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# FARM7

Response to Cultural Commission  
Phase 2 of the Consultation Process

Prepared for  
James Boyle, Chair

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## Response to Cultural Commission

The following response is structured around the two focal criteria for Phase 2 of the Cultural Commission Consultation Process, namely a pan-sectoral approach to the following:

1. The practical development and use of cultural rights
2. The institutional infrastructure and the balance of responsibilities for planning, delivery and evaluation at national and local level.

1. The practical development and use of cultural rights

Consistent with some of the comments raised at the recent consultation seminar, it is agreed that cultural rights cannot be 'enshrined in law'.

This is due to the myriad elements that constitute culture and is exacerbated by the often complex and constantly changing nature of the inter-relationship of these elements. Furthermore, to be of any value, the level of engagement with the different aspects of culture needs to be at the discretion of individual citizens. Therefore, to be enforceable, legislation would require a clear definition of cultural rights and a prescriptive approach to their implementation in order to allow effective evaluation and monitoring. This runs counter to the fluid and participative nature of culture and, more especially, the element of choice that is central to citizen participation and rights.

Cultural rights and empowerment to exercise those rights can best be nurtured thorough education with exposure to and appreciation of a diverse range of cultural phenomena. Easing access to the broad range of cultural activities and empowering citizens to take advantage of the diverse opportunities available will help ensure that those rights are exercised.



2. The institutional infrastructure and the balance of responsibilities for planning, delivery and evaluation at national and local level.

A centralised, prescriptive approach to planning, deliver and evaluation is not considered appropriate or achievable. In the first instance, there is a need to differentiate between cultural and creative industries. Whilst both make a valuable cultural impact, the nature and scale of that impact can differ significantly. By virtue of this, the type and level of support required to meet the specific requirements of each sector will differ as will the planning, delivery and evaluation of support. To be of any real value, the support offered should be driven by a fundamental understanding of the needs and requirements of each sector and the constituent sub-sectors that form both the Cultural and the Creative Industries.

This said, perhaps a coordinated approach is best achieved through a centralised hub that coordinates and supports a number of satellite organisations, each overseen by a pool of expert advisors in that particular sub-sector - wheel and spoke scenario. The hub could act as a conduit for sharing of knowledge, information and resources, where appropriate.

Responsibility for culture needs to be devolved to the level of the individual, so regional or localised control would appear more appropriate than a centralised, top down approach. In addition, many cultural activities have a strong grass-roots, community origin that could not be given expression through a top-down approach or be driven remotely, a recent example in music is initial emergence of Hip Hop in New York Ghettos and its more recent proliferation into popular culture in the UK. By default, the diversity of cultural activities and norms precludes leadership by any one person or organisation.

It is important to note that private and commercial sectors have a strong role to play in cultural leadership of Scotland. Through the better integration of design and creative talent into industry and business, Scottish culture would greatly benefit. An example to draw on would be design awareness in

Scandinavia, where many of the population are aware of national designers and own products designed by them.

There does appear to be an over-emphasis on the participation of artists. Other creative professionals, for example, architects and designers play a critical role in realising creative solutions to many social and economic problems. Furthermore, they make a significant economic contribution to Scottish GDP with design representing 25% of the income generated in the Creative Industries.