



Scottish **Arts** Council

Cultural Commission Submission

Towards a Cultured, Creative Scotland.

September 2004

Executive Summary

'To what end and how?'

This paper suggests ideas for both means and ends and covers key areas for the future of arts and culture in Scotland, and the welfare of its citizens. Many proposals ask for new initiatives. Some draw attention to deficiencies in current provision and attitudes. All tend to the benefit of the arts in Scotland, home of a major world culture, alluring to all, nationally and internationally. All address the cultural rights and the entitlements of the citizen.

The body of the report describes our proposals in some detail, this Executive Summary highlights the key ideas.

The place of arts and culture

Success in this venture requires a fundamental change in the political perspective that re-thinks where culture sits in society. One means to achieving this would be a **Minister for Culture in the Cabinet**, able to speak for cultural aspirations and heritage and provide leadership and political impact across the whole of government, and empowered through a Culture Act.

In considering legislation in relation to entitlements we would counsel against an approach that sets a **minimum level of provision**. Cultural development needs to be dynamic, not mechanistic. The Scottish Arts Council would advocate a more proactive approach; on one hand setting clear guidance for **recommended standards** and on the other **ensuring the ambition in the scope and quality** of what is on offer through **increased investment** and more effective partnerships.

The arts, as an integral part of a wider cultural landscape, must be seen as wider, and far more inclusive than the term currently allows. One means of achieving this would be a **reconfiguration of the organisational structures** which re-thinks relations between existing bodies.

A new **National Cultural Partnership**, whose members represent national cultural interests, could be an approach to the structural concerns. With policy direction set by the Minister for Culture, this new body would have an **arms length relationship** with government. This is essential for its success as **advocates for culture**, which cannot be inhibited by political intervention.

We would assert that the expertise and experience in **the Scottish Arts Council** should be deployed in **leading the National Cultural Partnership**.

There needs to be **more effective strategic planning** that recognises the need for national standards but accommodates the interests of cultural partners and reflects the cultural nuances of different parts of Scotland. We would propose the idea of **Regional Planning Fora** as a possible means to this end. The role of local authorities in this model would be critical.

Breaking the funding mould

A **new method must be found to break the mould** of arts funding along with the permanent air of crisis. An approach that should be considered would shift from subsidy to investment and manifest in the form of a **'trust' with assets** that form the resource base of the National Cultural Partnership. Investment implies returns, and we would undertake research to assess the social and economic returns in this model.

There is a need to develop **non-Lottery investment in the physical infrastructure**, to support an investment plan with a national overview. The trust model could serve this end, and improved strategic planning provide the context for a national overview of priorities, and could be aided by a broader 'percent for arts' approach, which would look to extend opportunities for artists.

There must be **equality of opportunity** including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and for disabled people, and more broadly in the community based sector. This work is often lottery dependent and unsustainable on existing funding models. This requires a **radical rethink of sustainable approaches**, achieved through the fulfilment of the First Minister's exhortation to the other government portfolios to invest at source in the role that the arts and culture play in fulfilling their aims.

Education and Audience Development

A long-term view is essential in these areas. As noted success in this venture requires a fundamental change in the national perspective that re-thinks where culture sits in society.

Schools form the agenda for our lives. It is crucial that **gaps in understanding and provision of the arts should be addressed**, and radical approaches considered. We propose that the first year/s of formal education should **focus on creative development** as a means of informing this agenda.

Audience development and arts promotion that identifies - and disseminates awareness of - what the arts have to offer everyone in Scotland is needed at national and regional level. Such work might be **carried out by an agency**, working to the National Cultural Partnership and ensuring that body has the skills and capacity to act **as advocates**.

Rapid advances in **communication technology** offer great opportunities for dynamic innovation in both the promotion of the arts and in new wave marketing. We propose that only a **national approach to arts and cultural marketing can assimilate these advances** and this should be a key driver of a national agency, building on existing skill and expertise. The task is to allow this expertise to engage creatively with the arts communities thereby allowing Scotland to demonstrate a leading role .

The artist, arts development and arts organisations

The Commission should consider the establishment of an **Artist's Charter**. This would set out the principles by which the nation will deal with those who come forward as artists and cultural workers, so creating the circumstances for citizens to benefit from their work.

The **national companies** should be a resource for the country and its people as a whole, and offer models of accountability and responsible governance. This may be achieved by ministerial rights of Board appointment or in the form of golden share element in the structure of the Board. Being a recognised national company should **not be a matter of scale or funding commitment**; it should be possible for appropriate smaller companies to be recognised as 'national' because of the nature and scope of their work. The national companies should be funded through the National Cultural Partnership in order for their work to integrate with and serve national need.

The **country's traditional arts and languages must be celebrated**, nurtured and accorded a central place in its contemporary artistic life. Direct proposals for structural development in future must come from the traditional arts community itself.

In order to meet the developing needs and rights of the citizen it is **critically important that new work emerges**. Through that, new developments in the arts will extend the understanding and pleasure of people who experience it. This requires that **support and encouragement be given to artists to take risks** that may or may not succeed.

A key element in provision for the citizen lies in such areas as **touring, receiving venues, residencies and festivals**. We propose that **devolving control to promoters** is a means to shift this balance in some art forms.

An **international arts and cultural policy** should extend and support opportunities for the people of Scotland to enjoy and experience the widest range of culture from around the world. It should also support Scotland's artists and organisers of cultural activities to develop their work and profile on the international scene. The Scottish Arts Council within a **National Cultural Partnership would have a lead role** in both strands.

Towards a Cultured, Creative Scotland
Submission to the Cultural Commission
In response to its Phase Two Pan-Sectoral Questions

17 January 2005

Executive Summary

We would urge the Commission to facilitate the next stage of the consultative process as a dialogue between the stakeholders and interested parties, seeking consensus but pursuing radical solutions. This dialogue would last beyond the life of the Commission. There is a need for a dynamic and ongoing process of engagement between politicians, artists, public servants and the public.

The response from our dialogue with colleagues and partners in many and varied settings on key aspects of our first submission has been largely positive.

Specifically there is considerable interest in and support for;

- **A Minister for Culture**
- **The importance of the arm's length principle**
- **Building in cultural opportunities as central to education and lifelong learning is the key to a long term shift in cultural opportunity**
- **The need for cultural bodies with national roles to work more closely together, in a radical redefinition of relationships, roles and responsibilities both at an operational and strategic level**
- **A comprehensive, inclusive definition of culture that embraces the widest range of arts and cultural interests, eschewing and rejecting false dichotomies of commercial and subsidised or 'high' and 'low' arts**
- **The importance of engaging the cultural community in cultural leadership on their own terms, as well as through the traditional models of representation and consultation**
- **A legislative commitment to cultural rights, through the existing community planning framework, would be welcome, but insufficient in itself**
- **A regional perspective on cultural planning beginning from an audience development perspective**
- **Extending the choice through a menu of opportunity is preferred to setting a level of adequate or minimum provision**
- **Pragmatic interventions which address the barriers to taking up opportunity, including poverty**
- **We have much to build on, but any advancement of cultural rights has resource implications**
- **The recognition that any 'national' companies have to be part of the national cultural ecosystem**

- **The importance of an international dimension that brings cultural and economic benefits**
- **The need to support and value artists and cultural workers in both professional and non-professional contexts**