

3.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the allocation of funding for Arts, Culture and Heritage (OQ.84/2025):

Further to Written Question 87/2025, will the Minister update the Assembly regarding the allocation of funding for Arts, Culture and Heritage and, in particular, will she explain how she intends to fill the gap between the A.C.H. expenditure proposed in the 2025 Budget and the reinstatement of the 1 per cent for Arts, Culture and Heritage that was approved by the Assembly in P.69/2024?

Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

I thank the Deputy for his question. As set out in the 27th amendment to the Budget, which was approved by the Assembly, the Government continues a commitment to maintain funding for the arts, culture and heritage sectors. The report to the amendment explained that the shortfall will be met from within existing budgets and resources. There is no single Arts, Culture and Heritage budget as such. The Government is currently reviewing spending across departments to ensure that the total expenditure on Arts, Heritage and Culture is captured when considering the 1 per cent. Once the review has been completed, this will be published in a report presented to the Assembly.

3.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

When we had the debate about P.69, we had quite an impassioned debate and it was mentioned that £700,000 was the gap. Can the Minister confirm that rather than an increase in funding on Arts, Culture and Heritage, as was the clear intent of P.69, the Treasury is setting out to ensure that the Government will meet the 1 per cent target without spending any more money at all on Arts, Culture and Heritage, but simply reallocating money from existing budgets into the Arts, Culture and Heritage campaign?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I think it was clear that we were not going to allocate new money to this, and that if the spending on Arts, Heritage and Culture was below 1 per cent over the year, then money would be reprioritised from within existing budgets and resources to meet the 1 per cent commitment. That may mean other budgets being cut to fill Arts, Heritage and Culture or reprioritised. There was no new money, and the report to the amendment was quite clear on that.

3.1.2 Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North:

Would the Minister explain why she did not state it clearly that any spending that was for 3 years since the States adopted 1 per cent of spending ... actually 5 years since the States adopted 1 per cent on culture that anything existing in the budget would be cut and move to meet 1 per cent instead of?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

If I can clarify. The budget classified as Arts, Heritage and Culture totalled £11.5 million in 2025, and the shortfall following the amendment is around £750,000, which will take total spending to £12.3 million, which is 1 per cent. The £11.5 million budget consists of £10.6 million for Arts, Heritage and Culture grants. There is £0.6 million for the teaching of Jèrriais, and £0.3 million has been allocated for the Liberation 80 celebrations, which are being organised by the Bailiff's Chambers. There are other sums of money within Arts, Heritage and Culture spending that is not within that budget. We do not have a specific definition of Arts, Heritage and Culture. In our review, we will be looking at all spending across Government to make sure that the 1 per cent is being met.

3.1.3 Deputy I. Gardiner:

Has the Minister gained the agreement of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development for this money?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and I had a meeting last week to discuss the progress of the review thus far. I think that there is no question that we spend vastly more than 1 per cent. If you take a wide view of Arts, Heritage and Culture, this Government spends vastly more than 1 per cent on it, but we are sticking within ... we will meet the 1 per cent. A report will be presented to the Assembly in the second quarter of this year.

3.1.4 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North:

The Minister mentioned the allocation of £12.3 million. As I understand it, the Department for the Economy receives £10.5 million. What oversight does the Minister have over that money that is allocated to the economy? Does she make a determination about where it is spent?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I thank the Deputy for that question because there seems to be a view gaining prevalence that I control the spending of every penny. I do not. Money is allocated to Ministers. It is for the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development to be involved in how that money is distributed through grants and other mechanisms. That is his responsibility and he has oversight for that.

3.1.5 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

So the extra money, aside from the £10.5 million that is allocated to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, is that money available for the allocation to the Battle of Flowers and the Air Display? If extra money is required for those events, will the Minister be able to find that money?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

That is a matter for the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development as to how he spends the budget. I am not involved in those decisions directly. If it is within his budget then he is the one who makes the allocation.

3.1.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

The Minister will be aware that the 1 per cent for Arts, Heritage and Culture was a pre-existing commitment of this Assembly, which the Government failed to amend, therefore the 1 per cent should stand. Does she agree that what she is attempting by trying to redefine what might come under Arts, Heritage and Culture spending is nothing more than political sleight of hand or perhaps spurious accounting?

[9:45]

That what should be happening is that the full 1 per cent - the £12 million or so - should be getting transferred directly to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, and it should be up to him or any future Ministers to decide exactly how that money is allocated?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, I do not agree.

3.1.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister also says that they are looking at what else might be able to be accounted for under Arts, Heritage and Culture. Does she accept that there is a strong risk, if she is looking to redefine the definitions, that anything, for example, educational spending that is pre-existing when it comes to music, art - even history potentially - that could come out of the 1 per cent and that we would find that the £12 million that should be going to primarily those 4 arm's-length organisations would dry up very quickly?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, that is not the case.

3.1.8 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Deputy Tadier has taken some of my questions, maybe I will ask it a different way. Will the Minister agree that this is more about creative accounting than a real commitment to the 1 per cent Arts, Heritage and Culture?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

No, it is not. There is no definition of Arts, Heritage and Culture in Jersey that we apply at the moment. As part of our review, we are looking to see how other bodies and statistical organisations define this, including the Arts Council of England and the U.N. (United Nations) Classification of the Functions of Government. As I say, if you put a very wide definition on it, we spend vastly more than 1 per cent on Arts, Heritage and Culture.

3.1.9 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

As the Minister has said several times, there is no definition of Arts, Heritage and Culture. Will she then be encouraging the Government to create a definition of Arts, Heritage and Culture to be able to fit into this creative counting for 1 per cent?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

Not necessarily. We will consider that as part of the review when it comes out, but I can only assure Members that there is no sleight of hand going on, and that this Government will spend 1 per cent on arts and culture this year, per our Budget amendment, which was approved by this Assembly.

3.1.10 Deputy J. Renouf:

This looks very much, I think, to most Members like a question of bad losers. The Government lost a debate on this, they have now somewhat cynically I think turned to a piece of accounting sleight of hand and, if we recall what the Minister said at the time of the debate, she said this money will have to be found from somewhere among the departments or we will have to consider increasing duties. It was not mentioned that we could potentially reallocate money that was already being spent.

The Bailiff:

There does have to be a question. That is rather a speech at the moment.

Deputy J. Renouf:

Will she accept that this is a very bad look for the Assembly in terms of public confidence in Assembly decisions when they can be so easily disregarded?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

We are only just into the second quarter. There is no sleight of hand. The cynicism is not from within Government. Government is committed to meeting Arts, Heritage and Culture budgets and it just seems to be our critics that are determined to find fault.