeting has not allowed for more than one year's provision of funding and the cultural organisations have relied upon an assurance given by the Minister that they would be given at least a year's notice of any cessation of grants. However, the Panel anticipates that the proposals to reorganise States finances and a move to medium term financial planning should enable the Department to put a three funding arrangement into effect in the near future.</p>	<p>The Minister supports the proposed move to medium term financial planning and the security which it would bring to the cultural sector. However, the Minister notes that the introduction of three-year cash limits is dependent upon changes to the Public Finances Law.</p>
7	<p>The financial assistance provided by the Fiscal Stimulus Fund to enable completion of a long standing refurbishment is welcomed. However, the issue of developing a coherent and comprehensive approach to funding the maintenance of the Island's performance centres remains to be solved.</p>	<p>All aspects of the property estate are currently being considered in a review conducted by the Property Holdings Department. Future agreements between the DfESC and the cultural sector will take account of the maintenance issues identified. The Minister notes that the requirement for Jersey Heritage to refurbish and refresh the properties for which it has responsibility was recognised by the States in p75/2010, and has resulted in increased provision being made for this purpose.</p>

Recommendations

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
1	The Panel recommends that the Minister considers whether the nature and purpose of the Council for Culture is well understood by groups outside the core funded organisations and ensures that the Council embraces the smaller community groups as well as any newly formed artistic groups	Minister	Accept	The Department will consider ways in which the work of the Council for Culture can be marketed to enhance understanding outside the core funded organisations. Discussions have taken place with the Jersey Arts Trust, the body which has responsibility for the voluntary artistic community, on ways to enhance the Trust's voice for the voluntary sector as part of the Council for Culture structure. Simultaneously, in the heritage sector, Jersey Heritage is engaging with partner organisations over marketing joint working.	July 2011
2	When reviewing the support and funding given to any particular organisation by the States the Minister must take care to ensure that the potential impacts on other relevant organisations are considered.	Minister	Accept	The importance of the impact of the funded organisations' work on partner bodies is well understood and underlies recent discussions within the heritage sector. It is also reinforced in the SLA being developed with Jersey Heritage. The Minister notes that two projects currently being advanced with support from the refurbishment fund have a positive impact on the partner organisations which have been involved in discussions to this end.	N/a
3	The Minister should develop financial arrangements with other cultural organisations on the lines of the Service Level Agreement with the Jersey Heritage Trust.	Minister	Accept	Formal completion of the Jersey Heritage Trust agreement is imminent and the Department is progressing similar agreements with the other funded bodies.	December 2011
4	A three year funding arrangement, instead of the current year by year basis, would provide the partnership	Minister	Accept	The Minister will proceed with these arrangements as soon as possible but notes that the three-year	N/a

organisations with greater certainty in terms of forward planning commitments and accounting practices. The Panel urges the Minister to proceed with these new arrangements as soon as possible.			cash limit is dependent upon changes to the Public Finances Law.	
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Conclusion

The Minister welcomes recognition that much has been achieved in terms of advancing the agenda of the Cultural Strategy with limited resources, and he wishes publicly to recognise the efforts not only of those organisations funded by the DfESC but the many others, particularly in the voluntary sector, which contribute strongly to the Island's cultural identity.

In particular, the Minister wishes to express his thanks for the enormous investment in time and energy made by the many volunteers of all ages who sustain so many of the local organisations.

Noting the challenges which lie ahead, the Minister has been encouraged by the positive approach of the principal arts and heritage organisations, and the indications which have been given that they value the opportunity to work together on projects of mutual benefit. In particular, the initiative to develop 'the Story of Jersey' which is currently being progressed affords the opportunity for both the National Trust for Jersey and the Société Jersiaise to influence and benefit from a project funded by Jersey Heritage. The Minister believes that such work will also be of value to Jersey Tourism and notes the positive discussions which have taken place recently with that Department.

It should be emphasised that the Cultural Strategy is an organic document with ambitions which cannot be delivered by the States alone. Those ambitions are to be achieved in partnership between the various organisations and individuals contributing to the cultural life of the Island. The Minister hopes that the structures which have been put in place will continue to evolve in order to meet the expectations of the community, and he is committed to helping achieve them with the resources available to him.