

STATES OF JERSEY



JERSEY COUNCIL FOR CULTURE: FORMATION

**Presented to the States on 5th December 2006
by the Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture**

STATES GREFFE

FORMATION OF THE JERSEY COUNCIL FOR CULTURE

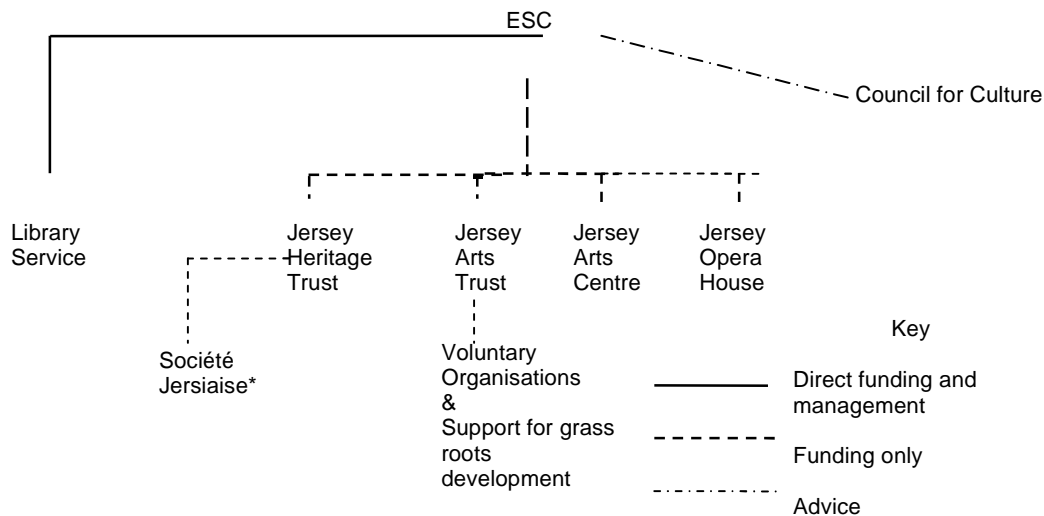
1 Background

The States approved the Cultural Strategy on 20th September 2005. Central to the strategy is the creation of a body to be called the Jersey Council for Culture to represent the interests of the cultural sector and to advise the Education, Sport and Culture Minister on cultural matters.

Although the strategy gives some guidance as to how the body might be formed, ESC engaged in a consultation exercise on the subject: two public meetings were held earlier this year and written responses invited to determine how it might best represent what is, by virtue of the scope of the Cultural Strategy, a very diverse set of interests.

2 The context within the Cultural Strategy

To realise the aims of the strategy set out in P.154/2005, there are two major structural changes to the way in which cultural provision is delivered; first, a direct relationship is created between Jersey's main cultural providers and ESC to enhance accountability for the use of public funds; secondly, a Council for Culture is established to represent cultural interests generally, to encourage co-operation between bodies, and to provide ESC with advice on cultural matters. The relationship is illustrated in the Cultural Strategy in the diagram below.



Direct funding of the major cultural providers under partnership agreements is an effective way of ensuring that public money is accounted for while simultaneously allowing those organisations the appropriate freedom to develop independently of government control. This capitalises on the strength of non-governmental organisations – flexible working practices, the opportunity to raise additional funds, and the scope to capitalise on voluntary support.

The creation of the Cultural Council recognises the diversity of cultural interests, and the fact that many of the objectives in the cultural strategy are to be achieved through co-operation between different agencies and individuals. These may be community groups, States Departments, the Parishes, commercial organisations and groups not traditionally associated with cultural provision, as well as, of course, the larger cultural providers in receipt of funding from ESC.

