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10 March 2005

Your Ref:

James Boyle  
Cultural Commission Chair  
Broughton High School  
Carrington Road  
Edinburgh  
EH4 1EG

Our Ref:

11 MAR 2005

Dear James,

### **COSLA Cultural Commission Submission**

I have pleasure in attaching the formally approved submission from COSLA to the Culture Commission. This document is the final product of the work of the COSLA-VOCAL Task Group, the most recent meetings of which both yourself and Bryan Beattie have kindly attended. I am sharing COSLA's submission with you and your fellow Commissioners before its formal publication, to allow you the maximum opportunity to consider the content of the document. A copy of the published version of this document will be forwarded to you in the near future.

I am confident that you will find COSLA's ideas and proposals of great interest and I trust that in submitting these to you at this point, they will constructively inform the final thinking of the Cultural Commission. I would stress that this is a strategic rather than a detailed policy document, where the specific proposals reflect two basic principles:

- clear democratic accountability should characterise governance of the cultural sector at both local and national levels; and,
- cultural policy must primarily be concerned with widening access to, and interest in, culture across the whole of Scottish society.

It is perhaps pertinent to emphasise again the importance that Scotland's Local Authorities attach to cultural policy generally, and to the National Review in particular. The time and resources that COSLA has devoted to this work, and the attention it has consistently been afforded by Scotland's Council Leaders, provides a clear manifestation of this.

COSLA looks forward to continuing to work with the Commission to help to deliver a Review that will support the development of a vibrant and inclusive cultural sector in Scotland, to serve both present and future generations.

I look forward to meeting with you again in the not too distant future.

With Kind Regards,  
Yours sincerely,

**Councillor Graham Garvie**  
**COSLA Arts and Leisure Spokesperson**

WHEN CALLING PLEASE ASK FOR: Claire Downs 0131 474 9264    [claire@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:claire@cosla.gov.uk)

Submission Covering Letter to Commission March 05 5  
Claire Downs

## **THE NEW SETTLEMENT FOR CULTURE IN SCOTLAND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.**

In 2002 the United Nations published a resolution recognising that "cultural rights are an integral part of human rights. The Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion held in Barcelona two years later reinforced this view in Agenda 21 for Culture.

In essence both bodies recognised that cultural diversity and cultural citizenship are key to the sustainable development of healthy communities and the growth of personal creativity.

This response looks at how Scotland might reach these important goals and why the status quo will not allow us to do so.

It outlines the structural changes and re-alignments which would increase accountability and reduce duplication.

Above all, it argues that putting creativity centre stage within cultural development will help shape the contours and drive the success of a modern nation.

The Cultural Commission provides us with both unique opportunities, and a set of important challenges.

It allows us to examine afresh what we consider culture to mean, why and who we fund in the cultural landscape, and how "quality" is determined.

We now have the opportunity to affirm a different, broader and more inclusive definition of culture within the context of opportunities for all Scots and their communities. Within such an agenda, museums, galleries and libraries can have a new synergy with contemporary art forms. Sport, heritage and parks along with community and commercially driven cultural activities can be woven into a tapestry where the breadth of activities engages a far wider audience.

Within this cultural tapestry, local authorities remain easily the largest providers of cultural resources in Scotland, spending £200m on arts, museums and libraries and £310m on sports and leisure per annum. They are, as the 1993 Charter of the Arts made clear, "the structural pivot of cultural life in Scotland." This is further reinforced by a considerable local authority capital spend programme for cultural services, and the leverage of this expenditure on spending by the Lottery, other public agencies and from the private sector.

We want to build on that investment in ways which reflect the needs of dynamic 21st century communities throughout urban and rural Scotland.

The cornerstones of our recommendations are the establishment of a series of cultural rights and entitlements and the strengthening of democratic accountability.

We believe these ambitions could be achieved by a number of measures including a new National Culture Bill to enshrine these rights in legislation, and a dedicated Ministry of Culture which would assume responsibility in some key areas.

These would include funding the national arts companies directly as is currently done with National Museums, Galleries and Library.

The Ministry would also fund and administer national programmes such as the cultural coordinators and new spending programmes such as the proposed Significance Scheme for Collections of National and International Importance.

