

STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Cultural Strategy Review

MONDAY, 4th OCTOBER 2010

Panel:

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour (Chairman)

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

Cultural Development Officer

The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

Assistant Director, Education, Sport and Culture

Also present:

Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer)

[09:32]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour (Chairman):

I would like to welcome you and welcome our members of the public and the accredited media. Are we ready to start? I would like to welcome you to this formal session of the Scrutiny Panel. We are light in numbers but high on quality and we will introduce ourselves. I am Roy Le Hérissier, the Deputy of St. Saviour, Chair of the Panel.

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:

Deputy Jeremy Maçon of St. Saviour.

Assistant Director for Education, Sport and Culture

Education, Sport and Culture.

Cultural Development Officer:

Cultural Development Officer, E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture).

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Deputy James Reed, Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Deputy Anne Dupre, Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer):

Sam Power, Scrutiny Officer.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Thank you very much. I think most of you are familiar with the terms under which you attend but, if anyone wishes me to read out the terms under which you give evidence, I will. Thank you very much. Just in terms of a declaration of interest, I am on the council of the National Trust and a member of the Société so, to that extent, I can declare that. In terms of our membership, unfortunately, Deputy Tadier is away at the moment and cannot be with us and Deputy Trevor Pitman has been called to family business, so I must apologise on their behalf. As we tried to make clear, this is not a fully-fledged scrutiny in the sense that we have asked everybody to come from various ... it is not fully-fledged in that sense and it might be termed more a health check on the state of play because, obviously, there have been a lot of developments; the more dramatic ones have obviously been around the Jersey Heritage Trust, but there have been various developments. The view of the panel was that it has now been, as we have been told several times, about 5 years since the strategy was published. There was a major meeting last year, as we know, of the entrusted parties, presided over or participated in by the Minister, and the feeling was that we needed to carry out a health check on the state of play, partly because the heritage thing will, undoubtedly, affect not only the overall strategy but the way relations are with other bodies and so forth. So, having said that, we will go straight in and I will assume that people will jump in; the Minister will, no doubt, take the lead, and other people will jump in as and when.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

Absolutely.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

We do not operate entirely on the principle that we just look at the Minister and channel everything through him; we do sometimes look at other people and ask questions, so that may happen. I wonder if we can open up in a fairly broad sense. Can you explain what progress has been made implementing the cultural strategy since its approval by the States?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

I think that a number of aims and objectives that are underlined and are included in the strategy have been progressed. I think that first of all recognition needs to be given to the cultural strategy is, perhaps, it is to be viewed as more of living document that provides us with a direction of travel rather than an ultimate goal. I think that we were aware when we picked up the strategy and decided to revisit it, that there are 7 aims and 53 objectives, and alongside of that concern that there were issues with resources and funding that had been raised in the original Strategy that, perhaps, had not been dealt with and, as such, we felt it important that we involved all the organisations as we reconsidered it. In last year's conference we particularly focused on the cultural strategy and encouraged groups, both on the heritage side and the arts side, to identify areas where they felt that more work and effort needed to be placed.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Mr. Minister, did you pick up any feedback that, in some areas, perhaps the strategy was struggling and in others it was doing well? What sort of picture did you get of how it was ...

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

I think that the picture we gained, I suppose, if we go back to January, February, March of 2009, was that we had one of the main organisations, Jersey Heritage Trust, in crisis. So our primary focus was not only in dealing with their short-term issues, as you are well aware, but also we set about placing them on

a far stronger and firmer footing for the future and I believe we have been successful in that. There has been some pain, there has been some reorganisation and, in certain respects, expectations with regards to the promotion of culture have been, perhaps, reduced in the short term. However, I do think that there is a real renewed enthusiasm and a genuine desire for a more collaborative approach by all the organisations to now move both the elements of culture forward and, when I say: “Both elements”, I mean the Heritage side as much as the Arts side.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Thank you. I will move to our colleague.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Yes. You glossed over it very early one, Minister, when we asked about what progress had been made and you said many have been progressed, but can you give some specific examples about where you feel certain areas have been progressed, where things have been improved, where this working together can be exemplified?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

First of all, I presume that you have been provided with the report and, if you turn to page 8, you will see that not only have we identified the relevant aims but, equally, the objectives that underlie each of the aims. On the far side of the page under “Achievements and Progress” you will see what we believe to be milestones in achieving the objectives that were outlined in the cultural strategy. I do not know if you want me to go through particular ones, but I think that the main objective is, I would suggest, greater collaboration by all parties as they advance and further culture on this Island. I would suggest that this has been successful over the last 5 years and, yet, there is a recognition, as I said before, that area needs to be further improved.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Out of this list, which ones do you feel, perhaps, have fallen short, have not quite made as much

progression as you would have liked to have seen?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