3 The Model in the Cultural Strategy

The Cultural Strategy deliberately placed the functions of the Council above the detail of its structure. Nonetheless, it did advance a two-tier structure –

An Executive
(comprising chairperson and two others)

A wider membership representing major cultural interests

4 The results of consultation

Unsurprisingly, the consultation process has produced a broad spectrum of opinion, not all of which is easily reconcilable. Nonetheless, a number of themes have emerged –

1. The need to recognise the diversity of interests involved, and to allow individuals and smaller groups a voice alongside the larger cultural providers.
2. The need to recognise the importance of the role played by the major organisations funded by the States, and to avoid establishing a structure which compromises their accountability to ESC under direct funding agreements and their own independent constitutional obligations
3. The need for the Council to be seen to avoid partisanship.
4. The need for members of the executive to avoid a conflict between organisations with which they may have connections and the aims of the Council itself.
5. The concomitant danger that, to avoid such conflict, the Council executive might have no representation at all from the very organisations established by the States to deliver important aspects of cultural provision.
6. The importance of adopting a broad and inclusive definition of culture.
7. The challenge of involving the individuals and groups which embrace these interests without producing an impossibly unwieldy structure.

Three particular imperatives have arisen; first, to ensure that a balance is maintained between the involvement of the major cultural providers and the opportunity for individuals to contribute; secondly, to create a framework in which the emphasis is placed on co-operation across organisational boundaries; and thirdly to ensure that direct funding relationships and partnership agreements between ESC and the major cultural providers are not compromised.

5 Proposal

5.1 The role and structure of the Council

Many of the views expressed in the consultation reflect reservations about the two-tier structure proposed in the Cultural Strategy. The concerns are twofold: first, that individual views will be lost in the main body comprising ‘major cultural interests’; secondly, that the notion of an executive recommending the allocation of resources sits uncomfortably with the direct relationship between the cultural providers and ESC. It raises a number of issues: what is the relationship between this executive and the wider body it represents? How is the executive to be chosen? In a small community, how are people of experience and commitment to be found who are not also associated with some of the larger organisations, thus threatening its perceived impartiality? Even if an executive *can* be found independent of the main cultural providers, how can it make recommendations about the funding of those bodies and simultaneously engender co-operation between them? Can cultural policy be formulated without the participation of the major cultural providers to which the States has already allocated responsibility in key areas?

Perhaps such a structure could more easily work in a larger community where there can be a clearer separation between the operational and the strategic. The dynamics of a small community militate against a hierarchical approach. It is likely to generate tensions between organisations and simultaneously create a feeling of exclusion at grass roots level. The Cultural Strategy was intended to break down such barriers. Moreover, the ‘arms length principle’ by which government is intended to recognise the autonomy of the cultural providers and give them space to operate does not sit entirely comfortably with an executive group which is, presumably, appointed by ESC or by the States.

Taking account of these factors, the Minister proposes a more inclusive approach to capitalise on the benefits of

the partnership agreements with the larger providers and also to engage with the wider constituency of groups and individuals involved in cultural activity.

5.2 Purposed Terms of Reference for the Council for Culture

- To provide a forum to share ideas for cultural development in the Island.
- To support cultural development by representing the cultural sector and providing advice to the Minister for Education Sport and Culture.
- To encourage and enhance the diversification of Jersey's economy through the development of cultural industry and enterprise.
- To encourage investment in the cultural sector.
- To work with organisations and individuals to improve opportunities and increase participation in cultural activity.

5.3 Composition of the Council for Culture

5.3.1 The Cultural Assembly

To satisfy the needs both of the larger cultural organisations and smaller groups and individuals within the community, it is proposed that the wider Council, to be known as the Cultural Assembly, is an inclusive body which meets annually in public and is open to all. This annual conference will act as a focal point for cultural development and will ensure that individuals, as well as groups, have the chance to contribute. The conference will afford the opportunity to –

- Receive reports on specific issues addressed within the Cultural Strategy.
- Table matters for consideration whether proposed by individuals, States departments including ESC, and other groups.
- Act as a forum for discussion of cultural topics.
- Share plans for cultural development.
- Raise the profile of cultural activity in the Island.