Such a Ministry would have a dedicated department with appropriate levels of policy, technical and research support containing a high level of expertise across the sectors.

Equally we see a need for a new well resourced body, wholly independent of government, to advocate, advise, lobby, and, where appropriate, monitor the delivery of policy.

Crucial to that delivery is the role of local authorities who could most effectively operate through the production of mandatory Local Cultural Strategies sitting within the Community Planning Framework.

Community Planning requires in accordance with the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 every local authority to initiate, facilitate and maintain a process which ensures that organisations work together with communities to deliver more effective, joined up and community focused public services.

We recognise too that the cross cutting agenda heralded by the First Minister's St Andrews Day speech requires as implied by community planning, an integrated response from local authorities embracing all council services from education and social work, through housing, transport and economic development to planning and the cultural and leisure services themselves.

Complementary policy development would work to establish broad cultural rights allowing every citizen to explore and sample a diverse cultural menu alongside rights to health, well-being and education within a safe, high quality environment.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION.**

We are still living with the legacy of a post war settlement for culture which attempted to encourage quality and excellence in defined art forms to be delivered by a set of cultural institutions.

These included the museums and galleries, libraries, symphony halls and opera houses largely created in the 19th century, alongside leisure facilities like parks and public baths.

The underlying agenda was to democratise knowledge, improve health and uplift and improve the conditions of the broader public.

The ethos was often hierarchal with those having enjoyed privileged cultural access inviting other citizens to share their view of the world and preferred cultural order.

That settlement sits uneasily with the demands of a new century, and with the need to give recognition to increasingly diverse art forms without resorting to inappropriate labeling suggesting that any one art form has intrinsically more merit than another.

We now have the opportunity to affirm a different, broader, inclusive definition of culture which positions culture within a context of opportunities for all Scots and their communities.

Exploring personal creativity, experiencing cultural diversity, provides the catalyst for innovation, growth, pride, and identity.

Within such an agenda, museums, galleries and libraries can have a new synergy with contemporary art forms.

Community and commercially driven cultural activities and sports development can be woven into a tapestry where the breadth of activities engages a far wider audience.

These new definitions of culture combine both quality and access; they strengthen local identity in our increasingly globalised world and give value to personal development.

A new creativity agenda therefore requires fresh thinking about the aims and purposes of investing in culture, and how we deliver cultural rights and entitlements to all citizens.

It entails looking at the roles of legislation and research, and the rationale behind developing strategy and policy.

It means examining our funding priorities in the light of our new expectations, and how these might be monitored; looking for consistency of outcome, avoiding duplication, developing enlightened partnerships, and tackling imaginatively the issues of quality and service delivery.

## **2.0 THE STATUS QUO.**

A modern Scotland needs a modernised structure if it is to respond to the increasing pressures on the public purse and the requirement to deliver efficient government.

At present we have a proliferation of organisations and funding structures sometimes encouraging complexity, bureaucracy and duplication.

Some are at arms length like the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Natural Heritage, some are part of Scottish Executive departments like Historic Scotland.

The Scottish Museums Council is a membership organisation which has an Executive grant, as does the Scottish Libraries and Information Council.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is a sub committee of the UK parent body. The National Galleries, Museums and Libraries receive direct funding from the Executive, but have separate boards.

Meanwhile the national performing arts companies, who also have individual boards, are funded through the Scottish Arts Council (SAC), and their grants take up almost three quarters of the SAC budget. Funding of film is undertaken both by Scottish Enterprise and by Scottish Screen.

Add to that the fact that some 90 arts organisations receive both SAC funding in respect of their national remit, and, in many cases, local authority funding, and it's clear there is scope for anomalies.

There is also an inherent contradiction in bodies charged with implementing government policy and administering funds being expected to act as independent advocates for the cultural sector.

Their role as independent advocates to public and parliament is often seen to be compromised by these other functions as government advisors and distributors of government and lottery funds. Consequently, they are perceived as having little ability to operate outside government policy and restraints.

These methods of simultaneously shaping policy and dispersing funds do not operate like this in any other area like education, health, museums, or heritage.

