

SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRY

CULTURAL COMMISSION

Introduction

1. The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) is an independent membership network, which strengthens Scotland's competitiveness by influencing Government policies to encourage sustainable economic prosperity. Its membership includes businesses, trades unions, local authorities, educational institutions, and the voluntary sector.
2. SCDI welcomes the establishment of the Cultural Commission. A vibrant cultural life is central to the wellbeing of Scots and Scotland. The proper organization of the agencies operating in the cultural sector can make vital contributions to social justice, educational and economic development issues. Participation in the cultural life of the community and enjoyment of the arts are an essential part of the intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence of the individual.
3. The following comments arise out of the initial consultations on the Cultural Commission's remit and on cultural rights. They are not intended to cover all the points raised or offer exhaustive views on any one issue; rather, SCDI is seeking to engage with the Commission in the spirit of ongoing dialogue.

Remit

4. SCDI welcomes the wide-ranging remit of the Commission. However, we would wish to see as a matter of priority an identification of the practical outcomes which government and agency support for the arts are intended to deliver. An identification of where public spending is and could be effective and what interventions are possible and desirable would be preferable to any attempt to articulate grand visions of what culture is or means to citizens. The limited role of government in the cultural life of society should be reflected by a modesty of language and realism of scope in the work of the Commission. As is discussed below, it is not our view that 'cultural rights' are either an end in themselves or provide the best platform for such a prioritization.
5. SCDI agrees that the Commission should look closely at the interactions between cultural bodies and policy and other policy areas. In particular, we would want the Commission to bear in mind Jack McConnell's identification of economic development as the Scottish Executive's top priority. This does not, of course, entail that all activities need to have economic development as their sole purpose but it does mean that the effects on the Scottish economy of all policies should be considered. We therefore welcome the identification of education, enterprise and tourism as wider objectives to be considered in the work of the Commission.
6. In many instances, the arts depend upon public money. In spending taxpayer's money, there must be a duty to deliver maximum value as efficiently as possible. It is appropriate that having identified the key outcomes desired from the delivery of cultural policy, consideration is given to the infrastructure by which policy is delivered. SCDI does not have a view about the current organization of the sector *per*

we but would want to see that the sector is organized so as to ensure that each body has a clear and defined role to play and that overlap of function is kept to a minimum. If the roles of funding bodies and national companies are not properly defined there is a risk of duplication of functions and inefficient use of resources.

Cultural Rights

7. While welcoming the general direction of the review, SCDI has strong reservations about the use of the term 'cultural rights' as a starting point. The language of rights is legal and entails an associated set of duties and guarantees of such rights (in essence a court). Whereas this may make sense in relation to some 'entitlements' – e.g. a commitment to undertaking a trip to a theatre or gallery for schoolchildren - it is difficult to see how this context would apply in many areas of cultural provision.
8. Notwithstanding the language, we agree that many of the principles identified within the Cultural Policy Statement are the right ones. Social justice issues of access and inclusiveness are important. Fostering an open understanding of Scottish culture and encouraging confidence can play an important role in promoting Scotland externally and unleashing creativity and entrepreneurship internally.
9. Using the language of rights and entitlements to express such aspirations may have counterproductive effects. The universal nature of rights suggests a 'one size fits all' approach which may not be the best way of approaching the needs of Scotland. As a purely hypothetical example, there is much evidence that cities drive our economic competitiveness. A concept of identical and transferable citizens' rights may not be the best model with which to understand the possible trade-offs between the dispersal of major collections or leading arts bodies around Scotland and the economic benefits of co-locating such goods.
10. SCDI recommends that the Cultural Commission focuses, therefore, on identifying and facilitating the key outcomes of spending on cultural policy. Intrinsic cultural value may be a reason for cultural spend but it is crucial that wider public policy goals and goods are considered in each decision. To that end, SCDI wants to see the early publication of the Commission's detailed workplan which would allow stakeholders to consider what role they could play in the development or delivery of policies. SCDI does not wish to see an overambitious statement of cultural rights and responsibilities detract from a pragmatic approach to the provision of support for the arts.

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J. B. Jones

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From: Daniel Kleinberg [Daniel.Kleinberg@scdi.org.uk]
Sent: 01 October 2004 11:03
To: info
Subject: [Scanned]

Please find attached the Scottish Council for Development and Industry's submission on the first phase of public consultation. I'm aware the closing date was Monday but was told by James Boyle at our recent meeting that this would be OK.

Regards,

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