



The National Trust
for Scotland

Karen Watson
Cultural Commission
Broughton High School
Carrington Road
Edinburgh
EH4 1EG

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Dear Miss Watson

REMIT OF CULTURAL COMMISSION
& CULTURAL RIGHTS

Thank you for inviting The National Trust for Scotland to submit comments on the above consultations. The Cultural Commission's review of Scotland's cultural life has the potential to further national pride in Scotland and the Trust therefore welcomes this new initiative. The Trust has incorporated comments to both consultations in the response below which begins with some summary points followed by more detailed comments.

- 'Culture' must be defined in the Cultural Policy Statement before any cultural rights are identified
- Scotland's cultural *heritage* is an integral part of Scottish culture and should be recognised as a key element in any review of the cultural sector
- Any final recommendations by the Cultural Commission will require adequate funding if they are to be successfully implemented
- The Trust welcomes the inclusion of education as an area where individuals have cultural rights

Definition of Culture

As a starting point for any consultation in this area an adequate and all-embracing definition of culture must be offered. Culture is not easily defined, nor is there always a consensus as to the exact meaning of the concept. The Trust believes that the modern understanding of the word (ie 'the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, and all other products of human work and thought' *Oxford English Dictionary*) reveals the breadth and depth of culture today and any work by the Cultural Commission should reflect this.

Cultural Heritage

Scotland's cultural *heritage*, i.e. what we have inherited from past generations, is an integral part of Scottish culture and is one of the key elements which gives us our national identity. The distinctiveness of Scotland's contemporary culture is partly due to its links with the past which may be physical (eg a place or artefact) or intangible (eg associations with a place or

artefact). This should be recognised at all levels of the Commission's work. Scotland's cultural heritage of buildings, townscapes, gardens, historic landscapes, archaeology, collections and artefacts provides a sense of place and community throughout Scotland, in both urban and rural areas, and is one of the principal reasons why tourists come to this country. Edinburgh Castle, the townscapes of the East Neuk of Fife, Edzell Garden or Skara Brae, to name but a few examples, all demonstrate the cultural wealth that has been left to successive generations. Similarly, Scotland's national archive is a crucial heritage resource in the understanding of Scotland's past and present. The Declaration of Arbroath or the minute book of the last Scottish Parliament for example provide important, authentic and tangible records of the peoples of Scotland. Cultural heritage can also dramatically influence how we perceive and make sense of the physical world around us – for example the landscapes of Glen Coe and Sutherland are viewed by many through the historical 'glens' of clan battles and clearances.

The Trust believes a balance must be struck between encouraging the creative arts and conserving and promoting cultural heritage in order to make cultural activity more relevant, accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Funding

Any final recommendations by the Cultural Commission, including a potential 'scheme of entitlements' that may follow the identification of cultural rights, will require adequate funding if they are to have any real impact on the ground. Standards of provision will only be raised or made more equitable across Scotland if the critical financial support to do so is in place. Scotland's cultural heritage is one of its greatest assets in attracting visitors. Funding is required not only to protect Scotland's heritage but also to interpret and manage it. National agencies, local authorities and the voluntary sector all play important roles in the cultural heritage scene and it is the government's proper role to preserve and promote Scotland's historical record and artistic achievements.

Education

The Trust welcomes the inclusion of education as an area where people have a cultural right. The process of learning is an essential characteristic of culture as traditions and patterns of social behaviour are passed down the generation and across social groups. It follows, therefore, that teaching is also a crucial characteristic. Indeed the way culture is taught and reproduced in itself becomes an important component of culture. Education is therefore a vital part in any cultural strategy and the Trust believes that more use and teaching of cultural heritage in school curricula and higher education programmes should be encouraged. The Trust itself for example has linked its education programme to the needs of the curriculum with the help of local authority education advisers.

I hope the above comments are useful. Please contact me if you require further clarification or information regarding any of the above points.

Yours sincerely

John Mayhew
Head of Policy and Planning