

2025.11.25

3.9 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the micro arts development unit (OQ.262/2025):

Will the Minister advise what work, if any, has been undertaken in relation to the establishment and operation of the “micro arts development unit” as referenced in An Arts Strategy for Jersey 2022-27?

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

The department created a micro arts unit aligned with our Arts and Heritage Strategies in 2023. At this time sport was moved to a dedicated role and the Arts, Culture and Heritage team was reorganised around strategic outcomes, empowered to manage partnerships and supported with targeted funding. This team built ecosystem relationships, measures outcomes transparently and leverages external resources to sustain our art and heritage strategies and maintain the creative Island partnership.

3.9.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I noticed that when the review of the Arts Strategy was published in September there was no mention of the micro arts development unit. I just ask, why was that? Does it still exist and indeed is it still micro?

[11:15]

The Bailiff:

Maybe it is very small. Sorry. [Laughter]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sir, I am tempted to say if the Deputy looks at the very small print. But, no, I believe and I understand it is more a question of labelling. I think. My understanding is that, effectively, that micro arts unit does operate and you see that through the small grants that they are given. But I will check that there is still something we refer to as the micro arts unit because I am not convinced we necessarily do, but I will have to confirm.

3.9.2 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

The Arts Strategy when it defines or suggests introducing a micro arts development unit proposes that this unit will need to be no more than 2 to 3 posts. Could the Minister advise currently the staffing levels provided either through full-time employees or the total capacity of the arts development unit?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Similar to my previous question, I would have to get back to the Deputy on that.

3.9.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Does he believe though that the scope of work falls within the original remit of 2 to 3 posts being sufficient to deliver the remit he wants from that function within Government?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Given the size of the arts team full stop, the Arts, Culture and Heritage team full stop, I would be surprised if one unit within that team had 2 to 3 posts because I do not think the team is big enough for that to be the case. But I will have to get details about this and I will circulate them to all Members quite happily.

3.9.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

I think the issue here might be around mission creep and the extension of the arts development unit to do a job that arguably ArtHouse Jersey was set up to do. I wonder whether the Minister could comment on why he does not feel ArtHouse Jersey is an appropriate body to disperse the funds that he has talked

about and whether this might not be an example of what the chief executive has talked about where Government expands into new spaces almost without realising it.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, and I believe I have discussed this before. Setting aside micro arts units or not, it has been my view that in arts and culture particularly we have a number of organisations that we fund. Some of them disperse grants onwards, some of them do not. But one of the issues in art is that you want as wide a range of arts to be seen and put on in Jersey as possible. Different organisations have different approaches and, therefore, exclude other types of art. The idea is that there would always be a small pot held in Government so that different community arts, organisations that are seeking to do small things, Lullaby Choir is one that comes to mind, are able to access grants very easily. Where it is just a case of showing an element of value for money and the money is pushed through, the view of the art itself is not taken into account. That way we have been able to disperse significant numbers of low-value grants to a wide range of community organisations. It is in no way a slight on any of the other organisations, including ArtHouse Jersey, who I value enormously. It is just about saying we wanted a way to just provide money to community organisations without having a view on the quality or type of art that they are doing but whether they are reaching a certain number of people within that community organisation; that is all it is.