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Queen Victoria School

Centenary Appeal 61

In Association with The National Youth Orchestras of Scotland

The Cultural Commission
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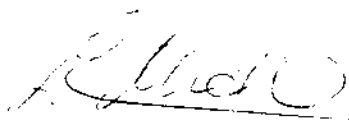
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8th January 2005

To whom it may concern:

I have enclosed some information about Queen Victoria School in Dunblane and our plans to build an Auditorium in 2008 which we hope will become a national centre of excellence for arts and culture including music, dance and theatre. I have also enclosed responses to the Pan Sectoral Questions. Should you require any additional information, please do contact me, I would be happy to assist. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours faithfully,



LINDSEY McARTHUR
APPEAL DIRECTOR
QUEEN VICTORIA SCHOOL

CULTURAL COMMISSION
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION; PHASE 2
PAN-SECTORAL QUESTIONS
DECEMBER 2004

Introduction

Queen Victoria School Dunblane is interested in the work of the Cultural Commission on three grounds:

The School is already well known for the high standard of its pupils' skills in the traditional Scottish activities of Highland Dancing, Piping and Drumming

The School fosters young participants in Music, Drama and the Visual Arts

The School has forged a partnership with a number of cultural groups which make use of the premises for residential courses during holiday periods. Most notable among these are The National Youth Orchestras of Scotland

A representative from the school attended a meeting scheduled for 8 December, at Bellshill Cultural Centre to examine ways in which participation in the consultation process could be taken forward. Unfortunately this meeting did not take place. This Submission is therefore made with possibly incomplete knowledge of the process. It is likely that input from the School might be more relevant at Consultation Stage 3, since the School is more concerned with ways of delivering a cost effective means of meeting some of the aims which are likely to come out of Stage 2 than with the theoretical discussions incorporated in the Commission's earlier work. It is hoped that further proposals will be sought when Stage 3 begins.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Rights, Entitlements and Responsibilities

'Culture' embraces such a wide range of activities that it is hard to generalise in the form taken by the first questions in the discussion document. Whether the form under consideration is Painting, Music, Photography, Broadcasting, Collecting or any other aspect of Culture, the original theme will spring from the desire and the talent of an individual to take part in one of these spheres of activity. The question then becomes to what extent and by what means can such individual efforts be encouraged, guided, and probably funded, by intervention by other agencies, either individual sponsors or Government departments. Any

attempt to enshrine such fluid and diverse element in law or regulation or guardianship could only become stifling, or at worst smack of censorship. Paragraph 5 talks of review. This will be in the hands of sponsors, where such sponsorship is required to permit a project to go ahead, or the thinking public who will not support unworthy culture with their presence at performances or galleries displaying it. Where the Government is a major player in disbursing funds, the allocation of largesse will necessarily always have a proportionate influence on the form of cultural development within Scotland. Where, for instance, broadcasting is supported by advertising the most important influence will be viewing figures, which reflect the public's interests in the form of culture served up by the broadcaster or in the performing arts, the support provided by the audience

The era of an acceptance of 'the nanny state' as the curator of the nation's morals is past. Tate Modern in England and Billy Connolly on Scottish television programmes are, perhaps strangely, part of modern accepted 'culture'

Cultural Leadership

Culture develops through the work of individuals. It cannot be driven, but it can be given encouragement. This ranges from small groups supporting each other's artistic efforts, in drama or painting groups and amateur bands, through to the national organisations, many of which are given time on Radio or Television. Leadership can encourage, through the education of children in school, and the extension of their experience through organisations functioning during the holidays or out of school hours. Workshops and courses can stimulate talent within an older age group. From those who show talent leaders may emerge. The role of the Executive is to facilitate the development of talent by supporting the best of these operations at each age group, and by ensuring that those who have the ability to teach are sufficiently well supported financially that they do not join the brain drain.

Para 7 implies that the influence of the Scottish Executive might determine policies. The fact that Executive money will be channelled into some cultural forms, and not into others will inevitably have that effect, but this should be directed not by ministers but through panels or councils which represent a wider range of interest than Government. To prevent a stereotype developing provision should be made for regular changes in the individuals making up the panels.