Equally the advent of devolution and the imperative for "joined up" policy making, suggests we need a fundamental realignment of the relationship between the Scottish Executive and the Non Departmental Public Bodies who function as single focus agencies.

So we see streamlining the democratic line of accountability as fundamental to effective change.

But it is also crucial that the new arrangements do not smack of an "official culture", which is why we give equal weight to the creation of a strong independent body with the credibility and muscle to scrutinise policy and become a powerful advocate for the cultural sector.

Another currently problematic area is the fact that a new and wider definition of culture has made demands of funded and funding organisations which they find difficult to meet.

Some have difficulty responding to the social inclusion agenda or interacting with the commercial potential of the creative industries.

Some are not presently equipped to deal with cultural initiatives which carry multiple objectives in the fields of regeneration and employment opportunities in addition to the core artistic component.

For those seeking funds, that complexity can translate as too much bureaucracy and too heavy a dependence on the expertise of outside consultants, the cost of whom can often be beyond the purse of smaller organisations with limited access to the knowledge network.

On the specific question of funding the national companies, the debate has often generated more heat than light and resulted in collateral and unnecessary damage to Scotland's artistic reputation abroad.

We propose that an independent evaluation instigated by government could determine what is an adequate level of resourcing.

But alongside that is the need for us to define what we mean by national, and how such national organisations should function as cultural leaders.

Continental Europe, Scandinavia and other parts of the UK offer us different models. But implicit in the equation must be an acceptance that national institutions should be more pro-active in spreading resources, talent and expertise throughout Scotland.

There may be scope too, for recognising that there are other Scottish institutions such as theatres or museums who may be designated as being of national significance.

Throughout all of these issues runs the thread of funding. For some time now, the public and private sectors have been re-assessing why they invest in culture and what benefits they expect to accrue.

As a result, whilst the enhancing effects of a vibrant cultural scene extend well beyond any "bottom line" calculation, it is only realistic to acknowledge this increasing demand for the sector to define its purpose and its ambitions.

Once it was a given that cultural experiences led to self improvement. This conviction that exposure to the arts can be supremely inspirational and educational has not been lost.

But in an age of measurement and performance indicators, at a time of increasingly competitive demands for funding, the cultural sector has to find new ways of articulating that conviction and imparting it to their key stakeholders.

This need for objective and rigorous self assessment has been addressed by other fields; the cultural sector, buffeted by the same global forces, has perhaps been slower to stand back and assess the implications.

Yet we live in a fast changing world where the pressures of the marketplace, the impact of the knowledge based economy, and the blurring of intellectual boundaries cannot be ignored.

We inhabit too, multi cultural and diverse communities in search of new definitions for their local, regional and national identities. That fact too will assuredly impact on the ecology of new cultural structures.

The present arrangements are ill equipped to meet these challenges. We need to replace a confusing diversity of funding arrangements, multiplicity of organisational structures, cumbersome bureaucracy and piecemeal approaches to self assessment with a fresh recipe for clarity, coherence, simplicity, and accountability.

It is no part of Scottish Local Government's intention to address these imperatives by calling for a centralising of services. Instead we believe that in creating explicit lines of authority and aligning democratic responsibilities, the twin ambitions of vibrancy and efficiency can best be realised.

We are unlikely to be given another such opportunity for a radical and robust re-drawing of the cultural map of Scotland.

We are unlikely to be forgiven if we squander it.

### **3.0 THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.**

Of course local government has also been given the challenge to re-assess and re-define its own role in a post devolutionary Scotland.

We have accepted that imperative, and policy initiatives have demonstrated a clear willingness to adapt and change.

But we accept that our principal concern must now be to reflect the needs of modern citizens in terms of identity, national renewal, and cultural entitlements.

That means a structure geared to diversity, inclusiveness, and economic regeneration in a globalised world. It means we need to refine the role and purpose of local government in relation to cultural policy.

As we hope to demonstrate, the investment in our local and national institutions and treasures through government subsidy is not a bureaucratic accident but rather reflects political priorities.

These priorities will inevitably be shaped afresh following the establishment of a Scottish parliament, a settlement which we believe was a mandate for more accountability and close engagement with individuals and communities.

The new politics are at once less deferential and more participative, and in their wake we need a greater effort to improve the democratic processes, making them more inclusive and more representative.

