

CULTURAL COMMISSION

Public Consultation Phase 2 – Pan-Sectoral questions

1. Are cultural rights just symbolic or should they have a practical purpose?

Enforceable cultural rights have the practical effect of ensuring that a whole community has access to a shared background of experience and knowledge, and so promoting unity.

2. Should cultural rights be enshrined in law?

The cultural rights of every Scottish citizen should be enshrined in law through the passing of an Act of the Scottish Parliament. These rights would encompass access for all (with particular emphasis on nursery and compulsory school-age children) to their Scottish Heritage whether it is through the performance arts of music, drama, storytelling in the school curriculum or within the community, or through visits to urban or rural environments of special interest.

3. How should cultural rights reflect other areas of social policy, such as inclusion or social justice?

Access to cultural rights for all age groups is enabled through the public libraries, the majority with computer network facilities. Access for students is available in school, college and university libraries. This access should be a part of all induction programmes for new library users. Access to cultural rights while targeted at every Scottish citizen should be weighted towards access for people disadvantaged by the least favourable areas of residence, poverty or the various forms of physical and mental disability.

6. How do we give grassroots organisations a stronger voice in the decision-making processes and how should the grassroots sector be represented and consulted?

The possibility of funding from various initiatives such as the "New Opportunities Lottery Fund" should be widely publicised on the web and through conferences. Widespread meetings should be held in local venues throughout Scotland to solicit opinion and needs which could result in applications for funding. There is widespread ignorance at grassroots level among the public of funding initiatives; in fact only the media savvy are presently able to access them.

9. What criteria should funding bodies use when deciding who to fund?

Funding should be open to applications from any company or arts group in Scotland. Such applicants should be required to furnish proof of a competence to put their proposals into practice. Funding available at present should be increased to enable touring productions to continue. Paisley Arts Centre is an excellent example of a centre which hosts a wide variety of touring companies for one or two performances. Large commercial touring productions at for instance the King's Theatre, Glasgow or the Playhouse, Edinburgh should not receive subsidies unless these are dependant on the promotion of new or experimental work. The development of community located venues should be encouraged.

In the field of publishing the production, distribution and sale of small magazines and books from small imprints should be supported. This support is vital to counteract the

flooding of the book market in Scotland with thousands of copies of a few titles circulated by wholesalers from south of the Border.

14. Do we need to define the term "adequate provision" in regard to local authorities current responsibilities, including the requirement to develop local cultural strategies within the context of community planning, and if so, how?

There is a need for a national determination of "adequate provision", setting standards which are realistic and achievable in all areas, whether rural or urban. Defined provision should include both the provision of venues and the support of initiatives, and should require local authorities to link local and national projects.

The inclusion of projects produced in collaboration with international organisations should be encouraged as it enlarges the Scottish citizen's cultural perspective. Such work in dance or theatre and film is ideally presented through themed festivals like "New Territories" in Glasgow. Festivals like the Glasgow "West End Festival" should reflect the thinking at a more local level.

15. What are the merits and practicalities of adopting national standards for the provision of cultural facilities and services?

There is every merit in the adoption of national standards and in the monitoring of these services and facilities at the point of access.

19. What privileges/special considerations should be afforded to national companies and what responsibilities should accompany these privileges?

No special privileges should be automatically afforded to national companies. They should be constantly assessed on merit and no special funding should be guaranteed.

20. What standards of performance and production should we expect of our national companies and what commitment to Scottish work and Scottish talent should the national companies have?

We should encourage our national companies to take part in touring programmes to other countries so that their experience of international productions can contribute to their own development of a high standard of performance and production. Scottish companies should have a minimal commitment to the presentation of Scottish work and they should encourage Scottish talent by short apprenticeships in performance and production techniques.

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Response to
Cultural Commissi...

I am happy for this response to be made available to the public and for extracts to be used in your publications or on your website.

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