

CULTURAL COMMISSION PHASE 2 CONSULTATION

SCOTTISH MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES WORKING GROUP RESPONSE

The Scottish Museums and Galleries Working Group (SMGWG) is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Cultural Commission's Phase 2 consultation. Our comments cover the main sections of the consultation document, rather than individual questions.

In our response to the Phase 1 consultation we set out a new vision for museums in Scotland, and a strategic framework which could deliver this vision. This second response builds on the first. We have therefore included the summary and recommendations of our Phase 1 response, as Annex 1 to this document.

1. Rights, Entitlements and Responsibilities (Questions 1-5)

Cultural rights, entitlements and responsibilities should be defined in a clear statement of cultural policy, for which delivery should be the responsibility of Ministers in the Scottish Executive, working through local authorities, national organisations, sector strategic agencies and other organisations. SMGWG has set out a clear statement of proposed rights and entitlements which will enable the museums sector to realise its new vision (Annex 1 - No 16).

Once rights and entitlements have been defined, stability is important in the short and medium term, to support delivery and to allow scrutiny of the outcomes through Ministerial accountability. However the value of cultural rights relates in part to their responsiveness in the longer term to the changing needs of the Scottish citizen. To set rights in law would impose a rigidity which would eventually reduce their value and an administrative complexity which is inappropriate in the circumstances. SMGWG does not, therefore, believe that cultural rights should be enshrined in law.

2. Cultural Leadership (Questions 6-15)

SMGWG believes that there should be 3 levels of cultural leadership, each with its own accountability:

2.1 The Scottish Executive should be responsible for articulation of cultural rights and entitlements, for national cultural policy and for the implementation and resourcing of an appropriate national and local infrastructure for delivery.

2.2 There should be a national cultural forum, representing all parts of the cultural sector, with a Chair appointed by Ministers. Representation would normally comprise the Chair or CEO of the designated lead body for each sector, such as the museums strategic agency. The role of the forum should be to:

- advise on cultural policy and infrastructure,
- promote joint working,
- undertake consultation,
- commission independent social research and evaluation,
- ensure consistent standards across the cultural sector.

- 2.3 Local authorities should provide local cultural leadership, through a local cultural plan which would outline the delivery mechanism for both local and national cultural rights and entitlements and other elements of cultural policy. The plan would be responsive to local needs and would be obliged to engage a wide variety of partners such as relevant Independent and University museums. Partnerships with local and national organisations would be a key element in the delivery of each local cultural plan. Standards and guidelines for the development of local cultural plans would need to be set out by the Scottish Executive.

3. Pan Sectoral Planning (Questions 16-21)

See under previous section.

4. Funding Arrangements (Questions 22-33)

Leadership in terms of cultural policy should be reflected in investment of resources by the Scottish Executive and similarly, leadership at local level should be reflected in investment by local authorities.

Public funding between and within cultural sectors should be determined through a framework established by the Scottish Executive. In our Phase 1 response (Annex 1) SMGWG set out proposals for a strategic framework for museums delivery, based on a Scottish Museums Partnership which would be funded both locally and nationally. Our proposals could operate within the wider pan sectoral framework which we set out under Cultural Leadership. Key funding principles might be:

- 4.1 Recognition of participation levels in cultural activity nationally, as well as the cost of the cultural experience. In 2000 museums and galleries in Scotland received over 13 million visits, making them the 3rd largest providers of a cultural experience after libraries and cinemas. Visits to very many museums in Scotland are free to the user. On a cost per visit basis (of roughly £4 per visit across the range of museums in Scotland) this is very good value compared with most of the performing arts.
- 4.2 Organisations which have a recognised national role should receive funding directly from the Scottish Executive. There is similarly a case, as set out in our Phase 1 submission, that museums which hold collections of national significance should also receive support from central government through a "Significant Collections Scheme".
- 4.3 Local authority funding for the delivery of a national cultural entitlement should be ring fenced for those organisations which comprise the delivery framework. This will be essential to ensure delivery in the short and medium term and sustainability in the longer term.
- 4.4 As a rule funding for local and regionally based organisations should be devolved to the relevant level, but within a framework which includes delivery of rights and entitlements as a required outcome from the community planning process.

- 4.5 The funding framework should include funding for capital projects for renewal and development of cultural assets. This should involve a range of funding sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, in addition to central and local government. This will be essential to ensure that cultural assets such as museums can meet changing public expectations in Scotland and internationally.
- 4.6 Funding for Research and Development of the sector should continue to be channelled through the sector strategic agencies.