It is very difficult. I think that I come back to the original point. The cultural strategy is wide and broad-ranging and the fact that it is a living document, there will always be areas where improvements can be made. I think that the primary achievement, as I say, apart from the collaboration of the organisations and the coming together of those organisations to start speaking with one voice, although recognising that they have their individual identities, is that we have dealt with the issues faced by the Jersey Heritage Trust, and I think that is a major milestone in moving forward. We have also recognised the contribution that National Trust has made, Société Jersiaise has made and, looking away from heritage for a moment and looking towards the arts, we have been able to provide some additional funding through the Jersey Arts Trust so they can help and support local artists and individuals, as we recognised that that particular area needed strengthening. Some fabulous initiatives and work has been undertaken by the 2 individuals at the Jersey Arts Trust and working very closely with the Arts Centre and, indeed, the Opera House, we have seen a far more co-ordinated approach to what was perhaps considered, prior to the development of the cultural strategy, a more fragmented and piecemeal type of offering with regards to culture on the Island.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If we can phrase that question in a slightly different way, what do you feel, going forward, perhaps are the top priorities of the department, which you feel that the department needs to be focused on going forward?

The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

We need to make sure that everybody does keep collaborating, that is the important thing. Certainly, in the last year, the Heritage Trust, the Société and National Trust have got together many times. In fact, they had a meeting only a couple of days ago. There is certainly a lot more cohesion between them all. I had a meeting with the Arts Trust last week, they are doing a lot of work with the Arts Centre, they are

doing a lot of work at the Opera House, so I think that they are starting to work very well as a team as opposed to separate individuals. We have got slight problems still with, perhaps, some of the amateur groups not wanting to join together but we will keep working on that.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

I think that, more importantly, as much as we need to focus on promoting culture, we are currently undertaking a piece of work with all the organisations and part of that work flowed from our conference was focused on looking at where the priorities lie and what areas we should be further developing. We have another conference in November this year and it is our intention to take the recommendations from the various reports that have been produced - following, as I say, the outcome of that conference - and encouraging, and allowing perhaps is a better term, the organisations themselves to determine where they believe the effort needs to be made in the coming year. Because, although we are responsible for culture on this Island, I believe our role is an enabling one, an encouraging one, rather than more of a guidance-type role. I think we are looking, and need to be guided by the organisations themselves because, ultimately, they are the ones that are dealing on a day-to-day basis with promoting culture on the Island.

[09:45]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have got a whole list of questions, most of which are being approached, even if I feel like Eric Morecambe with Andre Previn: we have got the right notes, but not necessarily in the right order, if you would be so kind. We are approaching the issues but it strikes me, having heard yourself, Mr. Minister, and the Assistant Minister, it is, in part, a very practical document, the strategy. In part, it is a massively aspirational document and, in part, like it talks about a college for culture, it has a whole infrastructure buried in there which is like, you could almost say, a Soviet-style approach to the management of culture. What interests me is you have got some issues there that, unless you resolve them, it is going to be very hard to produce and to give the energy and the direction to the kind of things

you have just instanced. For example, you talk about growing co-operation but Hamptonne, sadly, was the area where the 3 groups were working together but, of course, it has proved not to be as optimistic as we thought. Secondly, and you mention it in your report, there is the issue of the interest payment in the Opera House and the constant elephant-in-the-room effect they have upon the funding of the Opera House. Thirdly, there is the role of the St. James Centre which then blossoms out more so into the whole role of property maintenance, which is almost like these toxic bank loans that we keep hearing about; if only we could put it in a separate compartment and manage it we could manage the system better. That is alluded to in the report, that property maintenance is a massive problem and you are really managing through informal arrangements. There I have instanced 3 or 4 areas where, despite the best of intentions, as outlined in the strategy, you have major problems that you have to wrestle to the ground in order to give real focus and direction to the strategy. Would you agree with that interpretation, Rod?

The Cultural Development Officer:

Yes. I think that is entirely fair. What we have to do is to look at practical ways of trying to resolve some of things. You mentioned Hamptonne first, and Hamptonne is high on the list of immediate priorities in terms of the new collaboration between the heritage organisations. Certainly, in fact, quite recently there has been a meeting while we try to develop the structure for the so-called Heritage Alliance which, as you know, emerges from the *Harrison Report*, which was commissioned earlier in the year. The notion there is that the heritage organisations, without losing their identity, nonetheless collaborating, can have a much greater prospect of trying to deal with some of these issues. Hamptonne, in terms of the service level agreement, as you say, is an area where it has been necessary to cut back in principle, on paper. But already there have been discussions about a plan for next year which would see greater access to Hamptonne without straining the resources of the Heritage Trust as they are funded by Education, Sport and Culture. That would be a practical example, I think, where the signs are encouraging, at this stage, that some progress can be made. In terms of ... I think, you mentioned the interest payment on the refurbishment of the Opera House, that obviously is one of those matters where it is frustrating, I suppose, that the size of the interest payment annually is larger than the grant to the

