

Ack by email
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From: Helen Munro [munroh@stirling.gov.uk]
Sent: 17 January 2005 11:01
To: info
Cc: Daryl Fraser; Pat Godley; Gordon Jeyes; Bob McGowan; Keith Yates
Subject: Stirling Council Response - Cultural Commission[Scanned]



170105 Cultural
Commission Sub...

For the attention of Karen Watson

I attach Stirling Council's response to the pan-sectoral issues arising from your first phase of consultation. When we spoke on the phone recently you indicated that a response on Monday 17th would suffice.
Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Regards

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Stirling Council – response to Cultural Commission

1. Our Present Approach

Stirling Council is one of Scotland's smaller local authorities yet it has demonstrated significant success in nourishing cultural services and delivery. The Council works on an integrated basis, with Children's Services and Community Services working closely together to deliver cultural services for children and communities eg cultural co-ordinators are based in the Tolbooth Arts Centre. There is a focus on quality and close liaison with artists and musicians to deliver services. The main cultural service providers in the area – Stirling Council, MacRobert, Smith Art Gallery and Museum – work in a collaborative and partnership way. There is also close liaison with Historic Scotland and the National Trust in terms of activities at Stirling Castle and the Bannockburn Heritage Centre.

We have a clear emphasis on inclusion and giving access to cultural activities to audiences and participants who might never have accessed cultural activities before eg work with schools in Regeneration Areas; work with the Criminal Justice Service for women on probation orders; work at Cornton Vale prison; work, in conjunction with Artlink, for adults with learning disabilities, dementia and mental health problems; work with youth groups in terms of music, dance and new media.

We also have an emphasis on quality. This has been acknowledged in terms of a range of national (ie UK wide) and other awards eg the Tolbooth Arts Centres; UK Local Authorities Music Award; Changing Room Gallery. Artists of quality are used in the delivery of programmes and activities, as well as performing for audiences. The Library Service is consistently one of Scotland's top performers and has a flourishing reader development programme, using authors in its delivery. The Smith Art Gallery and Museum is mainly funded by the local authority, yet governed as an independent trust and has gained a good reputation as a local museum of quality.

We have a good spirit of partnership with the Scottish Arts Council and grant funding has enabled innovative approaches, eg to music production, to take place. Our ambition, and delivery, are only constrained by the resources available, both locally and nationally.

2. Cultural Rights

Central to the notion of cultural rights, as reflected in the in the United Nations' resolution (2002), is the affirmation that cultural rights are an integral part of human rights. If human rights are based on principles of equality, fairness and respect, cultural rights should have these principles at the heart. Already these principles are reflected in the many policies and initiatives adopted and being implemented by local authorities across Scotland – policies for community planning, social inclusion, equality, quality of life, diversity and regeneration to name but a few.

Stirling Council believes that everyone should have the following cultural rights:

- To access creative and cultural experiences;
- To explore and develop their creative capacities;
- To express their individual and collective cultural identity, and
- To develop understanding of the cultural landscape

Citizens can access cultural rights as spectators/audiences/visitors and their entitlement is to quality and choice ie an eclectic mix of cultural opportunities.

Hopefully, some citizens may go on to be participants, often starting in school but with a lifelong entitlement. Again, there is the need for an eclectic mix of quality opportunities.

Cultural entitlements should focus on the individual – on increasing the individual uptake of cultural entitlement. This will require co-ordination across agencies and the development of shared values, goals and targets. National targets should reflect local variations and priorities.

Cultural rights and entitlements are a concept to be welcomed, but the concept must be deliverable on the ground. This will require the maximum amount of funds possible and some measure of performance. An integrated approach, with national direction but freedom for local delivery, should aim to maximise resources available for activity on the ground and minimise spend on superfluous structures.

These rights should be at the heart of cultural policy and delivery in Scotland and should be reflected in every walk of public life. There are a number of options for delivering these rights, eg they can be integrated into community plans, enshrined in local cultural strategies and co-ordinated with other strategies such as those for Children's Services and Community Learning and Development, all of which are led by local authorities.

Talented Scottish citizens should also have the right to a cultural pathway to employment ie be employed in the cultural field. This will require recognition by schools, Careers Service and Scottish Enterprise of the cultural sector as employer. FE and HE courses must provide the appropriate pathways to success, as well as research evidence.

