

# Submission from Duncan Hendry – General Manager, Aberdeen Performing Arts

## Responses to Pan-Sectoral Questions

### Rights Entitlements and Responsibilities

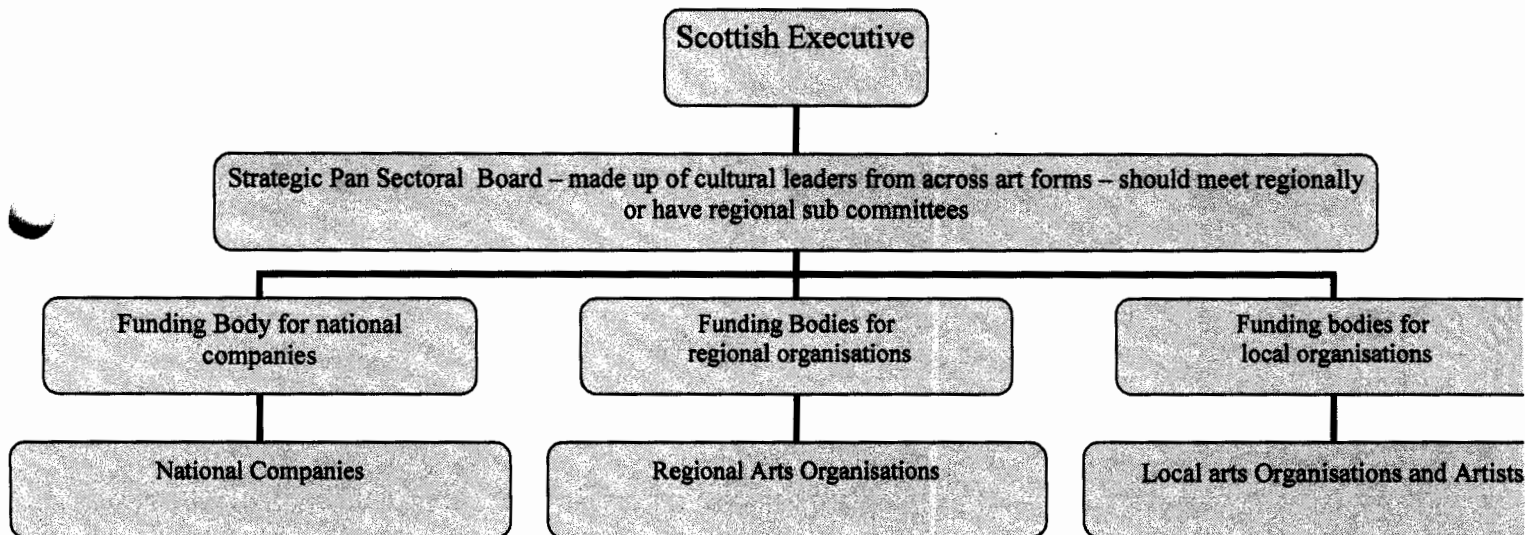
A set of cultural rights should be set out by the Scottish Executive (and if necessary enshrined in legislation) which specifies the rights of citizens across the whole of the country.

The issue of enshrining these rights in law is a complex one and raises the point of who would deliver these rights. The responsibility could be placed with local authorities and other agencies charged with delivery of service at local, regional and national levels by defining what is meant by “adequate provision”.

Cultural rights should link into the broader social agenda and should reflect issues of social inclusion etc.

There should be a national pan sectoral body that would interpret the rights set out by the Scottish Executive and this body would develop these rights into more specific entitlements and be responsible for the national cultural strategy. This body should also have a regional element or meet on a regional basis to ensure that the national strategy is truly representative and fair.

The pan sectoral body should undertake the role of review and amendment of entitlements and responsibilities. The Scottish Executive should review the broader cultural rights taking advice from the Pan-Sectoral Body.