Opera House. However, that clearly was the decision which was made by the States whenever it was in the mid to late 1990s, and the department pledged itself to approaching the Treasury to see whether any advantage could be secured by looking at trying to renegotiate the terms of that loan or, equally, paying it off early. The response we have been given is that, unfortunately, there is no advantage to be derived from that so it remains the case that that loan will be outstanding until 2020. But that is a matter, obviously, on which one has to take advice from the Treasury. So at the moment the Treasury channels that money through and the loan is paid off progressively. In terms of property maintenance we are at the moment looking at a review of particularly the arts provision - and you mentioned St. James, I suppose, as an outstanding example of that - to try to find the most effective way of providing for the needs of the Arts sector while recognising some of these maintenance matters. There have been examples, I think some good examples, of additional funding made available to the Arts Centre to try to resolve some issues there over their replacement heating and ventilation plant, which was an important one, because that building had been open for the best part of 25 years. So that is an investment which, I think, safeguards that building in the short term. There have been other examples of trying to make provision but, I think, you are right in the general sense that, clearly, for the States as a whole this question of setting aside resources for the property is an important one.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Do you think these issues, Minister and other honourable guests, take energy away from the kind of enabling role which the Minister outlined just now? Are you spending all your time on attritional kind of warfare?

The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

No, not at all.

The Cultural Development Officer:

I would not really regard it as attritional warfare, but I think these are serious issues that have to be confronted in the sector, and I think the Minister was rightly setting out what kind of document the

cultural strategy is and the cultural strategy is all about empowering the organisations and I think that has got to be on the basis of working with them to find the best way forward rather than trying to impose ways forward on them. Nevertheless, some of the issues are, clearly, States issues and those States issues are the ones which we have got to try to grapple with. Some of them do take time but I think that all of the ones that you have mentioned I would regard as important issues which are ... what is the saying: "The wise man builds his house upon the rock" and these are all about trying to build the house on foundations which are very stable, and I think that is part of our role.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just possibly bouncing to another question which is from the report. Definitely a recurring thing is about better communication, better co-operation, between the different agencies. I am just interested if you could comment on the relationship with Economic Development?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

Yes. One of the things that we have done as we have gone through and reviewed the cultural strategy, is to start to identify who our partners are, especially with regard to other States departments, in delivering these aims because clearly, in a number of areas, there is more than just one. The E.D.D. (Economic Development Department), I believe, is able to play a more proactive role than perhaps it has in the past. Although, I would say that funding for certain facilities such as the Maritime Museum and other areas, such as the arts and the Branchage Film Festival, has had funds provided by Economic Development to enable these things to happen. But I do think that there are opportunities to develop cultural tourism, I think that this has been recognised by all parties, including the National Trust and our heritage organisations and, indeed, our arts organisation. As such, we are entering into discussions with the E.D.D. to ensure that we are more proactive in that particular area. I would like personally to see a cultural events website being developed and I know that view is supported by some of the organisations who took part in the conference last year. Equally, I know that the E.D.D. is keen to help develop that particular area. One of the key catalysts to achieve that website will be the online ticketing system. Although, I will hasten to add, it has taken longer than we anticipated, I am now confident that in

November we will have an online ticketing system that will support the Opera House, Jersey Heritage Trust, Jersey Arts Centre and Fort Regent. There are 2 things that I think that this site will do: it will, first of all, help people to focus on promoting an advanced programme through a central website. I think that we have an opportunity to not only improve, perhaps, the offering of cultural events throughout the year, but also help to maximise the income that is derived from a lot of the events that are put on. We are all aware of comments being made at times that, on occasions, one could argue, because of the wide range of activities that are provided throughout the year there could be a dilution of effort and support because of the range on offer. I think that the cultural website idea and events calendar may help to tease some of those issues out and also ensure that all the wonderful efforts that are being made by the various organisations will be rewarded. It will also ensure they gain back some benefit from them because, clearly, with the resources that are currently available to both the Island and the States generally, it is going to be even more important that we maximise the use of those resources so that both locals and tourists alike can really benefit and enjoy, as I say, the wide cultural offering available....