The remainder of the questions in this sub section can be summed up by saying that the role of Government, Local Authorities and Universities and centres of artistic and cultural excellence must produce a climate in which excellence can develop, by providing teaching and facilities for the more formal aspects of art, music architecture, drama, etc, within the wide range of their other responsibilities. At the lower levels of education this will lay the groundwork. Within the wider framework of informal or commercial cultural activity, it will never

be possible to satisfy all tastes or all aspirations, but the objective should be the development of true excellence with due attention to obtaining best value from resources which will always be limited. By supporting existing institutions where they are performing well, it should be possible to build on sound foundations. There must, however be an acceptance that 'culture' does not stand still, and innovative ideas must be encouraged where they genuinely show promise.

Pan Sectoral Planning

The concept of Pan Sectoral planning is not an easy one to understand. The overlap between the various aspects of culture occurs in a number of instances such as the written word, its dramatic presentation, and the broadcasting, filming and television productions. Similarly architecture is sometimes the handmaid of the art form for which it is building, whether a gallery, concert hall or theatre. In these instances each project will spring from an idea which is far more likely to be spontaneous to an individual, or arise from the perceived needs of a group, than be the outcome of some master plan. A 'Pan-sectoral' view will need to be taken if there arises a conflict between groups or ideas. This may be one of physical planning, which would be solved through the machinery of Local Authority or appeal procedure, or, more likely, one of funding. Our interpretation of the need for pan-sectoral planning by a master agency is that this would be confined to financial support. Within even this field there would not be a single decision making body, but Government agencies, including Scottish Executive, Local Authority, Europe and lottery would all have the right to exercise their own judgement within the resources available to them. Similarly the voluntary agencies, private trusts and charities would not accept that their decision making over allocation of funds should be taken by anyone except the trustees of those funds. The individual, group or agency wishing to progress a cultural project must be free to place its bids with all the potential funders, and take its chance in competition with others.

With the above points in mind there is scope to examine the inter-relation of Government or quasi-government sponsorship of cultural projects.

Local Authority Level

Cultural activity affects a number of aspects of life within a Local Authority area. A good reputation for theatre, for mounting Festivals etc will enhance the tourist attraction, bringing added business to the area. Social services will benefit from a lively outreach programme to the elderly, to prisons or deprived areas. A high standing in the arts will add lustre to the school and university reputations, enhancing the desirability of that area as a place to study. Local Authorities must be free to weigh the priority that they give to Culture against the many other services which they are required to provide, such as roads, housing, an environment friendly to business, and those aspects of education which are not classified as Culture. Any central planning of Culture passed down from the

Executive should be restricted to guidance of the share of the budget which should be spent on the Arts, provided that these funds are sourced from central resources. Where a Local Authority wishes to support a local initiative, but has not sufficient resources, it should be encouraged to endorse an application for funds at the national level. It should also ensure that projects which it plans to support are not likely to be in direct competition with similar projects in neighbouring authority areas.

National Level

Resources at the national level are likely to be far greater than those at Local Authority level, whether these are directly controlled by the Executive, or through Funds raised from the National Lottery. The requirements are also likely to be much more diverse, and an element of screening and co-ordination will be essential. Questions in Paragraphs 18 to 21 address various aspects of this issue. Paragraph 17, scope, will only be answered in practical terms after decisions have been made on paragraphs 18 to 21, though the principle should be simplicity and speed in the early stages of identifying feasibility or otherwise of a project, and sufficient detail in the later stages to ensure that practical problems have been thoroughly addressed in the planning stages.

Para 18 Governance. Local Authorities should be free to support such cultural activities as they wish, within the resources at their disposal. They should be encouraged to endorse applications affecting their area which a sponsor wishes to submit to the appropriate National or International body.