5.3.2 The Core Groups

In addition to the conference which is open to all, four smaller groups or forums will be established. The groups will represent –

- ❖ Partnership agencies – the organisations which are funded directly by ESC to deliver cultural activity in the Island as shown in the diagram above. (It includes the Société Jersiaise whose grant is passed through the Jersey Heritage Trust) This is a group of officers nominated by the partnership agencies who will meet to explore ways in which they can benefit from co-operative working, contribute to the objectives of the Cultural Strategy and provide specialist advice to ESC in the areas for which they have responsibility.
- ❖ Community and voluntary sector organisations – the range of community groups and voluntary organisations which make up the fabric of the Island's cultural life. This is a group comprising representatives from arts and heritage organisations in the community. Because of its potential size and diversity, it might function most successfully through smaller meetings of groups representing shared interests, or by general invitation to attend meetings about specific issues, or equally as a result of initiatives from those groups. Examples of relevant objectives from the Cultural Strategy might include, for example –

“To encourage increased participation in culture at the grassroots...” (Objective 5.3)

“To encourage programmes and activities for under-participating groups” (Objective 7.2)

“To record, value and support the Island's local traditions.” (Objective 1.8)

Or it might function by work focused on the role of particular organisations engaging with wider interests to deal with a specific objective within the Cultural Strategy. For instance –

“To confer responsibility to [sic] the Jersey Public Sculpture Trust for identifying, commissioning and erecting public sculpture.” (Objective 1.5)

- ❖ Other States departments and their stakeholders. The Cultural Strategy rightly identifies the involvement of a number of other government agencies and their stakeholders. There are particularly close connections with Economic Development from the perspectives of Jersey Tourism, Agriculture and its place in the Island’s heritage, and support for creative industries. It should be noted that the cultural sector also includes a number of business interests which also have a significant role to play. The Planning and Environment Department, through its concern for the Island’s built environment and initiatives including the Jersey Design Awards and Percent for Art, also plays a significant role. These departments will meet to explore government’s role and its engagement with stakeholder groups including the parishes.
- ❖ The Education, Sport and Culture Department itself embraces a number of important interests; for instance, the Education Service, the Jersey Instrumental Music Service, the Youth Service, Highlands College, the Public Library, Fort Regent, and the teachers of Jèrriais through links with Le Don Balleine. This group will bring together interests within the department and connect them with partners in the wider Cultural Assembly.

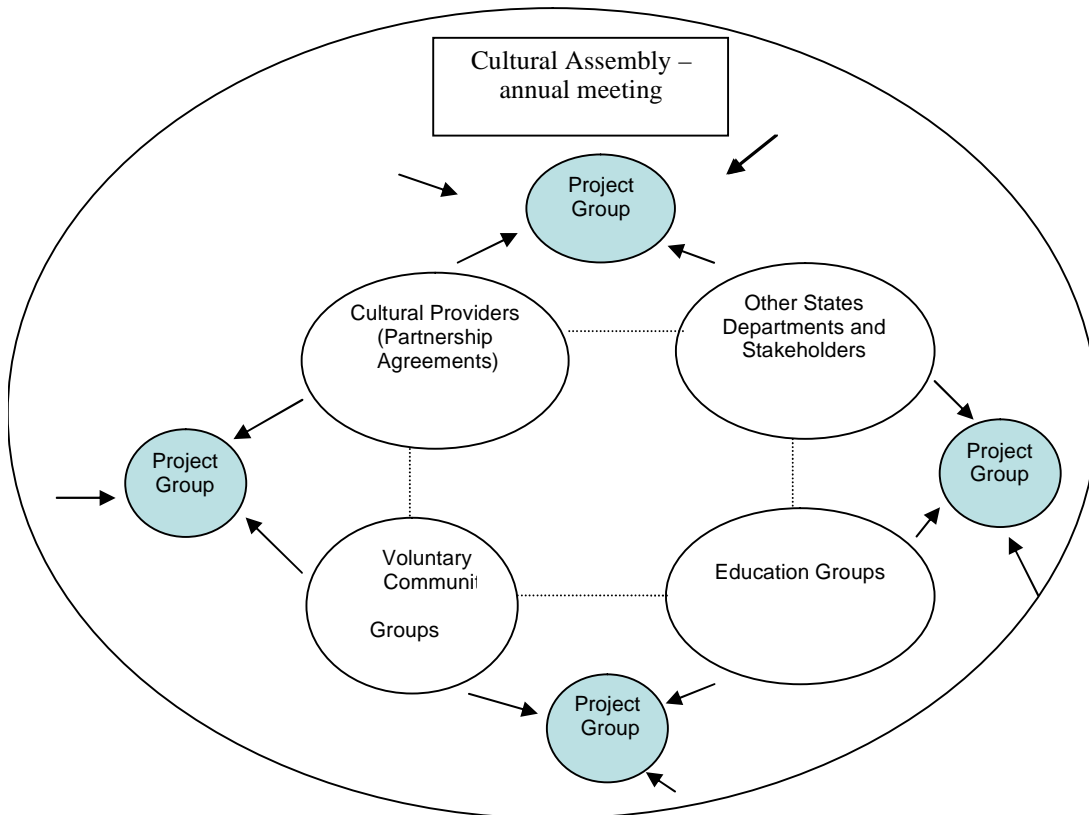
It will be clear from the nature of these groups that each will wish to develop its own methods of working, whether by means of meetings which bring together all those involved, or by specific members addressing matters of more particular interest; such an approach builds upon the sort of joint-working which already takes place in many areas of the cultural sector.