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I am glad you brought up that point, Minister, because it was going to lead to my next question, which is you talked about the department being an empowering enabler to the various organisations and of course part of that will be at the allocation of funding. How do you feel, with the reduction of the events funding that has happened in the last Annual Business Plan, that will impact upon the success of this particular strategy?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

I am sorry, could you remind me what reduction in Annual Business Plan?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The events funding from the E.D.D., given its relationship.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

Unfortunately, I cannot respond for Economic Development Department but I am sure you are aware, and I will certainly reiterate, that throughout the Comprehensive Spending Review process and, indeed, the Business Plan process, I have made every effort to ensure that any reductions in cost are targeted to areas that, first of all, do not affect frontline services. Indeed, in acknowledging the concerns faced by the various cultural organisations, I have not only not imposed cuts, reduced support, to those organisations, but the States supported additional resources to, in particular, the Jersey Heritage Trust so that they can have some confidence now in moving forward. Just to pick up a point you made earlier, Deputy Le Hérisier, Hamptonne is a concern. No one wanted to see the opening hours reduced to the extent it has, however, it has focused everybody's minds on perhaps looking outside of the box and seeing where greater collaboration, perhaps even between the heritage and the arts organisations, can maximise the use of that facility both now and in the future. I just cite one example: following the announcement that the opening of Hamptonne was restricted for 6 to 8 periods a year, the Red Dot organisation came along and put on a fantastic event over a weekend which drew thousands of people to the property. I think that the organisations themselves, whether it is National Trust, Société Jersiaise, or indeed Jersey Heritage Trust, are starting to look at, perhaps, new and improved ways of utilising our Heritage sites to the best advantage. The other thing that has become very clear to me is that we do not promote cultural routes. There is no linkage with our bus company and the Island Explorer service explorer (ticket) from one heritage site to another, and I think a greater collaboration between National Trust and Jersey Heritage Trust in particular could see a marked benefit.

[10:00]

Indeed, there is a genuine desire from the National Trust to do exactly that. Where Economic Development can come in, and this is not necessarily just about adding money, it is providing the expertise that will improve the marketing and promotion of our heritage sites, of the cultural events that take place on this Island, to raise the cultural profile which then allows the public and tourists alike to appreciate what is on offer. Because there are many occasions, I believe, that poor promotion of events lets us down. I always say it is not necessarily to provide additional resources, it is being smarter with

the resources that we have available to us and that is the area that we want to work with Economic Development in. Utilise their expertise alongside the expertise that we have within our organisations to really, as I say, raise the profile of our culture which, ultimately, I think, will provide a benefit to all of us.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Yes. Thank you. I certainly know, historically, it was always said that Hampton struggled with the fact it was not on a proper bus route and there were attempts to run many buses and so forth so, yes, it was an issue. I wonder if I can revert to what Rod McLoughlin was saying. He said, and we support this, that issues like property management are vitally important. I wonder if we could hear what is being done. For example, recently it was floated, and good luck that these things are floated, that the Odeon might be a better site, for example, the Jersey Arts Centre. How are decisions made about these things and what is happening to ensure that the whole property maintenance and purchase and reuse issue is managed in, perhaps, a more rational way than is the case at present? What is happening to ensure that happens?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

I can certainly answer that. There are a number of issues that we are well aware of that relate to the area of culture and, as you rightly say, property is one of them. We have St. James that still has scaffolding outside and that property belongs to the States. We have the Arts Centre, a fabulous building, but it is 25 maybe even 30 years old now, and we have enquired whether or not that facility is suitable for the future. We were also aware of the fact that another States property, the Opera House, was unfinished and the refurbishment of that property had not been completed when the major refurbishment took place some years ago. How have we addressed it? One, the Opera House has been provided with some fiscal stimulus funds to complete that refurbishment project. This will really improve the catering facilities on the site, the performance spaces to the rear of the building, it will improve the office accommodation and the corporate areas, all of which will help add income to the Opera House to ensure that its future remains secure both now and in the future. I would hasten to add that, in recent years, the Opera House

has found itself in a position of financial security and, although they do face challenges, they are in a far better position than they were, I think, back in 2004-2005. The performance space issue needs to be looked at as a whole, we have St. James, we have the Arts Centre, we have Le Motte Street, we have Fort Regent that is used for a certain cultural events, and we are determined, working closely with Property Holdings, to look at how we provide and improve the performance spaces for the future. One could believe that it would be better to have the performance spaces, apart from the Opera House, located in one position. If you think then about the proposals that were made recently regarding an the art gallery, there is an opportunity to look at whether or not a new performance space with an art gallery provision attached to it, might not provide and enhance the cultural offerings on offer. The St. James site; decisions need to be made over it. We cannot carry on, I do not believe, seeing scaffolding up and it left in a half-completed state. We have been encouraging all of the organisations to consider what the future holds and then we are aiming to work with Property Holdings to see what opportunities exist, whether it is the utilisation and disposal of some of the sites to fund a new site, a new facility...