Involvement is the enemy of apathy.

As we have stated, local authorities remain by far the largest investors in cultural and leisure services, collectively, a massive £500m plus. As the National Cultural Strategy noted, "Local Authorities are responsible for the majority of public support for cultural provision and access."

But it is not just a matter of raw resources. In the last decade Local Authorities have also been at the forefront of policy development in a bid to serve a wider public interest.

This journey has led local authorities to challenge narrow definitions of art and culture as they sought to increase access. It has brought an increased role for the voluntary sector, and encouraged new "in house" partnerships between sectors like health, education and economic development.

This has helped embed cultural thinking and perspectives in all departments as they formulate their corporate plans and objectives securing the place of cultural services with local and national social, education and regeneration strategies.

The over-arching aim has been to nurture personal confidence and grow pride in local traditions, achievements and abilities.

One example has been the creation by Fife and Highland respectively of traditional and Gaelic arts officers. It led not just to fresh confidence in indigenous culture but often new developments and employment opportunities.

More broadly, the drive to integrated and complementary services has brought partnerships with the voluntary and private sectors.

It is easy to under-estimate the breadth of the field in which local authority support can and does make an impact. The remit includes:

- Arts and sports education and activities in and out of school
- Arts and sports opportunities for young people and adults through community learning and development
- Libraries
- Museums and galleries
- Theatres and arts venues
- Public halls and community centres
- Cultural events
- Work to promote and develop the arts
- Leisure facilities
- Sports development
- Parks and public open space
- Financial support to independent cultural and sporting organisations and talented individuals

The resources amount to more than all the other funding regimes put together.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure the adequate provision of facilities for culture and powers to promote and support cultural activity.

Yet there are significant variations in the level and type of provision made across Scotland. Consequently the extent and quality of provision and access to cultural opportunities is inconsistent.

Led by the Scottish executive, research is currently underway to build a more detailed picture of local authority expenditure and the range and quality of cultural facilities within each local authority area.

Given such significant support, local authorities encourage those organizations we fund to align some of their activities to broader government and local objectives. In large measure this has been mutually beneficial.

It has also helped local authorities use cultural and sporting activities to support policies for economic regeneration, community empowerment and development, participation, learning, diversity, social justice and crime reduction.

Some of these initiatives have proved both effective and imaginative:

- GP's as referral points for health and cultural programmes
- Museum displays in non-museum venues like community centres
- Cultural and sports outreach work with at risk young people and recovering addicts or alcoholics
- Work experience schemes in galleries and museums
- Arts in hospital programmes
- Addressing anti-social behaviour through youth diversionary schemes in sports and the arts
- Regenerating the physical fabric through housing artists and arts organizations
- Providing free transport to develop audiences for arts, sports and cultural programmes
- Cultural and sports coordinator programmes in schools.
- Learning centres in libraries.

#### **4.0 THE WAY FORWARD**

The cornerstone of the new settlement for culture is defining cultural rights. But the establishment of such rights will not of itself automatically widen access to culture, promote creativity or nurture talent in line with the Scottish Executive's aims.

We will also need concerted action by central and local government and the organisations involved in the cultural sector.

We will need too, a brand of cultural leadership, at once innovative and visionary, which engages with issues across the broader cultural landscape.

These leaders who will come not just from the ranks of the major institutions, but from artists themselves, from the private and public sectors, and within the ranks of community activists.

Such significant changes will involve a fresh form of governance, new legislation and a consensual strategy which both widens access and supports talent.

#### **5.0 CULTURAL RIGHTS**

We believe the UN resolution on cultural rights and its endorsement by the Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion in Agenda 21 for Culture offer an important launching pad for establishing cultural rights in Scotland.

Their commitment to defending the rights of all citizens to culture, and to promote the expression of cultural identity as a basic dimension of human dignity and social inclusion is one which we should strive to replicate.

Research consistently tells us that the provision of those rights can make a significant difference to regeneration and community development.

But what do we mean by the term "cultural rights?"

We propose the following broad ambitions:

- The right to explore, express and extend cultural identity

Every citizen in Scotland should have the right to experience the diversity of Scotland's cultures and those of other cultures.