However it is important to recognise and support the continuation of the generous private philanthropy which has always been a feature of many areas of Scotland's cultural life. The tax and charity regulation framework should give strong encouragement to personal and private sector giving to cultural institutions. The Charity and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Bill now in passage through the Scottish Parliament, would, in its present form, remove charitable status from Scotland's national cultural institutions and from a number of cultural organisations (museums, galleries, arts centres) owned by local authorities. If enacted in this form, the legislation would have an enormously damaging impact on these organisations. Without charitable status they will lose access to charitable tax reliefs and charitable donations giving worth millions of pounds each year, funds which not only produce revenue funding but also form a key element of capital projects, often as essential partnership funding to support from lottery funds and funding from the Scottish Executive. The impact would extend to support from the business community and to the substantial support received from the Scottish diaspora, where donor tax relief on charitable giving depends upon the receiving organisation in the UK being charitable.

5. Standards and Evaluation (Questions 34-38)

Cultural rights and entitlements, if established nationally, would set out a consistent national framework for delivery of outcomes. Standards and evaluation would link public expectation with appropriate provision to deliver cultural rights and entitlements. Standards have an important role to ensure basic equality of cultural experience for all citizens. The sector Strategic Agency working with a Scottish Museums Partnership should have a role to advise and define standards for the museums sector, linked to best practice internationally. The Scottish Executive and local authorities should adopt funding agreements which set out what must be delivered, to what standards and how outcomes will be inspected and evaluated. Funding agreements for the national cultural organisations would also set out national delivery against a standards and evaluation framework.

6. Operations and Administration (Questions 39-43)

The Scottish Executive should build on the work already undertaken by the Scottish Museums Council, to realise, through investment, a common IT/IS framework for museums in Scotland. This would comprise a common infrastructure and investment in digital assets, together with a museums portal to provide a single point of public access to the services and collections of museums across Scotland.

The Scottish Executive should have primary strategic responsibility for Scotland's cultural presence internationally, working with and through national organisations

such as EventsScotland and the British Council. The national cultural institutions, including the National Galleries of Scotland and National Museums of Scotland, should have a recognised role (building on activity which they already undertake) to promote Scotland to overseas visitors and to contribute to international activities which raise the profile of Scotland overseas. Investment in museums with collections of national significance will enable them to contribute to this activity. The Strategic Agency should continue to develop an international profile for Scottish museums in continued collaboration with the UK Joint Forum.

7. Local Authorities (Questions 44-47)

There is a need for a better definition of local authorities' responsibilities for cultural provision, than the present "adequate provision". This should be provided by defined cultural rights and entitlements which local authorities, with national and other organisations, would be expected to deliver. This would set the baseline of cultural provision across Scotland.

Local authorities should be required to produce and deliver a local cultural plan, which would set out how cultural entitlements would be delivered, to what standards, and how local agencies and partnerships would be resourced to do this. The local cultural plan should also recognise the role of national cultural organisations in delivery. There is a need for better consultation between local authorities and national cultural organisations.

8. Regional Bodies (Questions 48-51)

SMGWG does not believe that there is a need for a regional level of cultural planning. This would, in our view, impose an unnecessary additional level of bureaucracy. We believe that the strategic framework we have proposed in our response to Phase 1 consultation (see Annex 1), would operate effectively at national and local authority level. Where we have proposed a regional grouping, such as Regional Centres of Excellence to build capacity for museums (12.1), these could operate through partnership arrangements. Such Pan Sectoral Regional Partnerships are under development through the Scottish Executive Regional Development Challenge Fund administered by the Scottish Museums Council.

9. National (Questions 52-58)

National status should apply when an organisation has national responsibilities. These should be clearly defined in terms of outcomes, set out in funding agreements, and measured through performance. National cultural organisations should report directly to the Scottish Executive, who should be responsible for setting objectives and standards, informed by the work of the national cultural forum and sector strategic bodies.

National cultural organisations should be players in the delivery of cultural rights and entitlements, through partnerships with local authorities. For example the national museums and galleries would play a role in supporting museums and galleries across Scotland to provide services of an agreed standard, by ensuring local access to collections of national importance, through loans and touring exhibitions, particularly where these had local relevance e.g. the Lewis Chesspieces.

10. Cross Cutting (Questions 59-62)

SMGWG believes strongly that there are numerous opportunities for cross sectoral partnerships involving the cultural and other sectors. For example we believe that museums and galleries have a major contribution to make to both education and tourism. SMGWG has proposed (See Annex 1) that museums should be properly recognised and funded as part of the educational delivery system, with every school child having the right to visit a museum of assured quality and within a reasonable distance, as part of curriculum based activity. Free transport for school visits would be an essential component of this. VisitScotland should be required to recognise the value and potential of cultural tourism in Scotland, to make this a much higher priority than the agency does at present, and to produce and deliver a marketing plan to develop cultural tourism nationally.