## **Cultural Leadership**

There are a large number of experienced and highly regarded individuals who could provide cultural leadership in Scotland. They should be advocates for the arts in Scotland both nationally and internationally. They should promote the cultural sector emphasising the benefits that the arts bring to the country and the high quality of work produced by Scottish practitioners. These cultural leaders could be members of the pan sectoral strategic board. There could also be leadership on a more local level where cultural leaders could become members of local arts councils responsible for local strategy and distribution of funding.

The Scottish Executive, first minister and arts minister should be advocates for the cultural sector in Scotland and set the broad agenda.

The arms length principle is important in that the Executive and pan sectoral body should set the broad agenda but the funding, monitoring and delivery must be provided by arms length organisations of professionals who will distribute funding and deliver on rights on a local, regional and national basis.

The Board of the pan sectoral body should be appointed by the Scottish Exec through an open process (advertised and recruited). This high level Board would decide the entitlements and strategies across the sectors and ensure delivery of cultural rights and a fair and even spread of provision across the country.

Local Government clearly has a role as a major provider and funder of arts activity. However, delivery should be by external bodies funded and monitored by local arts councils. Local Authorities could be responsible for setting up local arts councils.

The commercial sector should recognise the benefits of a strong cultural sector, which can bring economic and social benefits for companies and their workforces. The private sector should be encouraged to support the cultural sector through sponsorship and staff involvement.

The strategic pan sectoral body described earlier should have strong representation from senior practitioners from across the sectors. Communication channels should be established to allow individual artists to link in through their sector representatives and through regular regional meetings.

Strategic and operational alignment is a task for the strategic pan sectoral body and for the funding bodies which would sit below that Board – regional and local bodies responsible for funding decisions and monitoring of artistic output.

## **Pan – Sectoral planning**

I believe a strategic pan-sectoral planning board should be established that would sit between the Scottish Executive and the funding/delivery organisation(s).

This pan-sectoral planning board should be established by advertising for a Chair and then for Board members. Leaders from various sectors should be selected and appointed to the Board. The Board should have a capacity to meet regionally either as a complete Board or perhaps more appropriately with regional sub committees who would feed back into the parent board.

The Planning Board should develop strategies that will deliver the broad aspirations of the executive and indeed of artists. It should be approachable and accessible to all parts of the community. An individual artist or arts organisation should feel there is an open route for them to put forward their point of view on cultural strategy.

This planning board would then inform the organisations tasked with funding and monitoring of arts organisations.

Respected senior figures from each sector should be represented on the pan sectoral board.

Regional sub committees of the pan sectoral board should meet regularly around the country to allow individuals and communities to feed into the strategic process.

Funding decisions should be entrusted to a national, regional and local arts councils. The national body (modest in its administration size) would be responsible only for the funding of the companies with a national scope.

### **Funding Arrangements**

The decision on how much money should be allocated to the cultural sector should be remain with the Scottish Executive but with input from and advice from the pan sectoral board described above.

This would be a remit of the pan sectoral planning organisation - they would decide on strategy, priorities and funding between cultural sectors.

The pan sectoral body would decide on the distribution of funds to national, regional and local funding bodies within a cultural sector. These bodies would then allocate funds within their geographical area.

I do not believe this funding should be awarded by the Scottish Executive as I feel the arms length principle should apply to national as well as all other arts organisations. The recent dealings between the Executive and Scottish Opera illustrate the weaknesses of this process. There should be detailed service level agreements for the national companies and professionals within a national funding organisation should administer and monitor these funds.

Small organisations should be funded locally through local arts councils. These bodies will be familiar with work in their area and are best placed to judge applications and the work of local organisations.

Non national organisations should be funded by regional and local arts councils.

Funding application processes should be as simple as possible and proportionate to the level of funding sought.

The responsibility for capital planning must lie with the pan sectoral body or the upper echelons of a national funding body which would replace the SAC with responsibility for national companies and major capital funding projects.

It is my opinion that the strength of indigenous arts of the country reflect the vibrancy of nations culture and should be funded accordingly. This is not to argue for parochialism but merely to ensure

generous funding for traditional and indigenous art. The balance between sectors I feel should be best agreed by the pan sectoral body described earlier.