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Sorry, Minister. Have you reached any conclusions as to how you think it should be?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

No. This is an ongoing piece of work. We are certainly aware of some of the issues that surround that. The Arts Centre, in particular, was not funded totally by the States; indeed, quite a number of benefactors enabled that facility to be provided so there needs to be a decision, if we were to look at relocating the Arts Centre to another site, how that should be managed. But I think that it is important that we look beyond today and look to the medium and longer term and say: "What do we want, how do we provide it and could the facilities that we have now be better used?" We also have the Instrumental Music Service based at the Fort. Ideally, one might like to relocate that within some sort of performance space and performance facility so you get a greater involvement, if you like, mix of all age groups and individuals which would draw them to that space. I think that we are in the first stages, but I would hope that, within the next 12 months, we would begin to develop a much clearer picture of where we are

moving to and then we will need to consider how we get there.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Mr. Minister - then I will pass to my colleague who has got new lines of questioning, you will be relieved to hear - do you think the travails of the Heritage Trust and all the energy that you and the chairman and the trust itself has absolutely applied to the situation has ended up in a rather paradoxical situation where, rather than being the enabler, you are ending up having to take a much more direct role in these affairs, which you never intended to do?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

No, not at all. I think that we have stepped up to the mark and, perhaps, reminded the States of their responsibility in supporting our cultural organisations. It is one thing to use many words in support of the culture on the Island, it is another to, if you like, using perhaps a crude expression, to put your money where your mouth is. Unfortunately, although Jersey Heritage Trust and other organisations over the past, including the Opera House, have raised concerns to the States, to the government, about the lack of sufficient resources to ensure that they are placed on a secure foundation, for the most part, those have been ignored. What we have done, I believe, together with Jersey Heritage Trust is stand back, properly acknowledge the concerns that were raised, sought the full evidence of the current position and the opportunities that existed, and then gone out and dealt with the problem. I must say that I was extremely pleased to see that the States themselves and the Council of Ministers collectively recognised the need to provide the correct amount of resources, even though we are in difficult financial times. Even the solution that we found was not without pain, we did require Jersey Heritage Trust to address the annual deficit that was identified. We have had to look at closing our heritage sites, perhaps more than we would choose. However we now can, I believe, with some confidence, step forward - whether it is us as the States the department or, indeed, Jersey Heritage Trust - in the knowledge that, now the foundations are in place, we can further develop and enhance the offering that Jersey Heritage are required to provide on our behalf. That is, equally, an important point to make: we task, the States task, the Island tasks, Jersey Heritage Trust to look after our heritage sites and providing and

supporting our heritage and the development of heritage on the Island. Therefore, as I say, we cannot ignore our responsibility in that partnership.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Yes. It is excellent you put that system in place and that a new beginning, so to speak, is being launched. But there are still issues. At the risk of bringing up tired issues - and then we will revert to our colleague - it is said for example that there is a limited membership base that all heritage organisations are ultimately competing with, are you satisfied that the whole issue for example of membership as between the Société and the Heritage Trust has now been sorted out?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

No, is the short answer. It was not following 2005, when the cultural strategy was developed and agreed by the States, and it still has not now. Although I respect the individual organisations and the positions that they take, there is a reluctance for change. The change that was proposed in the cultural strategy was for a council for culture, a more co-ordinated approach, the development of a sort of a joint membership and a real partnership between the organisations on the Island. I think 2 out of the 3 have admirably demonstrated their desire to enter that partnership; the third is still having difficulties. I understand what those difficulties are and I understand the history behind the organisation, however, if we do not encourage and enable the 3 partners in the area of heritage to collaborate together, to work together and to develop joint memberships, I think that the danger is that the membership of one of the organisations will continue to reduce to a point where they will find it difficult to continue and I think that that would be tragic, absolutely tragic. But, sorry, just to finish off, it takes 2 to tango and I think that, as far as Jersey Heritage Trust is concerned, perhaps there has been a renewed recognition of the fact that there is a need to recognise, as I say, the issues and the concerns that particular organisations have and work with them to manage the change and there is a new desire to see that happen. The Heritage Alliance which has been spoken about recently, is a wonderful initiative that I believe all 3 organisations have signed up to and, from that point, we need to help those organisations to move forward and further develop that sort of partnership approach which will secure the future, not only of

the organisations but the heritage that they are tasked with taking care of.