At national level there must remain a distinction between funding drawn from taxation and lottery funding. Both these channels should be open to applicants and information should be freely exchanged between the executives of the two departments to ensure that double funding does not unduly distort the weighting of resources to any one area or field of Culture. This should not prevent both organisations giving support, but ensure that it happens intentionally.

The Boards with the final decision making authority should be served by sub-committees staffed by specialists in related fields. Without being specific such groupings might include in one category, Drama, Music, Authorship and Broadcasting. Another might have Architecture, and Heritage Buildings, while a third might include all aspects of Music and traditional and modern Dance. The Sub-Committees would have discretion within the cultural aspects covered by their remit

The tasks of the Board and the sub-committees would be to identify projects which deserve support, establish whether they could beneficially combine with other similar projects to enhance the value of both and to contain costly overheads, and to support or endorse for support from International funds those projects which appear to offer best value. The Board should also encourage the

interchange of ideas. Since many of the ideas would be coming up from real life situations, it would be of great benefit to the nation's culture if good ideas could be circulated, or seminars be held, to discuss how their benefits could be available to a wider clientele. With electronic communications this should be easily achieved if the correct mental attitude is instilled. The Board and its Sub-Committees would be able to identify the successes which they wish to support and circulate the details.

Para 19 Each sub-committee should nominate a spokesperson to sit on the national Board.

Para 20 Since it is impossible to satisfy everyone all the time the composition of the sub-committees and the Boards should be regularly refreshed with new blood. The members of the sub-committees should either be active or recent participants in one of the forms of Culture which that sub committee represents.

Para 21 Funding would be the most important part of the regime's work.

Funding Arrangements

Para 22 The Scottish Executive is the appropriate authority for funding found from taxation. Lottery funding should be under the management of a separate Board. (see above)

23 The two senior Boards, appointed by the Executive and the Lottery are the levels at which national funding should be decided across boundaries. There is no reason why local Authorities cannot support projects which bestride boundaries if they lie within their own geographical area, and are within their delegated budgets. The criteria will necessarily be in the eye of the beholder. For this reason we recommend a National Board with representatives from as many aspects of the Cultural scene as is feasible. Many of them may be spokespersons for the sub-committees which review applications from the more closely defined fields, but the Board should be chaired by someone who has not been involved with previous discussions within a single field. Personalities on the Board should be regularly replaced, so that stereotyping is avoided.

24 These decisions must be delegated to the Boards and sub-committees whose duty is to exercise their discretion on behalf of artists and the Nation as a whole. The structure outlined above should permit the widest range of interests to be heard, while enabling the authorities at each level to support or refer projects to a higher level.

25 Awards would be made by the national Board. They should be on a rolling programme with timescales decided to permit the organisations to plan ahead with confidence, but not to become complacent and fail to generate their own funds, or develop their aspect of culture. In most cases grants awarded in one

spending round should be for use 2 or 3 years ahead. Where building projects are involved, the time scale should reflect the planning and construction time-scale.

26 The national Board should inform Local Authorities of projects under review in their own Committees, and should, through the circulation of information, try to minimise the duplication of spending on similar projects in adjacent areas.

27 A local Authority should be permitted to make application for funding to the national Board if the project requires more investment than they can afford, or has benefits which extend beyond their own area, though not necessarily nation-wide.

28 Where criteria are easily defined, the application forms for use at Local and national level should be the same. It is likely that there would be differences in the emphasis which applicants place on some aspects of the bid, when submitting the form to the different levels, but a similar layout, and similar statistical information for both levels would be a great benefit to applicants.

29 The most important aspect is to make face to face discussion of potential projects readily available at an early stage in the conceptual planning. Once either the grant making board for the Executive or for the lottery has expressed its potential support, and any conditions which the applicant must consider, the refined proposal should be considered in principle with the other Board. All aspects of the potential benefit of the project, and the possibility of duplication with similar projects, should be reviewed at this early stage and an indication given about the potential for support, or the additional requirements that must be met if support is to be forthcoming. The excellent system whereby the lottery has in the past supported the detailed planning should be available from one source or other. Co-ordination between the two Boards should begin as soon as they both agree that the project deserves support in principle. If only one Board wishes to back the project, the future programme would be simplified, but if both agree that it is worth supporting then one Board might delegate the future supervision of the project to the other Board on their behalf.

