

Creative
Industries

Ack by letter
25/1/05

The Lighthouse

SCOTLAND'S | CENTRE
FOR | ARCHITECTURE
DESIGN | AND | THE | CITY

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Dear James

The Lighthouse Trust – CULTURAL COMMISSION, PAN-SECTOR RESPONSE

With reference to your letter of November 2004 on the above, please find The Lighthouse response attached.

The response seeks to concentrate on the big picture by looking at the development of cultural rights and infrastructure and other issues through the lens of the emerging concept of Public Value. By adopting this approach it is hoped that the debate will be broadened but without losing focus.

It is being gradually accepted that the Public Value provides a broader measure than is conventionally used within the New Public Management literature, as it covers outcomes, the means to deliver them, as well as trust and legitimacy. It also addresses matters like equality, ethos and accountability. Current public management - and culture is no exception - sometimes fails to consider, understand or manage this full range of factors.

In forming this response the opportunity has been taken to draw upon DEMOS's work linking Public Value to the creation of Cultural Value. This has been helpful in looking at the questions, because from that viewpoint much of the social inclusion compliance incumbent upon public funding becomes a logical component. This has been even more useful in framing an argument, however skeletal at the moment, for the stewardship of the school estate and its impact on the development of young people's talent and creativity and which is key to future national prosperity, to be turned into an irreducible cultural right.

Also, permeating the response, is a proposal for a structure – a national partnership framework, albeit with a relatively open architecture.

I hope that this response is helpful and look forward to the next stage of the Commission's work.

Yours sincerely

Dr Stuart MacDonald
Lighthouse Director

THE LIGHTHOUSE SCOTLAND'S CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN AND THE CITY

SUBMISSION TO THE CULTURE COMMISSION

10.01.05

Preamble

The following sets out The Lighthouse's response to the letter of November 2004. The response uses the pan-sectoral questions attached to that letter as prompts rather than answering them in detail. However, it is ordered with reference to the sequence of the 62 questions. This submission sees the debate about cultural rights as being inseparable from the emerging issue of Public Value, and inexorably linked to the discussion about leadership, governance and standards. Although this is not the place for a full blown analysis of Public Value as it relates to culture, the concept is thought useful as Public Value is judged by public preference which is perceived to be at the core of Commission's task.

Rights, Entitlements and Responsibilities

As indicated in the response to the first phase of the Commission's consultation, The Lighthouse is in broad agreement with the argument about cultural rights, especially as this might provide a mandate for hitherto neglected areas like design, architecture or more contemporary forms of culture. In turn, this could have a modernising effect on the school curriculum in which culture remains predicated on a set of nineteenth century art forms. Nonetheless, it perceives that there is much to be done in persuading arts constituencies, far less the wider world, about the meaning and implementation of cultural rights. In this submission, therefore, how cultural rights might be used to develop policy and standards is approached through the emerging concept of "Creating Public Value"¹ and the related concept "Creating Cultural Value"².

Public Value has its origins in the current dissatisfaction with the measurement culture prevalent in the public sector. It offers to politicians like Douglas Alexander a different way of thinking about policy reform³. At its simplest, Public Value is the value added by the public sector – it is the difference between what citizens give to and what they get from public bodies. One aspect of this discussion is that citizens recognise value when they are prepared to pay for it – like buying a ticket or making a donation. But another aspect, very important in terms of culture, is the commitment of citizens – the time or energy they devote to the arts. Public willingness to give something up, whether time or money, is a demonstration of value.

A crucial dimension of this argument, therefore, is subjectivity, meaning that value resides in the experience of the individual user - the arts are a matter for self-determination by the individual not the state. This is exacerbated by the current language of evaluation, which fails because it is wedded to the collective not the individual, to the objective not the

subjective. If the aim is to offer everyone an informed choice it is not enough to open doors or widen access. The real barriers are in people's heads.

Certainly, policy responses to inequality of access must range across wider educational and social agendas. Because of the amount of evidence which points to a particularly strong correlation between low educational attainment and lack of interest in culture, education should, of course be a major target to create change. For example, Design can create public value. Every child should be educated in a well-designed school which gives them the chance not only to develop their artistic talents but to appreciate and enjoy the built environment and public space. Public value is judged by public preference. A major responsibility of the Executive's educational mission, therefore, must be to encourage people to enjoy the public value of what is offered in terms of culture and by so doing, change preferences and increase value.

Public value, like culture itself, is best produced in a "mixed economy" – that is why including creative industries which are in the main private sector, not subsidy based, is essential to the mix. One of the problems with the cultural sector is the lack of private sector involvement. The Executive or an Executive agency can neither be the sole provider nor arbiter of cultural rights if they are seen as an essential ingredient of cultural value. It follows that "guardianship" or governance should be shared between those involved the "value chain"⁴. Through the process of consultation the Commission has already expanded the range of stakeholders beyond SAC and local authorities to artists and other representative sectoral groups. It would seem to make sense for this more democratic range of stakeholders to become the guardians of cultural rights. This is important, because the manner in which organisations conduct themselves is as important as the values they espouse. The Commission's approach, especially the way it has engaged with practitioners as stakeholders, commends itself to be continued into any future regime.