[10:15]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Thank you. I will now move to Deputy Maçon.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Now that you have moved to me we have touched, in some ways, on what I wanted to ask. But just perhaps fleshing it out a bit more and looking at it in a bit more detail, you mentioned the Council for Culture and could you just explain to us its constitution, its role and its aims very succinctly?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

I do not know, I cannot. [Laughter]

The Cultural Development Officer:

I am very happy to wear the hat of the Council for Culture. I think that the cultural strategy set out a number of different models which one might consider for the Council for Culture and the first approach by E.S.C back in, I think, early 2006, was to go out and to ask the organisations what they really wanted and I think that there was very little appetite for setting up a completely new organisational structure. I think that that mirrors the P.A.C.'s (Public Accounts Committee) recent question about whether we have got too many organisations. I think that the imperative in setting up the Council for Culture was not to set up some new body. What has been preferred, rather, is to find different ways of bringing people together in collaborative structures and the collaborative structure which has been chosen so far has been largely to bring the funded cultural organisations together round the table with an equal voice to encourage that sort of joint working, and to allow them to provide good advice, where necessary, to the department. Partly as a result of last year's conference, but I think also partly just because of the recognition that once a degree of stability has been achieved, there is quite a lot to be said for looking in

more detail at the arts areas and the heritage areas. The thinking has been to try to strengthen independent groups in each of those areas who will meet less frequently on an overarching basis. On the heritage side, the Heritage Alliance is really an attempt to bring all the heritage bodies together in a forum where they can work together, inform the department of imperatives within the heritage sector and look at specific projects which they might achieve as a result of closer working, which would not otherwise be achieved if they were working independently. A similar initiative is now taking place on the arts side so that all 3 funded arts organisations are also now looking at ways in which they can work more closely together, partly in physical areas - we were talking earlier about property and where people are and how we deal with the buildings and all the rest of it - but partly also I think to centre some of the aims and objectives of the organisations. The answer to your question is that, in terms of the working structure, the idea is to get these existing bodies together rather than trying to appoint some new body but, equally, because I think we recognise that the cultural sector is a very diverse sector, the cultural public should not be excluded so there is a commitment once a year to have a conference with a degree of public involvement which gives people a chance to raise issues which they want to and which gives us the opportunity to try to respond to those. At the back of the report, there is an account of last year's conference with all the key things which individuals brought up. But I think that your question is a good question because I suppose on a first reading of the cultural strategy you could envisage some sort of supreme new body. I think that that raised all sorts of issues, not least, I suppose, if you think you can have an independent body like that, how you create an independent body like that in a relatively small place like Jersey where you have got a proliferation of existing organisations so you are asked to find a lot of independent people who do not have some existing affiliation to some of the other organisations and I think that that is quite a difficult thing to do. I think that that sort of model works better in very big places where you can find people who have an interest but who are not directly connected. But I think that a much more collaborative, co-operative model works better in a small community where you have got those organisations already set up.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The aims that are set from this Council for Culture, have they been established, have they been agreed

by the stakeholders and do you think that they have been adopted by the stakeholders, Minister, perhaps?

The Cultural Development Officer:

I suppose the main aims are the aims of the cultural strategy so I think to that extent all the organisations have been required to report back, not only in general terms on what they do, but also about ways in which they discharge the aims and objectives of the cultural strategy. I think that is partly why one can derive a list of things which have been done so far. But I think that, in a way, the paradox here is that there is obviously additional value in working together and collaborating, but there is also a need to recognise the core objectives of the organisations concerned. I think that where you are looking at a situation where - in very round figures - £3 million goes into cultural activity through the funded cultural organisations, and there is really a very small resource for collaborative working, it is important that one does not skew the priorities so that you end up with those organisations being deflected from the core things which they are there to do. For that reason, I think that it is very important to see the objectives of the Council for Culture as including very strongly the objectives of the core organisations, Heritage Trust for example. The Heritage Trust has very specific objectives; the Minister was talking about the obligation to look after the Island's heritage, as it were, for the States, the States made the decision. I think that it is important that the joint working while, as it were, improving the situation does not detract from the core obligations that the organisations have.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

On that issue, Mr. McLoughlin, one of the arguments that is always made about arts organisations in particular, not necessarily heritage, is this famous one in England that at Covent Garden every seat is subsidised to the extent of £80 or £90 every time somebody goes to the opera. Why should the general public subsidise what is perceived by some as a highly elitist activity? What is happening with the

Council for Culture, given the strong emphasis you have put upon the role that all these groups play and how they play a big part in it, what about reaching out to groups who are not necessarily embraced by the subgroups within the council? How are we bringing more people into culture and making it, for want of a better term, a more democratic activity?