30 The Boards must have discretion to allocate funds as they choose. The composition of the Boards will ensure that the emphasis reflects the best cross-section of informed opinion that can be recruited, and the regular change of members should bring refreshing views to their recommendations. The influence of lobby groups, the press and individual taste will be reflected in the way they make decisions.

31 Membership of the Boards and Committees will treat these issues on their merits. If they are topical issues the members will be aware of them and should not need to be given any extra emphasis by Governmental or other direction. If the expression 'initiative based' means that these initiatives have been launched

by the Executive, then they should have financial support from other central funding.

32 Endowment funding should be managed by the organisation seeking support. It is unlikely that any organisation will be entirely dependant on Executive or lottery funding, and the endowment fund should be built up from the other income sources. The significance for the Boards is that they should recognise that such funding is to provide a guaranteed income from investments, and not to be squanders on day to day expenditure when the organisation applies for subsequent grants which lie within the Board's normal financial remit.

33 Prudence and Effectiveness. There must be a clear audit trail, supported by accounts from recipients of support.

In assessing applications the number of people or groups who will benefit should be a key figure

A high priority should be given to assessing the long term costs and viability of a project to continue without requiring further support.

Alternative ways of meeting the same objectives should be considered when assessing grant applications

An annual review of projects supported should be carried out at the relevant level and a synopsis circulated to the Executive

No system will be without its failures and its critics, and this must be accepted as an endemic risk in supporting activity where there are few hard and fast criteria on which to judge success or failure

Standards and Evaluation

The questions under this heading are difficult to answer without breaking down the requirements to specific types of support. For example, there must be safeguards in the way funding on a building is spent which are inappropriate to the sponsorship of art classes for disabled children. Rather than try to be specific we would stress the importance of careful scrutiny of the application, and the references that he or she presents, and subsequently manage the operation with the lightest touch commensurate with the avoidance of fraud.

Operations and Administration

Keep it simple

39 New technology is constantly evolving. The importance of systems being compatible with each other makes it sensible to adopt Government standards. In

specialised areas, such as ticket sales there may be software which has proved successful in some fields, and should be recommended to other potential users. The Cultural world is part of a much wider world and should not try to develop specialist systems, which will only be of limited application. IT purchasing would be better done through the Government or local Authority channels than through a new free-standing organisation.

43 Allocation of funding to participants. Leadership from the top, demonstrating the importance of lean and efficient management is the only way to avoid administration gathering parkinsonian momentum.

Local Authorities

44,45,46 We are unable to comment

47 Where funds are allotted from the Executive there is justification on insisting that Local Authorities spend them as decreed, but the practicality has been shown to be less easily achieved. This must depend on a tighter control from Edinburgh if it is to be successful. Local Authorities will retain autonomy in their spending plans for funds raised locally, and should have the discretion to respond to the requirements of their constituents, who may place culture high or low on their list of funding priorities.

Regional Bodies

48 No

National

52 National should mean that the Company serves organisations or individuals from the whole of Scotland, and is not intentional exclusive to a limited area. National status should imply that the company's product enhances Scotland's reputation.

53 Since any National organisation cannot justifiably expect a single Local Authority to provide full financial support, even if it is located in that area, it should have a degree of priority for support from the national Board. In accepting such support it must continue to demonstrate that its performance is truly achieving an enhancement of the country's cultural reputation

54 Their funders

55 This will vary with the company's remit. It would be impossible to have a Scottish National Shakespeare Company, but it would be unreasonable for Shakespeare to be excluded from the repertoire of Scottish theatre.

56 For residence they should have the same rights and duties as any other resident company. On tour they should negotiate such terms as are agreeable to the Local Authority.

57 If consistency is appropriate it could be achieved by a bureaucratic examination of the relevant constitutions etc, but from an outsider's viewpoint there would seem little to be gained.

