

Stirling Councils' Cultural Services Division - 27 September 2004

Response to Cultural Commission Consultation Document

Education

The Commission should be asking what subjects could be introduced into the compulsory curriculum that will foster artistic and cultural awareness and develop social skills and what alterations will this require for the school day.

We suggest that consideration be given to introducing the following subjects, as a start, into the school compulsory curriculum:

- **Art History** – an exploration of the history of art from renaissance to contemporary times including text book study, illustrated talks, visits to national collections and contemporary galleries. Project work could be for example curating a hypothetical exhibition, which would develop debating/discussion skills, decision-making and teamwork or making an audio tape for blind people describing in detail a famous work.
- **Film Studies** – the most popular art form – a critical analysis of a current film. The production of short films in a number of genres, for example animation, period drama and documentary. Group visits to the cinema.
- **Drama and Stagecraft** – the study of play text, character, acting, theatre production including set design and building, costume and lighting.

We believe that such studies involve not only art and creativity but the physical sciences and humanities and which if were introduced at an early stage would give school children a more integrated and well-rounded education that would better help them make sense of the world.

In addition to the above we think the Commission should be exploring the possibility of having one school term per year dedicated to cultural activity. This would engender closer planning between cultural providers and education authorities and stimulate the market for cultural product.

The institutional infrastructure

Firstly, we would like to congratulate the Scottish Arts Council on the sterling work it has put in over the many years to create a vibrant Scottish arts scene that is the envy of many. However we believe that the Scottish Arts Council does not have the capacity, either human or financial, to respond to local cultural, artistic and creative needs.

We therefore propose that a model of regional arts consortia be considered. Regional arts consortia should be made up of artists, arts managers, educationalists, business people, champions and elected members. Whether appointed or elected, the consortia should be charged with developing culture and

creativity strategies for their regions, and deciding on the priorities for their region, yet work within a national strategic framework. Within this model the Scottish Arts Council would be responsible for creating national strategies in consultation with the regional consortia and would retain funding responsibility for the national companies and national and international touring.

We believe that with devolved funding to the regions for the arts would build more flexibility into arts funding, engender more local accountability and ownership, create scope for more inward investment locally and, importantly, meet needs more locally. A strong relationship with the Scottish Arts Council at the centre would be paramount.

We believe that the model could be expanded to include other cultural providers such as museums, architecture and design, tourism etc and result in regional cultural consortia.

The delivery of services and access to them.

We believe that there are two fundamental hindrances to the delivery of services and access to them: the lack of suitable material that is capable of making an impact nationally, and the lack of facilities outside central Scotland.

We propose the following:

- every region in Scotland should introduce an Investment Fund for the Arts;
- the percent for art policy which is operating successfully in many parts of the country should be extended and enshrined in planning law;
- every development of an appropriate scale should be required to contribute to the Investment Fund for the Arts;
- monies from the Investment Fund should be used to improve the physical infrastructure for the arts – theatres, art galleries, museums – both in terms of new build and refurbishment;
- monies from the Investment Fund should also be capable of funding productions, residencies, new work, touring etc;
- monies in the regional Investment Fund should be matched by central agencies or the Scottish Executive.

Marketing and Promotion

We believe that audience development is more than merely aggressive advertising and promotion. We propose that the Commission recommend regional marketing networks, resourced with appropriate expertise and funds to develop marketing intelligence that will be translated into effective marketing and promotion strategies. At the moment, arts companies on the whole suffer from a deficit of marketing expertise and resources.

In addition we believe that local communities should have more access to the arts and culture in terms of advice and opportunities to develop their own cultural priorities. Within the Community Planning framework there should be an emphasis on developing local culture.

Encouraging Creativity

We believe that creativity is not exclusive to the arts but has to be encouraged in all walks of life. There should be more opportunities to celebrate artistic and creative achievements, locally, regionally and nationally.

Within more formal settings we believe that creative and cultural education should embrace new ideas, new ways of working and importantly risk –taking.

Artists should be available to talk more about their creative processes.

Local communities should be engaged in creativity with the professional sector being available for help, advice and support. All arts companies that are publicly funded should develop a strong relationship with their immediate local communities through schools, youth clubs and community groups. Local pride in artistic output should be engendered.

Cultural rights

We believe that the concept of cultural rights can only be translated locally and the onus of delivering those rights should be a duty of every local authority.

Just as local authorities are required to deliver services such as housing, criminal justice, education and social work, so they should be required by law to deliver cultural services. Locally agreed targets for participation should be set and approved by the Scottish Executive.

Presently there is very little in the way of statutory performance indicators for the cultural sector. Robust evaluation and performance measures would be required for a statutory cultural service.

Devolved responsibility for the arts and culture would facilitate more effective co-operation between local authorities and independent organisations that together would be responsible for meeting targets.

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