



RESPONSE to:

CULTURAL COMMISSION
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION: PHASE 2
PAN-SECTORAL QUESTIONS
NOVEMBER 2004

Rights, Entitlements and Responsibilities

1. How should cultural rights and accompanying entitlements and responsibilities be used to develop both cultural policy and appropriate standards for the provision/delivery of culture in Scotland?

By supporting the cultural activity at the level of its production, at grassroots and national level and allowing individual communities and regions to select what is most appropriate for their particular needs.

2. Should cultural rights be enshrined in law?

NO. There should be a clear declaration by Government of the intention to allow all people of Scotland to participate in and enjoy the widest possible access to culture. To make it law would end in failure, and a consequent reduction in quality. And how could you legislate for the differing needs of communities and geographic locations.

3. Should cultural rights, entitlements and responsibilities reflect or link to other areas of social policy, such as inclusion or social justice and, if so, how?

No Each area should address its own priorities. Interactions between areas rather than subjugation of one area to another.

4. Who should have guardianship over cultural rights, entitlements and responsibilities and how should they exercise their authority, particularly in relation to non-conformance?

Have the courage to allow those working in any one field of expertise to actually know what they are doing. Non conformance to what ? Sounds like a dictatorship.

5. Who should have responsibility for the review and potential amendment of cultural rights, entitlements and responsibilities and how should this process be conducted?

A review can be undertaken at specified intervals, by a non political committee, allowing input from all sectors – a bit like the present Cultural Commission.

Cultural Leadership

6. A number of stakeholders have bemoaned the lack of cultural leadership in Scotland but what sort of leadership is actually required?

A Minister of Culture who actually knows something about the subject. Could it be an appointed position rather than an elected MSP

7. What role should the Scottish Executive play in cultural leadership, how should it interface with the cultural sector and what influence should it have, if any, over cultural policies and priorities?

The Scottish executive should lead with a clear statement of intent and support for cultural life. It should provide financial support in line with their aspirations and the needs of the Cultural sector.

Recognition f by SE that visionary force is essential to human well-being and betterment; and there needs to be more understanding by decision-makers that diversity (individuality), authenticity, and risk-taking are the foundations of the creative "industries".

8. Is the arms-length principle still appropriate and, if so, how should it be enforced?

Well you cant be arms length and engaged at the same time, but equally directing cultural activity according to the need to implement political objectives is cultural death.

9. Who should appoint the leadership of the cultural sector and to whom should the leadership be answerable?

Committees of respected practitioners and administrators should be trusted to make such appointments. They could be answerable to the committees suggested in 5 above --- A review can be undertaken at specified intervals, by a non political committee, allowing input from all sectors – a bit like the present Cultural Commission.

10. What role should local government play in cultural leadership, including policy making, and how should it balance its responsibilities to the electorate with the needs of artists and citizens across Scotland?

Local Government must continue to play an important role. However they are not noted for being risk taking or imaginative. Perhaps there should be a large scale education project for administrators and councilors, on the role and benefits of contemporary culture, even on 'what is' contemporary culture.

11. What role should Universities, Colleges and other centres of artistic/academic excellence play in the defining of Scotland's cultural strategy and how should they be represented in the cultural leadership of Scotland?

They should not define strategy, but they are a part of the process along with others. Their role in cultural education is of course most important.

12. What role should the private and commercial sectors play in the cultural leadership of Scotland?

They should be encouraged to actively support culture but they should NOT use their resources to lead culture.

13. How do we give artists a stronger voice in the decision-making (planning and funding) processes at national level and how should artists be effectively represented and consulted?

More opportunity for artists to be involved as professional advisors , to be involved in decision making, to have their voices listened to, and to actually see that what they say makes a difference. Position practitioners on committees at all levels...

14. How do we give grassroot organisations a stronger voice in the decision-making (planning and funding) processes at national level and how should the grassroots sector be effectively represented and consulted?

Start by trusting them to have professional opinions that go beyond self interest. Then respect their opinions.

Transparency by administration which allows open access to those who have something to contribute.

Cultural Forums , in the true sense of the word, would be a good idea. Allowing genuine interactions at regular intervals, together with greater transparency between grassroots sectors and policy makers, funders, and administrators.

But this will only work if there is a genuine intention on all sides to listen.

15. How can we ensure the appropriate strategic and operational alignment between Scottish cultural agencies/organisations and UK cultural agencies operating in Scotland?

Let them talk to each other under the banner of agreed wider (national) aims and objectives.