- The right to develop cultural talents and interests

Every citizen in Scotland should have the right to fulfil their creative potential through participation, and the development of their talent.

- The right to literacies

Every citizen in Scotland should have the right to education ensuring essential reading, writing numerical and IT skills.

- The right to health and wellbeing

Every citizen in Scotland should have the right to a general sense of health and wellbeing through participation in cultural, recreational and social activities.

- The right to a pleasant high quality environment

Every citizen in Scotland should have the right to an environment offering local distinctiveness, variety and beauty which protects local cultural heritage and public spaces.

- The right to help shape and design cultural policy and provisions

Every citizen in Scotland should have the opportunity of helping to determine local cultural policies and provision.

Self evidently, delivering those rights requires an adequate level of resources and provision, and an audit of existing levels at both national and local levels is an urgent priority.

## **6.0 NEW LEGISLATION**

Any radical change in rights and entitlements requires a new framework and the protection and encouragement of new legislation.

We propose a National Culture Bill to enshrine and ensure the realisation of those rights supported by statutory guidance.

This new bill and guidance would:

- Enshrine the key cultural rights outlined above.
- Confirm a number of existing national entitlements, including those for which local authorities have statutory responsibility.
- These include adequate sporting, recreational, social and cultural facilities and library provision with free borrowing access via the National Library Network.
- Consider new national entitlements such as free music tuition in schools.
- Involve the production of a Local Cultural Strategy for each local authority area in Scotland as a core part of the Community Planning process.
- Consider legislative provisions and incentives to help artists and creators.

- These could involve libraries purchasing books by Scottish authors and tax breaks for cultural creators on the Irish model.

## 7.0 NEW GOVERNANCE.

The governance of Scotland should be underpinned by the principles at the heart of Agenda 21 for Culture: supporting democratic accountability, widening access, and establishing rights to help develop sustainable communities. It must also incorporate devolved decision making within a cross cutting agenda.

At the national level we believe two things are crucial:

- A clearer line of responsibility for strategic policy and funding decisions to the Minister and his or her Scottish Executive department.
- A strengthening of the role and power of independent advocacy, expert advice and public scrutiny.

Both require a fundamental realignment of the relationship between the Executive and the Non Departmental Public Bodies in the culture and leisure sector. Policy making and funding should reside in a much expanded ministry with a dedicated department for Tourism, Culture and Sport.

This would further enhance the senior cabinet status of the minister who would be responsible for the full development of the National Cultural and Sports Strategies with appropriate levels of policy, technical and research support.

Such a model would help embed democratic accountability.

Parallels can be drawn with developments in the Justice field, where Ministers are clarifying the lines of accountability that apply to their relationship with the Scottish Prison Service.

The new ministry with its dedicated department would be responsible for funding the national arts companies directly as they currently do with the National Museums, Galleries and Library.

This would result in greater across the board consistency by putting in place clear funding criteria.

Clearly a resolution needs to be found for the future funding and definition of arts organisations with a regional and national role.

This should avoid any regime based on inertia and historical funding patterns.

It must also avoid the duplication which sometimes occurs between SAC and local authority funding.

The ministry would also fund and administer national programmes such as the cultural coordinators and active school programmes, as well as proposed new national capital investment programmes such as the 'Significance Scheme for Collections of National and International Importance',

A direct link with local authority and community planning structures would remove the need for intermediaries.

In keeping with current guidelines, we believe the management of the lottery should continue to be kept at arms length from the Scottish Executive.

The establishment of a new ministry for culture, sport and tourism will require the introduction of expertise from the cultural and sporting sectors.

This would chime with Executive thinking regarding the modernisation of the civil service.

## **8.0 THE NATIONAL COMPANIES, MUSEUMS, GALLERIES AND LIBRARY.**

The future role of the national companies must involve continuing efforts to reach a wider and more socially inclusive audience through outreach and partnership work. Also, they have a key role supporting Scotland's tourism and cultural profile on an international stage, through involvement in international festivals, trade delegations and exhibitions.

By addressing the "Efficient Government" agenda, Local Government across Scotland and the UK is beginning to realise significant cost savings from the introduction of more efficient back-office operations under-pinned by changes in work practices, new IT systems, and economies of scale.