ANNEX 1 – PHASE 1 RESPONSE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Our vision for Scotland's museums in 2030 is that everyone in Scotland and visitors from abroad will be able to benefit from the knowledge and enjoyment that Scotland's wonderful museum collections can provide.

The vision will be achieved through a Scottish Museums Partnership supported by a museums strategic agency. This will be a sustainable network of museums large and small across the country, sharing collections, resources and expertise, united by adherence to international standards of best practice and by their common delivery of the 'national cultural entitlement'. A Scottish Museums Partnership could, within 5-10 years, deliver a measurably enhanced museum service to communities across the country, to visitors to Scotland and would serve as an international model, with evidence that it works.

The Partnership will be based on a strategic framework for delivery, linked to a national cultural entitlement.

Recommendations

1. Museums in Scotland that provide learning to agreed target audiences and to assured standards, should be properly recognised and funded as part of the education system.
2. Object centred learning should be an integrated part of the school curriculum, and museums should be a full partner in curriculum development.
3. Access to museum based programmes for all school students should be part of the national cultural entitlement. The transformed cultural framework needs to address both transport and geographical issues.
4. There should be a strategic framework for museum delivery in Scotland, linked to a cultural entitlement. All museums within it should be funded to deliver a range of agreed services to agreed standards. The framework should be a partnership, supported by a museums strategic agency which would build on the expertise of the Scottish Museums Council.
5. The framework will enable a collaborative approach to collecting, disposal, storage and access.
6. Criteria for museum standards and delivery should be part of the community and central planning process, linked to cultural entitlement.
7. The strategic framework must enable capacity through support for training and development for both paid staff and volunteers.
8. A strategic framework for museum delivery in Scotland should be linked to national and regional strategies for tourism and marketing, with public service standards for museums aligned to those of the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions Grading Scheme.
9. The framework should provide for cross sector research to inform audience development, monitor performance and report outcomes.

10. A strategic framework for museum delivery in Scotland should include the stimulation of creativity as an explicit aim for formal and informal learning programmes.
11. Museums should be recognised and resourced as a key part of the cultural and creative industries.
12. There should be a **Scottish Museums Partnership**, based on a strategic framework for museum delivery, linked to cultural entitlement. It could comprise some or all of the following:
 - 12.1A network of Regional Centres of Excellence, based on existing significant museum services across Scotland. These could be funded by Local Authorities, the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and operated by the former, linking regions to delivery and the community planning process. If felt desirable, they could have a broader role in providing advice etc within their region and could even have funds provided to offer grants, funds projects etc. A key role would be helping build capacity in the sector.
 - 12.2A 'significant collections' scheme for museums having collections of national and international importance. This could serve as a mechanism to secure a sustainable future for nationally important collections, but also deliver defined outcomes in terms of enhanced access. This scheme could be funded by the Scottish Executive and would build on the research currently being undertaken on behalf of the Executive by SMC.
 - 12.3A Capital Challenge Fund open to significant collections and regional centres of excellence could be established to provide a source for capital grants, particularly for collection related projects, including renewals of buildings and displays or digitisation projects. This could be funded by the Scottish Executive and supported by a museum strategic agency, with matching funding from as many other sources as possible.
 - 12.4A Project Challenge Fund could be created to develop and deliver innovative projects in the areas of audience development, learning, leadership and development, to equip museums to be dynamic contributors to Scottish society. This would build on the model of the Regional Development Challenge Funding.
 - 12.5A 'Scottish Museums On Line' portal should be established as the public face of the Scottish Museums Partnership. This could both provide a free and well structured way for the public to access information about museums and serve as a central resource for museum professional reference and discussion. This could be funded by the Scottish Executive.
13. There should be a museums strategic agency which would service the framework for the Scottish Museums Partnership and provide support for its museums. It would administer the funding mechanisms above, liaise with the Scottish Executive on policy development, disseminate best practice and

provide quality assurance linking museum outcomes to the delivery of cultural entitlement.

14. The role of the National Museums of Scotland and National Galleries of Scotland in the partnership framework should be both to deliver services directly to the public and also to serve as a national and international source of collections, advice and expertise, working in partnership with the museums community to ensure that museums are able to play their full part in delivering on cultural entitlement.
15. There could be a Partnership Forum to act as a steering group, involving local authority and independent museums, university museums and the National Institutions and the museums agency.

16. A national cultural entitlement should include:

16.1 Every school child should be able to visit a museum of assured quality and within a reasonable distance, as part of curriculum based activity.

16.2 Access for everyone to museum collections of assured quality and within a reasonable distance.

16.3 Access to museum services which are responsive to community needs and aspirations.

16.4 Online access to significant museum and gallery collections and services in Scotland through a national "museum portal".