Cultural Leadership

This aspect of the submission is concerned more with leadership as a process. A contemporary view of leadership is emerging centred on the need to find a new language, a new narrative to avoid the historic pitfalls in the debate about culture. This new narrative is founded upon cultural organisers and producers, funders themselves, and civil servants explicitly articulating the values they are seeking to promote. In other words, the self-perceived mission and identity of practitioner or "delivery" organisations is as integral to the creation of public value as the policy processes or criteria that award the funding. This is a major shift and affects leadership in the following ways:

- making decision-making more transparent

- generating greater public participation
- setting goals and developing an ethos of trust
- seeing a greater public sector role in terms of social entrepreneurship⁵

Ultimately, the goal should be to increase trust between funders, the funded and the public because of the more open and transparent processes involved.

Two questions arise:

- how can leaders be developed?
- who can develop them?

Clearly, in whatever future structure, there is a need in Scotland for some form of cultural leadership foundation or similar, which for the reasons of transparency given above, should be at arms length from local and national government. Regardless of format, this body should encompass relationships with creatives, the grassroots, universities, as well as take on issues of strategic alignment.

Pan-sectoral Planning

The issue of pan-sectoral planning is convergent with transparent decision-making and the need for greater trust, based on the idea of a more explicit shared set of values. In other words, it is part of the new narrative. Like those involved in the value chain discussed above, pan-sectoral planning should involve an expanded range of stake-holders.

A future regime might operate at three levels – national, local (authority level) and community. In that sense, centrally driven, top down delivery might be replaced with grass-roots value creation. Just as Village Design Statements influence planning decisions, a similar process could be used to create Community Cultural Statements which, in turn, could inform pan-sectoral planning. They could also inform decision-making at other levels.

Funding Arrangements

The outstanding question here relates to how the current methods of funding can be improved and/or how sustainable alternatives could be entertained. At the very least, there are clear inconsistencies and historic anomalies that require to be rationalised. For example, why should the national galleries and museums be funded directly by the Executive when national companies are funded through SAC? Also, how might bureaucracy be reduced in favour of systems which employ criteria that are more relevant to practitioners – why, for example, can't dance groups submit videos, or musicians tapes?

The approach of the Welsh Assembly in moving to direct funding is of interest, not least, because of the proposed establishment of a Culture Board representing a broader range of interests than the extant Welsh

Arts Council. If the idea of creating Public Value is taken on board who or what makes funding decisions is of less importance than recognising that value is created by the way in which organisations carry out their functions as much as what they do. If a Culture Board or similar were to be set up in Scotland, it would be crucial to ensure that the values of any representatives – government, practitioner, agency, private, grass roots – were fully articulated and agreed.

In the above respect a concrete example of how to capture Cultural Value from a funder's point of view has been designed by Holden⁵. Whilst this example is of more direct relevance to the discussion of Standards and Evaluation, Public Value challenges policy-makers and organisations to adopt a new concordat between funders, funded and the public.

Consideration should also be given to the creation of a National Endowment for the Arts as an additional mechanism. Whether or not this is modelled on the US example, the experience of NESTA would indicate the efficacy of a fund which not only encourages high risk and edgy projects that would not otherwise be funded by traditional funding sources but also promotes cross-cutting initiatives transecting the arts and science. However, NESTA is UK wide with all the inherent difficulties of such a scheme in the context of delegation and the problem of public perception and interpretation of values derived from a system developed in one part of the UK and applied to another. Anecdotal evidence points to the need for a dedicated Scottish endowment that would be open to application from any cultural practitioner or organisation. One way of funding this endowment might be to tax the windfall profits made by companies through PPP building contracts or for the Executive to utilise its tax-raising powers. Again, the tax-payers would have to be convinced through the explication of the Public Value of such a scheme.

Standards and Evaluation

Tessa Jowell has encapsulated the argument by asking, "How, in going beyond targets, can we best capture the value of culture?"⁶ expert commentators like Sarah Sellwood, have argued that much data gathering in the cultural sector has been a "spurious exercise"⁷. Proper evaluation that concentrates on improving performance rather than being used as an advocacy tool to justify further funding ought to be the priority. The current language of measurement fails because it is wedded to the collective not the individual, to the objective, not the subjective, and yet attempts to quantify the unquantifiable. It also gives rise to spurious dichotomies: excellence or access, quality or participation, public or private, subsidy or investment.

According to Holden, "Casting performance measurement in the new conceptual framework of Cultural Value both changes and clarifies why (his emphasis) the existing measurement is taking place". Using the new framework, social equity, public trust and the legitimacy of institutions

would be taken into account. Holden also suggests pursuing a strategy of wider public buy-in by using such methods as local press coverage. However, what is important is the concentration on public perceptions and the use of more holistic characteristics than employed by our present evaluation systems.