3. Performance and Standards

How will we know if cultural rights and entitlements have been achieved? A range of national performance measures will be required to monitor the effectiveness of public spending in cultural activity. Evaluation pertinent to the intrinsic value of cultural experience need to be developed; so also do indicators which include social inclusion and diversity. Any performance indicators should apply to all sectors receiving public money ie voluntary organisations, subsidised arts venues of all kinds as well as local authorities.

4. Institutional Infrastructure

Realising the First Minister's ambition for culture as set out in his 2003 St Andrew's Day speech will require a reconfiguration of the current infrastructure.

If the First Minister's ambition for culture is to be realised, strong leadership and advocacy need to be demonstrated at the highest level. Therefore the Scottish Executive should be central in developing cultural policy and co-ordinating research. The role of the existing strategic bodies need to be examined in the context of the expertise they contribute to the cultural landscape.

A clear national policy, with appropriate performance measures must be delivered locally. There is no place for regional structures in a country the size of Scotland and certainly no place for the money they would consume which would be better spent on artistic delivery.

Community Planning Partnerships exist, by law, throughout Scotland. These enable partnership approaches to be taken by local public partners eg in the delivery of care for older people; in substance abuse work; in community safety and anti-social behaviours programmes; in integrated Children's Services. There are also good examples of collaboration and co-operation in wider area networks eg Health Board or Police Board areas. A community planning approach to the delivery of cultural rights and entitlements, involving artists, local production companies and the voluntary sector working alongside the public sector (local authorities; enterprise companies; NHS) would pay great dividends.

Partnerships or networks that cover the spectrum of cultural activity are the vehicle through which the cultural agenda can be moved forward. Partnerships need to have decision-making authority in order for them to be effective. The existing Community Planning Partnerships could be the vehicle through which culture is integrated into community plans and entitlements distributed at local level.

Local authorities, working in partnership with other agencies, are not only the guardians of community well being but pioneers in it. The wealth of experience and expertise in local authorities ideally place them to plan and deliver the cultural agenda for the next generation.

Local authorities recognise the value of culture and creativity, and artists can be found working across the spectrum of local authority services. Local authorities' leadership role in cultural development is critical. Direct support from Government to local authorities for local cultural initiatives would raise the profile of culture and give a clear signal to local communities that culture is valued at the highest political levels. Local authorities could then get on with the job of removing the geographic, social and cultural obstacles that prevent many people from taking up their full cultural 'entitlement'.

Of paramount importance, is the avoidance of adding to cultural bureaucracy. New partnerships, networks or structures should be "light on their feet" and enable cultural development.

Funding Arrangements

Fulfilling the First Minister's ambition for culture in Scotland will require additional money in the cultural budget. Commitment and leadership from the Scottish Executive would be emphatically expressed if every department contributed an annual percentage of its annual budget to culture – to be expended by the cultural sector through the new Culture Department. In recognition of the value of culture in the everyday lives of the people in Scotland, money need not be tied to specific projects with instrumental objectives but for the people of Scotland to enjoy an improved and extended cultural service.

Cultural organisations bemoan the inadequacy of core funding, giving rise to a seemingly endless quest for limited project funding. Consideration needs to be given to consolidating the myriad of funding streams coming from Executive and the NDPBs. Long term plans for the development of culture in Scotland should guide the allocation of monies. Sectors working together need to acknowledge priorities.

5. Conclusion

Cultural strategy and performance should be set nationally by the Scottish Executive. A few truly national companies could be funded directly by the Executive, but subject

to the same performance measures as all other delivery bodies. Apart from these few companies, cultural rights and entitlements should be delivered by Community Planning Partnerships.

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As a major conduit for the promotion of values in Scotland, the public sector has a critical role in conveying the principle of self and mutual respect. Respect gives rise to confidence – confidence in our own views, abilities, dreams and aspirations. Those in the public sector who have role in shaping minds, informing opinions, conveying values and the like have a key role in validating individual and community diversity. The principle of respecting self and others should proliferate throughout the public sector heralding the arrival of, in the First Minister's words, "...a vibrant, cosmopolitan, competitive country and an internationally recognised creative hub".

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