The Cultural Development Officer:

One of the early decisions for the department was, I think, how to approach the role of the Jersey Arts Trust and I think that the Minister was talking earlier about the challenges which were faced back in 2005 and, in particular, the potential instability around the time that the cultural strategy was introduced which was partly around the question of funding. Also, I suppose to be quite frank about it, that the Arts Trust at the time was not overly enthusiastic about the cultural strategy. An early decision had to be taken about how this was going to be approached and the department was very keen to consolidate and, indeed, develop the role of the Arts Trust in terms of going out to the community. I suppose one would see the argument really as to whether the Arts Trust was there as a sort of overarching umbrella organisation which would fund the Opera House and the Arts Centre, or whether it had a much more specific community role. I think that the department was always very keen to say that anybody, on behalf of the Arts Trust, who feared that the cultural strategy would see a diminution of responsibility for the trust was quite wrong and what would happen is that being freed of the responsibility of looking after the Arts Centre and the Opera House funding, a new role would emerge for the trust. I think that is very much what has happened. Entirely by coincidence - just because of the way the reporting cycle works - the ministerial team, I think on Friday, came from the latest presentation from the Arts Trust. Perhaps the Minister would like to say something about it in a moment but, the interesting thing about it, was that a huge amount of activity and endeavour had gone into precisely that kind of grass roots activity and how you get more people interested in literature and playwriting and people who are not affiliated with particular organisations, necessarily. But it seems to me there has been a tremendous amount of activity and development in that area which I think is a vindication of, as it were, giving the Arts Trust the freedom to operate in that area.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

We can only go to so many Elvis Presley tribute concerts, do you think it translates into more bums on seats at the art venues, do you think people ...

The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

Can I just say this week alone there is something at the Opera House, there is something at the Arts Centre, there is a poetry slam at St. James and there is something on at the Fort. There is something there for every single person: whether it is pop, whether it is Gilbert and Sullivan, whether it is poetry, we are just spoilt for choice and I think there is something for everybody.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

You do feel do you, Anne, that the demographic is changing, that you are attracting more and more, a broader range of people to these events?

The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Definitely, yes. Look at Branchage last week, the number of people that came over just for that. I think we are doing incredibly well.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think the other thing is that, especially with the Jersey Arts Trust, and in fact the other individuals, they are really focusing on our young people. Because they recognise that not only do our young people have a wide range of talents, from Battle of the Bands right through to playwriting, but there is an - if you like - untapped resource that can be not only utilised for the good of the Island, but actually help develop and promote our culture. In particular, we were amazed at how with very, very little money in reality, the individuals at Jersey Arts Trust have been able to provide a broad range of activities that not only reached out to the young people, but actually brought through and culminated in, for arguments sake, the Radio Plays. The public actually being able to enjoy and appreciate plays that started at the end of a pen of a young person.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Sorry, we are starting to run out of time and I am asking too much, as ever, and Deputy Maçon will jump in soon. Can I ask, moving to culture as heritage, I know the Heritage Trust has given a lot of thought to the whole issue of winning the hearts and minds of local people, as opposed to necessarily just being seen as an adjunct to the tourism industry. How do you think the battle for the hearts and minds of local people, in terms of supporting heritage, has manifested through the Heritage Trust? How do you think this going?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

What battle?

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier :

Well, getting local people on side, getting them to visit sites repetitively. How is this moving?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think all you need to do is to pick up the last heritage survey that was completed less than 12 months ago and I would then question how you have come to your conclusion.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

No, no, I am putting the conclusion to you to test it out.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Yes. I think it was over 80 per cent of all those surveyed underlined the importance of our heritage, both physical and natural, and the need to support and maintain it. So this idea that there is a battle needs to be won of hearts and minds, I really do question. I think that what we have got to be careful of, and I am talking now under the cultural banner, is that in recent times much focus has been placed on our heritage, quite rightly with the issues to do with Jersey Heritage Trust. We have another strand, a very

important strand which is the Arts Group, and if there is an opportunity today of maybe talking a little bit more about that particular side, I think it is important to get what we believe to be the right balance because if it was not for the Arts organisations and the individuals that make up this Island, we would not have this broad range of culture and the offering that goes with it.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

We are coming to the end now but just very quickly, one of the action points from the strategy is to develop greater recognition of the different needs of heritage and cultural organisations, so how will this be achieved?

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

Right, well I think the first piece of work we have undertaken has focused on the heritage groups. As I said before, we recognise there is an equally important strand which is the Arts.