58 This must be the subject of a detailed review by people who know the situation in each constituent part.

Cross-cutting

59 This is a very wide subject where the different cultural disciplines will have different opportunities. There are already strong links between education and the arts, whether it is in teaching within the curriculum, or the wider support for adult learning or youth groupings for cultural purposes. Those who are most closely involved will no doubt have specific suggestions about achieving better co-operation by sharing facilities which are only used for limited periods or for feeding participants in, for instance, schools, into wider local or national groups where they can obtain instruction and experience at a higher level. The role of the Highland Youth Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestras fill exactly this role. Any management structure for the Cultural should identify best practice and circulate that information among others who could benefit.

60 The opportunities are limited, but the fact that both cultural and sporting organisations often depend upon the support of large gatherings means that some aspect of the two can combine for their mutual benefit. The presence of the Queen Victoria School Pipes and drums at Murrayfield for the past 75 years demonstrates that this does happen.

When considering the provision of facilities, the value of versatile accommodation, which can serve a wide range of purposes should not rule out the use of halls for cultural and sporting use, particularly at any level where a single purpose building would often lie empty.

61 The unique aspects of Scottish Culture, (Piping, Highland Dancing, Fiddle music etc) are part of the attraction that brings tourists to Scotland. Scottish Culture is also exported to many other parts of the world when National Orchestras or Pipe Bands perform overseas. The importance of ensuring the highest standards of performance, (and, dare one say it performers' or supporters' behaviour) will ensure that these activities enhance the nation's reputation. This does not mean that traditional music must be fossilised in a pattern that existed 50 or 100 years ago. The songs of modern bands, the accompaniment of pipe music by military or brass bands, which would have made older purists turn in their graves are part of cultural development. The

authorities blessing the development of Culture, must build on the tradition, rather than be restricted by it. A great deal will depend on the good sense of the Boards and sub-committees supporting artists and projects which have the potential to stand out in the world because of their high quality.

CONCLUSIONS

The Questionnaire addresses a number of points of policy which we have attempted to answer. The Covering letter said that you were asking for our views on Pan Sectoral matters in particular

The practical development and use of cultural rights

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

The school's interest in the outcome of these deliberations is in delivering one project which can assist the Cultural Commission to meet its desire to extend the benefits of several aspects of its tasks to a wide range of cultural organisations. In this we are striving towards a practical solution to an existing recognised deficiency, rather than to a management structure within which such projects should later be developed. You may feel that these points will be better covered in Stage 3 of your deliberations.

Our aim is to construct a facility in Central Scotland which will be of value to many sectors of Scotland's culture. It will:

Meet the School's needs for teaching and display of

Music

Drama:

Piping and Drumming

Highland Dancing

Provide rehearsal space, with ideal acoustic qualities for

The National Youth Orchestras of Scotland

The Highland Youth Orchestra

Other residential courses during the holidays and non-residential during term time, when not in use by the school.

It will offer recording facilities in ideal acoustic surroundings for any orchestra, band or group

It will be supported by full residential accommodation for long stay visitors during school holidays

The construction of the Auditorium will offer an opportunity for the Architects and Builders to demonstrate the best in Scottish construction.

It is hoped that projects like this will form part of the framework on which the Cultural Commission can take forward its deliberations into the field of practical measures.

Submission to the Cultural Commission – Queen Victoria School

Present Situation

The School provides facilities for a number of youth groups during holiday periods. These include The National Youth Orchestras of Scotland (NYOS) and The Highland Youth Orchestra who periodically make use of the residential accommodation, catering facilities and classrooms prior to going on tour. The main shortcoming is a space large enough to rehearse the full orchestra, with acoustics which are in any way comparable to a world class concert hall. At present a primitive conversion of the Sports Hall has had to suffice.

