



Strategic Review Workshop

20 April 2005

Briefing

*“The last word on how we may live or die,
Rests today with such quiet men,
Working too hard, in rooms that are too big,
Reducing to figures,
What is the matter, what must be done.”*

From ‘The Managers’ by W.H.Auden

1. Background

- 1.1. Council has agreed that there needs to be a change in the pattern of our funding and general activities to meet our aims more effectively, particularly given the very limited flexibility in the current funding mix. We have invited the department heads to describe the opportunities for growth, development and change in an optimum scenario, and for the same within a radical scenario which assumes standstill funding. The attached narratives describe a vision for their sectors, and the sometimes sensitive and complex relationships between different activities within each art form. Ultimately we may need to reduce to figures ‘what is the matter, what must be done’, to describe these opportunities in our bid to the next Comprehensive Spending Review. However at this stage we are focusing on the narrative of what is possible if we are ambitious, and what needs to change if we are to achieve those ambitions.
- 1.2. The workshop is another stage in a process, and this stage offers council and committee members the chance to look in some detail at the scenarios, to test, question and challenge the visions prior to a process of wider consultation. The attached agenda outlines the process in more detail, and is designed to give detailed attention to each scenario in small groups. While we would encourage you to read all of the attached papers, we are asking that you consider one in more detail, as part of a group allocated to explore that scenario. In fact we would suggest that you prepare two or three specific questions that you want to ask in relation to your group’s art form narrative. We have also offered a very simple framework, built around the three corporate aims, which may help you in this regard (Section 3)
- 1.3. The second and equally important part of the workshop is to see if we can identify the overarching themes that may suggest some higher level priorities. In this sense the whole process is in part bottom up – hearing from the art forms the key priorities that affect their sectors – and top down. The top down aspect includes considerations such as the changing demography of Scotland, the complexities of geographical and economic circumstances of particular groups and communities, and what might be generalised as equality issues, where the opportunities for

artist and audiences alike from some groups may suggest particular courses of action. And of course the top down aspect includes the targets set by the Scottish Executive. We have included some basic data to help highlight some of these themes, and the next section outlines some thoughts and questions that may help to raise some of the wider themes that could influence Council priorities.

2. Questions in relation to the big picture.

- 2.1 Do our three corporate aims have equal status? If so how do we reflect that in what we do, what we fund, and how we communicate? Even if they have parity of status, is the balance of resources between them correct?
- 2.2. Is there a case for prioritising development on one or two art forms at the expense of others? For example on the basis of how well they impact on the corporate aims, how fragile they are at present, whether they have been under resourced historically?
- 2.3. Are there areas of activity and organisations where we are filling a gap in local authority support, and where we should redress the balance?
- 2.4. Are there areas of the country that we aren't serving well enough in terms of the range and quality of activity, or conversely are we investing too much in some places compared to others?
- 2.5 Are there communities of interest for example people who experience a disability or minority ethnic communities, that are on the margins of our support and are disadvantaged by our interpretation of characteristics such as quality, artistic excellence and the status of the artist?
- 2.6. Should we prioritise indigenous arts for support as unique aspects of Scottish culture in an international context?
- 2.7. Are there areas of activity that are on the margins of our current thinking, or are only just emerging in confidence and capability, but could have a big impact on our corporate aims? Examples could include puppetry, street theatre and literature festivals.
- 2.8 In an aging population should we focus on increasing audiences amongst older people, at the expense of the current lottery priority for children and young people?
- 2.9. Is there merit in looking at the role of our cities in a way that plays to strengths and opportunity in both national and international contexts, developing distinctive national roles and international profiles? For example Glasgow as an international gateway for the visual arts and Edinburgh as an international centre for literature
- 2.10 Have we defined clearly enough our role in relation to the voluntary sector and the massive amount of time and commitment that is expressed in clubs, societies and community groups throughout the country?
- 2.11 What can and should we do to ensure the community based initiatives that are still dependent on hand to mouth project funding can be properly respected and secured?

3. Questions to consider for the art form scenarios

Do the proposed developments in the scenarios...

Increase participation...

In a place where there is evidence of limited activity at present (for example with reference to per capita spend by local authority)

Amongst a prioritised age group (for example with reference to SE targets)

Within a particular community of interest (for example with reference to SE targets)

In a particular art form (for example with reference to the AAP Survey)

Enhance our support to artists in fulfilling their creative and business potential...

In the development of the art form practise

In retaining and attracting artists to work and live in Scotland

In an international context

In developing the practise of the individual artist

In supporting the viability of the art form nationally and internationally

Place the arts, culture and creativity at the heart of learning...

Through influencing the formal curriculum

Through influencing practise in the classroom

Through new opportunities in informal learning settings, in particular our CFO network

In sustaining and developing professional practise amongst artists and those working in the sector

Jim Tough
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