While retaining their individual boards and identities, it is reasonable to assume a similar approach by the National Arts Companies and the National Library, National Galleries, National Museums and Public Records Office, could result in comparable cost savings, particularly in areas such as human resource management, financial administration, and procurement.

We believe an independent evaluation instigated by government could settle the right level of resourcing for the national companies.

But arguably funding is not the core issue. We need to know what 'national' means in the new settlement. We contend that they should be a resource for Scotland, represent Scotland and have obligations to the wider community.

We think too the nationals could be more pro-active in spreading their resources, talents and expertise.

Equally, as public assets, the evaluation of their relevance, performance and quality should include wider perspectives including those of stakeholders such as local authorities

In an age of decentralisation with stronger local and regional identities, we might also consider encouraging some theatres or museums to be designated as of national significance.

## **9.0 ADVOCACY FOR THE CULTURAL SECTOR.**

There should be a new well resourced body or network independent of government and representative of the entire sector to advocate, advise, lobby and offer the sector a powerful new voice.

It would not be responsible for funding and therefore distanced from government. Our preferred model could bring some pre-existing bodies together into a new umbrella organisation, possibly with sector specific sub-committees perhaps similar to the Scottish Cultural Partnership proposed by the Scottish Arts Council.

Such an organisation would be concerned with arts, heritage, libraries, museums, galleries, and the cultural and creative industries.

The Partnership would comprise a mix of appointed specialists and experts from across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

A similar body could be created for sport or maybe a more appropriate option would be the incorporation of sport into the above recommended body..

These bodies/body could also forge independent links to the relevant parliamentary committees and, where desirable, undertake a research or monitoring role on their behalf.

They would advise and support areas such as cultural leadership and development.

## **10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE.**

It is important that the role of culture is properly covered in community planning for which local authorities have a statutory responsibility.

The most effective way is through the production of Local Cultural Strategies within the Community Planning Framework.

In partnership with appropriate national and local bodies, Local authorities should be responsible for drawing up and implementing those strategies.

They have the necessary resources, experience and expertise and are democratically accountable for what is planned and delivered.

Local Cultural Strategies would be expected to:

- Show how cultural rights will be met at local level
- Show how other national policies and priorities will be met, including culture's contribution to cross-cutting policies on regeneration, social justice and inclusion, health and education
- Set priorities for action and targets within specified timescales
- Identify the resources required to deliver the strategy and how they will be secured
- Identify the roles of partners in delivering the strategy and how they will be determined
- Set out arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress and updating strategies

We recommend that Local Cultural Strategies cover a three year period and be guided and monitored to ensure their best practice. Other key partner agencies should have a form of duty to ensure their full participation in the development of these strategies.

This approach would mirror Community Learning and Development in some respects, where the Scottish Executive strategic guidance, funding and inspection has led to wide-spread Community Learning Strategies based on a local authority led formal partnership approach.

The establishment of Community Learning Strategy partnerships on a permanent basis across Scotland has involved representation from all key stakeholders in the public, voluntary and community sectors.

Similarly, we suggest that Local Cultural Partnerships, supported by local authorities, are formed to draw up and deliver Local Cultural Strategies.

Each strategy will need to consider how to address the barriers which restrict cultural access for many citizens. These include issues of: poverty, exclusion, rurality, equalities and educational under-achievement.

This will require co-ordination with other key strategies such as Community Learning and Development, Children's Services, and school and public estates strategies and physical planning policies.

In all these fields the role of cultural provision within partnership strategies should be recognised.

These can build capacity, improve basic skills, address the needs of children, young people and families at risk, improve health and mental well being and planning and design.

Partnership pledges to ensure cultural rights could be supported by formal establishment of general citizens' entitlements and those of artists, arts and sports organisations, and particular sections of the community.

