

Ian

From: Kay, Rob [Rob.Kay@westlothian.gov.uk]
Sent: 17 September 2004 17:19
To: info
Subject: response to consultation[Scanned]

Hi, heres a few ideas to chuck into the consultation pot:

Education: How do we develop artistic, cultural and social skills and provide cultural knowledge?

Ensure that culture continues to be a key part of the curriculum, and encourage business and non-commercial support for local and national adult training, exhibitions, festivals, venues and performances through tax breaks and/or match funding.

The institutional infrastructure: How best to organise and support the cultural sector in Scotland to deliver the maximum value in the most effective manner?

Forget it, it cant be done. The Arts dont work in the rational context of best value and effectiveness, its the wrong paradigm to apply.

The delivery of services and access to them: How best to provide cultural facilities and ensure the widest access?

Let others take the lead, and let government follow. The real expertise is out here in the communities, not in there. Heavyweight committees of the great and good have never achieved much apart from fossilising culture into stuffy institutions.

Marketing and promotion: How to increase and broaden the profile of the audience and the public engaging with cultural activity in Scotland?

Leave it to the experts. Its its fun, they'll come. If it aint, they wont. The commercial model of demand is far better than the paternalistic or subsidy junkie model.

Encouraging creativity: What is the best way to maximise the creative potential of the people of Scotland?

Leave them alone, create a favourable tax climate and they will do it anyway! (look at the Irish, they have some good ideas) What are the areas where Scots have cultural rights? I'm not an expert on the law, but surely a right TO something can only be defined in terms of legal redress if it isnt delivered? Otherwise it is a principle, an aspiration, a vision, or maybe even a pipe-dream! Realistically, you arent going to be able to deliver Tosca to Twechar (and we have our doubts about whether you can deliver it in Glesca as things stand). How should the various rights be worded? As aspirations (see above) What do you think should be the areas of responsibility? How should those responsibilities be worded?

I hate to sound negative again, but the whole concept of cultural responsibilities takes away all the fun and creativity, doesnt it? Lets not forget that we do this for fun, and when it stops being fun, we should stop doing it. Government etc should invest in and support (some of) the Arts when it makes economic, commercial, political, educational and social sense, not out of duty. Political powers and responsibilities stem from consent by the people. As a taxpayer, I dont choose to give government this responsibility.

Tolerance: "There will be tolerance of all cultures within Scotland." I'll put this challenge to your committee: does this include so-called "Ned culture", because quite clearly as it stands, there isnt much love lost between the government and the Buckfast-drinking fraternity, whilst the ballet and gin and tonic brigade tend to be regarded more favourably. But arent "street cultures" the source of many of the more vibrant cultures - they surely have a right not to be persecuted or marginalised. How about the cannabis cafe culture, bondage, gay bars or heavy metal? Anyhow, some of this looks either fanciful or simply impractical: "There should be parity of esteem between the principal languages of Scotland - English, Gaelic and Scots." is a fine enough statement until you realise that there are fairly small minorities speaking two of these languages, (well scots is arguably a dialect not a language) and probably as many people again speaking Urdu or British Sign Language - where do you draw the line exactly? Isn't it better to just say that, as a broad principle, all cultural forms of expression in Scotland are considered of equal value, but then this opens the next big can of worms - does this pious aspiration include Kylie Minogue, Franz Ferdinand and/or the Krankies, and if not, why not? (discuss)

What might some of these specific entitlements be? What would be the best methods and structures for developing and delivering them?

Given that I dont believe the entitlements principle is possible, this is a hard one to

call. But it would be a sad school or town without music or dance - so I dont have a problem with enshrining arts provision into education, making libraries and museums available, or supporting Opera and theatre companies. Much of this can be left to local circumstance, there is a limited but vital role for government in supporting the major cultural institutions.

As Chair of a vibrant voluntary community arts group, commercial sponsorship is key to our success, whilst applying for endless grants is a pain, they always come hedged around with conditions that damage our creativity and capability. The biggest single thing to help us would be match funding or tax breaks to raise the value of commercial sponsorships and donations.

Yours,

Rob Kay
Chair
KICS & DIG
Kilsyth International Carnival Society & Drums in the Glen
email: kics@paperclip.org.uk

Please send your response for this phase of consultation by 27 September 2004. Comments can be emailed to the Commission at, info@culturalcommission.org.uk <<mailto:info@culturalcommission.org.uk>> or sent to Karen Watson at the Broughton High School address.

Please give your name and your address, or phone number or e-mail address. All responses not marked confidential may be made available to the public and/or extracts used on the Commission's website or in

This message, together with any attachments, is sent subject to the following statements:

1. It is sent in confidence for the addressee only. It may contain legally privileged information. The contents are not to be disclosed to anyone other than the addressee. Unauthorised recipients are requested to preserve this confidentiality and to advise the sender immediately.
2. It does not constitute a representation which is legally binding on the Council or which is capable of constituting a contract and may not be founded upon in any proceedings following hereon unless specifically indicated otherwise.

<http://www.westlothian.gov.uk>

This email has been scanned for all viruses by the MessageLabs SkyScan service on behalf of West Lothian Council. For more information on a proactive anti-virus service working around the clock, around the globe, visit <http://www.messagelabs.com>