Operations and Administration

ICT clearly has the potential not only to improve services but also to add value. For example, developments audited through the aegis of the e-cities initiative, or the REAL learning initiative, indicate several directions. The e-cities initiative, especially, is recommended as a model for service delivery and value creation transferable to the cultural sector. And, in respect of the idea of a national partnership framework, the creation of an on-line portal should be considered. This would empower citizens by helping them inform choices. Again the e-cities initiative can pin-point serviceable models from other sectors.

In respect of international developments, Design Partners, which brings together all the UK agencies with the support of the DTI, is an immediately replicable model. A similar partnership forum for culture, if established in Scotland, could be a sub-set of any future Culture Board.

Leadership and leadership training is the key to shifting the present emphasis; this would help move the debilitating focus on a lack of resources to one which is about creating greater public value.

The Role of Local Authorities

If the role of culture is to be strengthened, then the role of local authorities, which are key agents in terms of service delivery, needs to be enhanced and equalised by legislation, especially in terms of defining what exactly constitutes adequate provision. The absolutely key role of local authorities is, of course, in education, not only ensuring that National Guidelines and Priorities are met so that creative talents are developed to the full, but also that young people are educated in high quality environments, which are not simply fit for purpose, but are exemplars of good design in their own right. Cultural rights should begin with the education sector.

The role of local authorities could be looked at another way. Value is expressed through preference and preference means choice, informed choice – usually at the level of the individual because culture is more often than not a personal, private encounter. Nonetheless, if a start to a bottom-up approach were to be made through the mechanism of Community Culture Statements then local authorities would have an important dual role in helping to facilitate the process as well as (along with others) brokering the provision to address those statements.

In turn, local authorities could work in liaison with the Culture Board, especially in terms of evaluating outcomes based on fairness of geographic distribution of resources and funding. This could then help inform funding decisions and relate producer aims to consumer response.

There is another aspect to this discussion, which also relates to the questions about evaluation above. It is that expanding participation in culture at the level of the individual citizen infers commitment on the part of the consumer whether in money, time or energy. There are other inherent behavioural changes – individual preferences may have to be mediated through collective procedures. As Mulgan et al state "Good government requires citizens and their representatives to continually revise shared values and objectives through a process of public deliberation".⁸ In that sense local authorities have a leading, educative role which also extends to predicting and pre-empting emerging attitudes and expectations. This raises the requirement for high quality research and readily available data and information. There is concomitant need in Scotland for some independent research capacity like DEMOS, Comedia or the Policy Studies Institute.

National

National should not only relate to having a Scotland-wide remit but an international dimension also, meaning taking Scottish culture abroad and bringing international culture to Scotland and developing an international reputation in that sense. What is important here is the issue of governance and national coverage across the full spectrum of contemporary culture. There are huge variations in provision across Scotland: competing and overlapping responsibilities, different funding models and patterns of delivery and, of course, no coherent national policy.

Based on the emerging language of Creating Public Value, this submission has attempted to develop a skeletal national structure incorporating at one level a Cultural Board with broad representation, and at another Community Culture Statements that endeavour to embody the aspirations of the individual citizen. Both seek to create value as a means of reaching a shared collective vision. This is perceived as a network design with a relatively open architecture into which could be inserted sub groups charged with matters of international concern or research. Interweaving this argument are responses relating to issues such as equity, funding mechanisms, provision or evaluation. And, within this, questions about cross-cutting issues have been addressed.

As its promoters put it, an understanding of Public Value avoids many of the pitfalls inherent in the current debate about culture.⁹ Social and economic drivers find a new context in the more creative, collective values expressed in the language of public good. Public value provides an alternative to the instrumentalism of audit and quantification, and it provides a nationally appropriate agenda. In other words a way of

engaging with the issue of cultural rights in terms of citizen experiences brought together under a Scotland-wide partnership.

References

1. See: Moore M., *Creating Public Value: strategic management in government*, in: Gilmore S. (2004), *An Introduction to Creating and Recognising Public Value for the Arts*, Los Angeles, California Arts Council
2. See: Holden J. (2004), *Capturing Cultural Value, how culture has become a tool of government policy*, London, DEMOS
3. Douglas Alexander quoted in foreword to: Kelly G., Mulgan G. and Muers S. (2002), *Creating Public Value: an analytical framework for public service reform*, London, Cabinet Office Strategy Unit
4. Moore *ibid*
5. Holden *ibid*
6. Jowell T. (2004), *Government and the Value of Culture*, London, DCMS
7. Sellwood S. (2001), *The Politics of Data Collection*, *Cultural Trends 47*, London, Policy Studies institute
8. Mulgan *ibid*
9. Hewison R. and Holden J. (2004), *The Right to Art, making aspirations reality*, London, DEMOS