These entitlements could include:

- access to community facilities offering opportunities to take part in cultural, sporting, recreational and social activities
- access to provision for children's play
- access to public parks and quality open spaces
- the right to participate in sport and physical activity through provision of local indoor and outdoor sports facilities
- the experience of local and national heritage including museums, heritage sites and attractions, natural, built and literary heritage, townscapes, local history and archaeology
- access to events which reflect local cultural heritage and the diversity of Scotland's cultures, traditions and languages
- experience of performing arts, visual arts and crafts, literature, community arts, cultural traditions and the moving image. These should be provided through local provision of arts venues and activities in multi-purpose facilities with access to projects, performances, workshops, festivals and information
- access to libraries and information resources including manuscript, printed, electronic and multi-media material and community information and a right to literacy support and learning opportunities
- being democratically involved in helping develop local cultural policies including Local Cultural Strategies
- being able to experience a physical environment that demonstrates local distinctiveness, variety and beauty and to be involved in key decisions involving developing their physical environment

Local circumstances and distinctiveness are at the heart of the diversity of Scotland's cultural life. It follows that specific entitlements in different parts of the country should be the responsibility of local Cultural Strategy Partnerships.

Similarly, peoples' ability to pursue their cultural interests and develop their talents will depend on where they live, their mobility and issues of transportation, economic circumstances and education.

The role of Local Cultural Strategies should be to remove any barriers to access and specify the roles of organisations within partnerships.

This will help determine the levels of funding and support as will the guidance and advice of Audit Scotland.

Finally, we recognise that while the proposed strategies would sit within a community planning framework based on local authority boundaries, there are some aspect of cultural provision which will transcend these boundaries.

Obvious examples include museum resources, audience development and the planning of major capital infrastructure.

Sometimes regional community planning structures evolve in response to local needs such as the Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership. Further examples of Local Authorities working together in collaborative ways include, the response to the Regional Development Challenge Funds, within the museums sector and such formations as North East Arts Touring, which is a partnership including Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Moray Council, which facilitates touring theatre and visual arts. In other areas, other forms of partnerships could perform a similar cross boundary function.

We do not support, however, the artificial creation of formal regional structures for culture and sport adding another layer of bureaucracy and increasing the democratic deficit.

## **11.0 THE ROLE OF EDUCATION.**

The forward to "Ambitious, Excellent Schools" states that in such establishments "young people get the best opportunity to reach their full potential."

And there is a strong argument that if we want to achieve a step change in creating a confident cultural Scotland, we must start with a new generation of children and young people.

The National Priorities for Education acknowledges the importance of encouraging creativity, ambition, self-reliance, initiative, and an ability to work collaboratively.

These modern skills must be recognised as having equal value to the traditional acquisition of qualifications.

Scotland is a land of huge contrasts not just in its rural and urban geography or the gulfs between affluence and deprivation, but between those specially gifted and those with significant additional needs.

Local cultural strategies need to work with that reality and address social problems including poor health, low self esteem and the poverty of aspiration. They need to give the presently disempowered a real opportunity to re-engage.

We know that young people learn through multiple intelligences and effective schools respond with a variety of opportunities to motivate, stimulate, and raise achievement.

In that context, culture and creativity are of paramount importance.

Research has shown us how the creative child becomes a confident adult open to life long learning opportunities.

Demonstrated too is that cultural and creative activities play a key role in supporting social inclusion and regeneration, and raising both achievement and the level of aspiration.

We now have an opportunity to apply these lessons, particularly at primary school level.

This means a less cluttered more holistic approach to curriculum. It means that cultural entitlements must thread through the formal and informal curriculum and out of school learning.

We believe the route to this lies in bringing together the concepts of the community, health promoting, and effective school recognising the potential and unique talents of every child.

In this way the local cultural strategy becomes not another free-standing initiative, but an ethos within which all schools use a range of approaches to develop self esteem, self confidence and creativity.

There will, however, be some common characteristics of the school which aims for excellence:

- A balanced curriculum which develops multiple intelligences.
- An ethos recognising and nurturing the innate creativity of all children.
- A commitment to the importance of the arts, creativity sport and P.E.
- Contemporary cultural practice in the expressive arts.
- Learning Scottish history and culture while fostering pride in diversity.
- Engagement with local and professional artists and with arts and sports organisations to develop pathways from school into the community.