Local and regional arts councils should be allocated funds to support initiative based projects.

We can certainly improve on current funding systems – although application processes have been simplified in recent years. Form filling should be kept to a minimum as too many artistic directors are spending time on applying for funds rather than delivery of work.

Effective use of public money can be monitored with a light monitoring regime which is not onerous for the arts organisation.

### **Standards and evaluation**

An arts organisation should have clear objectives and targets that can be measured and monitored by a funding body. The governance of the arts organisation should be appropriate to the size of organisation and its activity. The governance and constitution of the organisation should safeguard the spending of public money and ensure that funds are spent appropriately and for the outcomes proposed in the funding application.

The outcomes, output, process and governance should be proposed by the arts organisation and agreed with the funding body.

Consistency of standards is a matter for the pan sectoral body to monitor and take action where appropriate.

Standard processes for evaluation should be set out by pan sectoral body to ensure quality and consistency across and within sectors. Appropriate training should be available to local, regional and national funding bodies and officers to ensure consistency.

The funding organisation should have the freedom to reduce or stop funding to under performing arts organisations. Any right of appeal should be limited and carefully considered so as not to undermine the funding organisation.

### **Operations and administration**

Electronic communication has already had a radical affect on cultural administration in Scotland. Funding organisations should ensure that arts organisations can afford technology to allow them to operate efficiently in the contemporary environment.

There may be an opportunity to have arts organisations that look after several buildings in a City or area thereby ensuring the more efficient management and maintenance of the arts infrastructure.

Responsibility for international cultural development would lie mainly with the pan sectoral strategic body and the new national funding body described earlier

There should be monitoring of the balance of moneys spent on administration as opposed to performance and incentives to reduce administration costs and bureaucracy. Arts Organisations should

be encouraged by the funding bodies to reduce administration levels and report back to their customers (as happens with charities such as Oxfam) on how much of the public pound is spent on the organisation rather than performance.

### **Local Authorities**

“Adequate provision” should be more clearly defined as it is a fairly meaningless phrase at the moment. Cities, towns and rural authorities should be clear on the specifics of provision that they should ensure is available. A local cultural strategy should also be obligatory and this should link to regional and national cultural strategies.

A broad definition of provision should be set out but without too much detail - i.e. a city authority might have responsibility to have a theatre (s) but without being too prescriptive about what is staged or produced in that theatre.

Ring fencing of cultural resources is justified particularly if this money is given by the national government for this purpose.

### **Regional bodies**

There is a regional element to cultural planning and delivery. For example in the North East – north east arts touring provides a valuable service across the area which could not be provided within smaller areas. The provision of youth theatre across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire is another example of provision crossing local boundaries. Some sort of regional planning and funding is therefore important.

These bodies could be set up as regional arts councils

SAC funding responsibilities (apart from organisations operating nationally) should be devolved to regional and local bodies. Regional bodies should consider provision that can be more efficiently delivered across the region rather than in smaller packages. They should also consider regional interests and demand. There must be clear linkages to national and local bodies to ensure that broad strategies, rights and entitlements are delivered consistently

The cost of regional bodies need not be excessive if they are populated by volunteers with a modest level of professional officer support.

### **National**

The designation “national” should indicate a company that performs across the whole country and is accessible to most communities. It should also indicate that the quality of work is comparable with similar national organisations in other countries.

National companies should be adequately funded to deliver across the nation to the high standards described above. There is very little point in having a national company that is under funded and therefore cannot deliver either on quality or scope.

National Companies should report to a new funding body with responsibility for the current national companies (Opera, Ballet and Orchestras) plus any other arts organisations operating nationally and internationally.

**Cross Cutting**

Opportunities should be exploited locally, regionally and nationally to promote cross cutting between sport, tourism, education and tourism. Representation from other sectors particularly education should be encouraged on local and regional arts councils.

The responsibility for advocacy for Scottish Culture lies with every citizen of the country. Scots should be encouraged to talk up the cultural activity of the country when they travel internationally.

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