[10:30]

You speak of the Council for Culture, but I think that it is one way of drawing those 2 strands together in an attempt to promote culture on this Island. With regards to the arts, we want to develop specific policies and some of the outcomes from the conference that we had last year. Some concerns and issues were raised that they felt should be included in an arts policy such as the coordination of the cultural activity, which includes the cultural website and online ticketing facilities aiming to increase not only, as you suggest, people on seats, but an income that can be derived from that activity. Also the expansion of Percentage for Art and whether or not there is an opportunity to use some of the proceeds from that particular policy being promoted by the Planning and Environment Department, to be used for non-permanent as well as permanent use. The other area equally important, and that we have just spoken about, is the need to embrace our youth culture and encourage our young people to feel part of the cultural programme and events that are happening on the Island, alongside of the more traditional activities that we are used to. One other area that I think we would like to explore further is looking at

ways to involve local artists in States generated work, publications and the like. We have had recent discussions with those involved in Branchage and we are encouraging them to work more closely with our media group at Highlands where they are able to produce film and D.V.D.s (digital versatile disc) and other promotional material which might reduce the cost, if you like, and reduce some of the pressure of the resources that are available at the moment to make these events. So there are synergies.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

We are reaching the end so what I will do at this point is ask each of you if there are some concluding comments you wish to make and I would quite like to draw the highly respected and esteemed Mr. Greenwood in for a comment. So I will ask him a question, could you describe, David, what is the relationship between your department and the cultural organisations, in 5 words?

Assistant Director for Education, Sport and Culture:

In 5 words, arm's length. You mentioned earlier that there was this, you actually used the phrase Stalinist, I think, at one point when you were talking about Highlands College as a college for culture. I think the one philosophy that has coloured the whole approach that we have taken towards culture has been about empowering the arts and the heritage organisations and learning from them and making sure that we are not the dictators of taste in the Island. I think that is very, very important. I think through the constant dialogue that Rod has with the organisations, and that the Minister and Deputy Minister have with organisations, through the conference that we hold and through the embryonic groupings that are taking place and the encouragement of collaboration. I think we are getting there.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

What is your greatest challenge at the moment?

Assistant Director for Education, Sport and Culture:

Greatest challenge at the moment, I guess as every civil servant in the States would say is probably about resources. But you have to put that in context and I think you have to look at Jersey and you can

look at the problems, you can look at the problems that the Heritage have encountered, you can look at the problems the Opera House had earlier. But you can also pick up the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* any day and you will find a very culture rich Island and I think that is very important to look at the opportunities that exist as well as the problems.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you.

Cultural Development Officer:

Perhaps I could just add a few comments really in sort of partial response to Deputy Maçon's last question about how it is that you get these organisations to work together for the common good. I think it is important that one approaches it from the point of view of a particular project and particular initiatives. I think that is the way to do it, to find projects which genuinely involve different organisations upon which they all have a common interest in working together. I think a sort of compulsory collaboration works less well than collaborating on something which seems to be in the general interest. I know that you were asking specifically about heritage and I suppose one interesting thing which emerged from the conference last year was looking at what happens in the Isle of Man where I think if you visit the Isle of Man you are very struck by what is called "The Story of Man". A happy sort of title which unfortunately we cannot entirely borrow here, but the notion of the Story of Man is that you go to a place and there is a historical narrative which goes over the centuries that gives you a sense of what the cultural identity of the place actually is. Now if you translate that here it is obvious that Jersey and, for example, Jersey Heritage, the National Trust and the Société all have a major stake in that story of Jersey. I think that one of the interesting areas of work for the future which they are already talking about is trying to get that narrative going and that would link up ... the Minister was talking earlier about sort of access to different points in the Island and if one starts to look at the story of the Island as being a story which is told through properties and sites which belong to a lot of different people that are not just in the domain of one organisation, then that gives an opportunity to collaborate where it is genuinely in everybody's interests to work together. So I think that is the

approach that I would sort of urge as a matter of general principle.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you. Quick.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think that we need probably to recognise the many positive benefits that are derived and provided by the many local organisations and individuals both in heritage and the arts sides of our culture. If we do that I think that maybe we will all benefit and enhance the cultural offering that we have come to enjoy.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you. Anne?

Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I just want to say that I do not think we would be anywhere unless we had the huge numbers of volunteers that we have got and if it was not for the volunteers in all the various organisations, whether it be arts, heritage or whatever, we would be in a much poorer situation.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

What is your biggest challenge at the moment?

Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

I think just really to see everybody to working together and I would like to see that more with perhaps more of the local amateur groups trying to get themselves together and not being quite so precious.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Okay, thank you. Well, on that note, and thank you for that upbeat ending, although it did not have to be, it is up to you, thank you very much all for attending as you know we will be seeing other witnesses

in order that we can delve deeper into the broad issues but it has been a very interesting session and we very much appreciate your commitment and the energy you apply to this. So thank you very much indeed.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

If you do need any additional information arising from your various hearings, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will do what we can to provide you with that information.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Thank you very much. We will break now and at 10.45a.m. the Société Jersiaise will come in.

[10:38]