The Centenary Appeal Project

Queen Victoria School has never had a hall or theatre sufficiently large to hold the whole school family meeting the conditions of modern health and safety regulations. The original theatre is limited to a capacity of 110, which is totally insufficient for a school of 280 pupils, with additional places required for staff and families. It has long been the intention of Her Majesty's Commissioners (the Board of Governors) to celebrate the school centenary by building a modern multi-purpose Auditorium in which school assembly, concerts, plays and performances by the School's Pipe Band could be held. Given that NYOS are seeking rehearsal facilities that would replace the one they had at Saint Andrews Campus in Glasgow which is no longer available, the Commissioners engaged architects to design a building that would not only meet the school's needs, but would also meet the acoustic requirements of the Orchestras, and other organisations such as musical groups undertaking recording sessions. At present there is no other suitable facility in Central Scotland that could provide high quality rehearsal facilities and on-site residential accommodation in a secure child friendly environment.

During 2004 an initial design brief was produced by architects to RIBA stage C. Fundraising is currently underway, and it is intended that the Auditorium should be opened in Spring 2008, the school's Centenary year.

NYOS Requirements

In 2000 a feasibility study was carried out on behalf of NYOS to examine the possibility of building a venue in partnership with public or private sectors. The aim was to provide a National Centre for the provision of educational projects for all ages with particular emphasis upon music, in Scotland. Total estimated cost for the project was £8.6M. The project did not go ahead because

NYOS currently use a variety of venues around Scotland but none provide the ideal rehearsal space and residential accommodation that will be available at QVS. A Partnership between the two organisations means that costs will be greatly reduced. There will be no land purchase costs, no need to build residential accommodation nor kitchen or toilet facilities. There is also a much reduced need for break out rooms. Running costs are also greatly reduced as the Ministry of Defence has agreed to maintain the building.

Facilities Available at Queen Victoria School

During the school term time the Auditorium and Sports facilities would be available at times when they are not required for school use. (The existing facilities are already let to a number of youth organisations on this basis and the design of the Auditorium allows outside users to enter and leave without disruption to any other school activities)

During the school holiday period all the facilities will be made available to visiting groups. These comprise modern living accommodation for a total of 280 girls and boys as well as rooms well placed for resident staff; a wide range of classrooms suitable for all forms of instruction in groups of 30 pupils or less; playing fields, swimming pool and floodlit all-weather pitch, and sports hall. Catering facilities can be provided for all residents. An administration staff is always on hand as well as 24 hour security staff.

When the Auditorium is completed it will accommodate 450 tiered retractable seats and a level performance area of 25m X 20m. Particular attention is being paid to the low sound levels from extraneous sources and from the air conditioning to make this facility suitable for the highest level of musical rehearsal and performance. Within the same building there will be smaller teaching rooms which would provide opportunities for smaller groups to rehearse.

The Location

Queen Victoria school was sited at Dunblane because it is a central location well served by railways leading to Glasgow, Edinburgh and the North of Scotland. Modern road networks mean that it is accessible from both Glasgow and Edinburgh in under an hour. A slip road 400 yards from the school gate means that routes to the North and North east are also easily accessible.

Managing the Concept

The school was originally funded by public subscription as the war memorial for all Scottish servicemen who died in the South African Wars. When the school was constructed the land and buildings were donated to the War Office (now the Ministry of Defence) in return for a guarantee that the Government would maintain it 'in perpetuity' for the sons and, since 1995, the daughters, of Scottish Service personnel.

The Ministry of Defence has undertaken to accept the Auditorium as an enhancement to the School's facilities and to maintain the building once it is completed.

The National Youth Orchestras of Scotland will have priority for the use of the Auditorium and other facilities as they need when these facilities are not required by the school. They will be charged standard rates for such short term lettings. It is anticipated that their requirements will be in the early weeks of school holidays as they prepare to take the orchestras on tour. There will therefore be considerable periods, especially during the Summer, when the premises will be available for any other Scottish youth groups.

During term time the Auditorium would be available for letting to other groups for daytime and evening use, in the same way as the sports facilities are periodically let to outside users at the present time. Booking for both residential or day-time use would be made through the Bursar's office.

Timescale

It is planned that building work should begin in Spring of 2006 and the Auditorium should be opened in Summer 2008.