

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE EDUCATION, SPORT AND
CULTURE COMMITTEE BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HERISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st MARCH 2005

Question

With regard to the proposed Cultural Strategy, would the President -

- (a) identify the sources and sum of funding which will support the Strategy? and,
- (b) outline how the 'arms length' principle will be maintained under the proposals put forward in the Strategy?

Answer

- (a) The proposals contained within the Cultural Strategy are, for the States, as a whole to embrace, and members will see that key partner organisations have been identified. Clearly there will be costs but many of the costs have been identified elsewhere. The Cultural Strategy, for example, places great emphasis on the relationship between creativity and economic development. I note with pleasure therefore that provision is being considered within the economic growth strategy for the development of small enterprises. I note also that consideration of support for Open University students, many of whom will wish to study in 'cultural areas' is also to be considered. The on-going work undertaken by Dr. Michael Goldstein on the provision of higher education in the Island, will also address issues of cost surrounding the development of higher education in the Island, some of which will be 'cultural in its nature'. You will note also that the strategy suggests the development of a percentage for art scheme for both the private and public sector. In this sense therefore the cultural strategy, like the States 2005 -2010 strategic document, relies on other more detailed work for its delivery.
- (b) I am aware that concerns have been raised regarding possible interference by Government in the development of 'culture' within the Island. I have a personal concern, not for the future but for the current arrangements and those arrangements which have been in place over recent years. Neither I nor the Committee would wish to interfere in cultural development save for a concern that cultural organisations, like any other organisation, operate within agreed resource limitations. When the Committee assumed responsibility for culture, there were no mechanisms in place to assure an arms length principle. Indeed on several occasions we were expected to take decisions on cultural matters without the benefit of sound, broad advice.

The Cultural Strategy makes provision for the creation of a council for culture which will have a responsibility, among other things, to advise the Education, Sport and Culture Committee on cultural matters. The council will have broad representation of expertise and will be able to call upon further more specialist advice if required. On matters of cultural development therefore, the Committee will be better advised than at any time in the past.

No Committee would go to such lengths to create an advisory body if it were planning to ignore the advice it receives from that body. It is the belief of the Committee therefore that the arms length principle is enhanced through the arrangements described in the Cultural Strategy.