

2 October 2024

Deputy Montfort Tadier
Chair
Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Office
States Greffe
Morier House
St Helier
Jersey JE1 1DD



Dear Deputy Tadier

JERSEY ARTS CENTRE COMMENTS ON PROPOSED GoJ BUDGET 2025-2028

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on the Proposed Budget 2025-2028.

We were pleased to see the inclusion of Formula Driven Growth proposing that budgets for Arts, Heritage and Culture will be maintained and increased by RPI but JAC is concerned that without the continued commitment to set aside 1% of the overall Government budget for Arts and Heritage, future funding of the cultural sector will be eroded.

While we understand the challenges presented by current financial restraints, I must express our deep disappointment that the funding of the critical works at Jersey Arts Centre (JAC) have not been included in capital projects. JAC is, and has been, a key cultural asset for Jersey since 1983. And since Covid, the Island's only permanent performance venue.

In 2021 a £2.9m fiscal stimulus award was allocated to JAC before being withdrawn with little explanation. In 2022, there was another agreement to present our needs to the States.

Our premises face urgent issues, including structural decay, fire safety improvements, accessibility challenges, and outdated services as there has been no significant modernization since our inception. Our recent feasibility report, shared with government on 12 April 2024 confirms the need for these works as a matter of urgency.

It identifies essential repairs, notably to the roof (which is presumed to contain asbestos) and which is regularly failing, causing internal damage. It also proposes a comprehensive modernisation plan which will make the venue fit for purpose and future-proof it for many years including significant gains to our energy efficiency - currently far below acceptable levels, enhancing energy efficiency from a non-rated to a C EPC rating, and expansion to accommodate additional administrative staff.

These changes require an estimated £9,855,230. We recognise that this is a significant sum, but failing to act now will inevitably result in further expense in the future, as well as impacting our ability to run the venue.

The improvements will future proof the JAC, and enhance its sustainability, making sure it remains a vibrant cultural and artistic hub. One of the 13 priorities of the Common Strategic Policy 2024-2026 is to deliver a plan to revitalise Town. Given the recent developments to the surroundings in Charles Park the desired maintenance and visual enhancement of JAC would complete the impressive Public Realm revitalisation of the area and its further potential as a cultural district.

I look forward to hearing a lively discussion on the proposed budget and hope for your support in safeguarding the future of Jersey Arts Centre.

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Yours sincerely



Jacqui Patton

Chair, Jersey Arts Centre Association

Attachments:

- JAC Letter - 5 October 2022 (in response to withdrawal of Fiscal Stimulus award)
- Deputy Morel's response - 12 October 2022 (with £150k award and commitments)
- JAC Letter - 10 April 2024 (presenting Feasibility Report findings)
- Deputy Morel's response - 29 May 2024