In addition, local authorities working in partnership with their schools, should develop a range of specific entitlements. Opportunities such as:

- Learning a musical instrument.
- Participating in musical and other artistic experiences.
- Attending a public performance of an artistic nature.
- Learning to swim.
- Becoming involved in physical activities.
- Joining team sports.
- Being offered a range of school activities including shows, concerts, trips award schemes and outward bound experiences.
- Developing his/her talent in a particular aspect of the expressive arts or sport.

Integrated community schools offer a good example of such experiences being fully integrated rather than added on.

Similarly, excellent schools would embed culture throughout the curriculum and have their cultural and creative activities evaluated as part of HMIE school inspections and Scottish Executive benchmarking, that would reflect the National Priorities for Education's emphasis on broader definitions of achievement than straightforward attainment.

The success of creative schools will depend on developing a successful cultural infrastructure with local authorities.

This will entail building cultural links in, through and beyond schools through developing and consolidating programmes like the Cultural Coordinator and Creative Links posts across Scotland.

Also in order that schools can fulfil their cultural remit effectively, the issues of short term limited funding and legislative restrictions on outdoor and out of curriculum sporting activities will have to be addressed.

While schools are key to developing creative, culturally aware children, it's also essential for arts, sports and community organisations to involve young people in their activities ensuring their continued involvement into adulthood.

Similarly we need to develop the role of culture throughout the Further and Higher Education sectors and link together Local Cultural and Community Learning Strategies as part of the Community Planning Framework.

This all requires for a close partnership between the proposed new dedicated department and the existing Education Department .

## **12.0 RESOURCES**

The development of local cultural strategies should help to identify gaps in provision and ultimately assist in achieving a greater consistency in support and expenditure on culture and sport across local authority areas.

The audit of local authority cultural resources recently commissioned by the Scottish Executive and the Cultural Commission should also support this process and identify any strategic gaps in resources.

All this will help inform a sound analysis of the extent to which existing provision meets demand, and what level of additional resources are needed from Local Authorities and their partners to deliver the local cultural strategies.

One method of increasing funding might be incentives which encourage local authorities to reflect national priorities; for example, the Scottish Executive could offer matching funds to be invested in culture for every £ local authorities spend above their GAE allocation on cultural activity. This is a particular issue we would like to discuss in more detail with the Scottish Executive.

Also, a long term national investment strategy for capital investment in facilities is essential, recognising previous constraints on capital expenditure and the resultant poor condition of many existing buildings and facilities.

Resources might be levered in through using spare capacity in school buildings more effectively for community use. A study was commissioned in 2003/4 by the Scottish Executive, **sportscotland**, and SAC to assess how Scotland's schools could be more effectively used as community and cultural resources. The recommendations from this study will need to be carefully examined and acted upon by local authorities, school boards and the Scottish Executive.

There is also a strong case for one stop shop approaches to public service provision where a range of services are delivered from under one roof offering both convenience for users and economies of scale. There are a number of examples where community libraries and learning centres provide the focal point within one stop shop developments involving other public services such as health centres, leisure centres, arts venues, community centres and schools.

## **13.0 CONCLUSION**

We believe that the establishment of the Cultural Commission has offered Scotland a unique opportunity to re-examine the existing landscape, and provoke debate as to how that might be most effectively re-shaped to meet the demands of the 21st century.

It gives us scope to re-define culture in a more wide-ranging and inclusive manner, broadening the opportunities for access and personal development.

It allows us to enact the vital commitment to cultural rights as a core component of human rights outlined in Agenda 21 for Culture, and to have these rights enshrined and protected by legislation.

We submit that our proposals offer a rigorous appraisal of the weaknesses of the status quo, allied to a radical programme to encourage democratic accountability and erase duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy.

Most importantly, we suggest that by building on the historic achievements of local authorities in nurturing and funding the cultural and sporting sectors, we can respond in a logical and dynamic way to a post devolutionary Scotland committed to participation, inclusion, and maximising personal creativity.

Our proposals embed culture and creativity in every aspect of local authority departmental policy making, a complementary approach to that urged on government by the First Minister in his St Andrew's Day address in 2003.

Local authorities, already required by statute to establish collaborative partnerships in the field of community planning, are uniquely placed to extend that ethos through local cultural strategies.

We look forward to continuing to play a pivotal role in making tomorrow's Scotland an environment in which every citizen has the opportunity to develop their creative potential to the full.