5.3.3 Working Groups

The core groups will meet to prioritise aims within the overall objectives of the Cultural Strategy, and take account of issues raised by members and by the wider Cultural Assembly. But many of those objectives will be addressed by specific project groups working across these boundaries and with other agencies and individuals. The structure is intended, therefore, to be *flexible* rather than prescriptive, to encourage collaboration and joint-working to focus on achieving particular projects, and to avoid the pitfalls inherent in bringing very large groups of people around the same table in circumstances where shared interests may be limited. It also recognises that government’s role is essentially to support cultural development rather than to prescribe the nature of that culture. A representative of each of the core groups will report to the wider Council. A formal report of the meeting will be produced.

The relationship might be illustrated in the following way –

The Cultural Council



6 The Council and the Cultural Strategy

States' endorsement of the Cultural Strategy gives political weight to a wide-ranging series of objectives on which the Council as a whole, and the core groups in particular, will be able to focus. However, it is important to realise that the Cultural Strategy is an organic document which will grow and develop: it is not a set of inflexible targets. The various groups and individuals who make up the fabric of the Island's cultural life and who are the members of the broad Cultural Council, or Assembly, will themselves contribute to its development. Conceptually, therefore, it is important that this Council is open to all by virtue of an interest or involvement in cultural activity as it is understood in the widest sense.

The point has been well emphasized in consultation that the role of government is not to define or manage culture: culture is the expression of the collective values and interactions of a society. What government *can* do is to assist in making the conditions in which culture develops and flourishes as favourable as possible.

7 Support for the Cultural Council

The Cultural Council, both in its plenary form at the annual Cultural Assembly and in the smaller core and working groups, depends strongly upon the engagement of its constituent members. In addition to providing annual revenue grants to the cultural providers, ESC will also support the Council through the Cultural Development Officer, and offer pump-prime funding for initiatives which fulfil the objectives of the strategy and which involve partnerships between the agencies involved. ESC endorses the fundamental 'arms-length' principle with regard to the cultural providers, while emphasising the importance of clear agreements with all those in receipt of government funding. ESC will ensure that grants are properly applied and accounted for but its role is not to interfere in the running of the major cultural providers, far less in the work of the voluntary community, the strength of which comes precisely from the nature and values of that community. The role of ESC is to facilitate interaction between the various different constituent members of the Council, recognising that methods of involvement and working vary according both to the issues under consideration and the nature of the bodies

involved.

8 Timetable

ECS intends the work of the core groups to begin early next year, allowing time for any comments on the new framework to be received and considered by the end of January 2007. The first annual conference of the Cultural Assembly will take place once the smaller working groups/forums are established and functioning.