

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE
COMMITTEE ON 12th OCTOBER 2004**

“Members will see in the report and proposition, (P.172/2004), lodged today proposing a cultural strategy for the Island that the Island’s cultural sector has, to date, not been adequately funded.

The Committee received a request for help from the Directors of the Jersey Opera House Limited in September this year. For the last few weeks, the Department has been working closely with the Directors of Jersey Opera House Limited and the Jersey Arts Trust to find a solution to the financial problems which the company has encountered. The Education, Sport and Culture Committee has now agreed a solution and consider that the full background should be explained to States members and to the public.

When the Directors of the Jersey Opera House approached us, they explained that disappointing attendances at shows this year had resulted in financial difficulties. Specifically, they expected to be in deficit at the end of 2004 and that the shortfall could be between £210,000 and £280,000. The Committee was informed that, in the absence of a financial rescue package, the Opera House would close in early October 2004.

The Jersey Opera House receives an annual grant of £412,000 towards operating costs. The Committee has agreed to bring forward part of next year’s grant funding so that the Jersey Opera House can stay open and honour its commitments for the remainder of 2004. One effect of this will be that in 2005, the Opera House will only receive the balance of the grant due for that year. It has been made abundantly clear that part of this rescue package is a determination to produce a full and realistic business plan for the future, so that the current financial difficulties should not re-occur.

Officers of the Education, Sport and Culture Department are working closely with the Directors of the Jersey Opera House and the Jersey Arts Trust to produce this business plan in order to achieve a viable future for the Opera House.

Members will see in the Committee’s recommendations for the development of a cultural strategy for the Island a belief that a much more co-ordinated approach should be adopted for the funding and management of our cultural resources. This should ensure that the full breadth of cultural activity which the Island currently enjoys will be secured for the future.”