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**Karen**

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**From:** lesley.ohare@falkirk.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 17 January 2005 16:31  
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**Subject:** Stakeholder consultation:Phase 2 - Pan Sectoral Questions[Scanned]



Attachment falkirk council  
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Please find attached formal response to the above and apologies for not meeting Friday's deadline.

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## FALKIRK COUNCIL COMMUNITY SERVICES

### RESPONSE TO CULTURAL COMMISSION STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION: PHASE 2 PAN SECTORAL QUESTIONS

#### 1. Introduction

This document is the formal response from Falkirk Council's Cultural Services team; we have not tried to answer each of the 64 questions but instead have endeavoured to provide responses under each of the topic headings.

#### 2. Rights, entitlements and responsibilities

- 2.1 For government (local and national) it is necessary that the concept of a minimum standard of provision be developed. Currently cultural provision varies widely across Scotland and, with it, the commitment to make provision universal. If the people of Scotland are to be *given* cultural rights, the concept of 'adequate' provision needs to be more clearly (and positively) defined. If they are to *take up* their cultural rights, and Scotland is to reap the benefits, then a concept of entitlement that is more aspirational than 'adequate' needs to be adopted.
- 2.2 For the individual it is necessary that there is a full understanding of what these rights entail (and what responsibilities accompany rights).
- 2.3 Methodology: local cultural audits to inform cultural strategies which in turn generate action and impact. There is a need for a clearer link into Community Planning as a mechanism to inform debate, understanding and implementation as well as ensuring a more holistic approach. Culture is, like health, education, housing, etc., a social necessity in its own right but also like these, one that cannot exist in isolation.

#### 3. Cultural leadership

- 3.1 The lack of cultural leadership is perhaps the result of a lack of confidence in the value of culture. The First Minister's St Andrew's Day speech in 2003 set an exciting challenge for the whole country not only to look at how cultural activity is supported but also to raise its credibility, its value and its importance.
- 3.2 This lack of confidence is reflected in the language of the cultural sector: concepts and words such as the handout and the begging bowl continue to be used rather than those of investment and development.<sup>1</sup> An effective cultural leadership whether at national or local level needs to

grapple with this perception of inferiority and constant self-justification if culture is genuinely to take its place at the national policy table. A Leadership development programme currently in operation across Scotland's museum sector provides a model for application across the entire cultural sector.

- 3.3 This will require political commitment at Executive level through to local politicians; culture has to be enshrined in political manifestos and not just the special interest of a minority; it requires a ministerial portfolio.
- 3.4 Cultural leadership should not only be seen in a political context, the arms-length principle is still a valid and important distinction. State support for culture should not result in state-led culture. Apart from the dangerous political precedents for this, there should be an acknowledgement that the dynamics of culture do not fit into the administrative hierarchy of government. There must be a powerful lobbying voice (or series of voices) able to articulate the concerns of a wide range of stakeholders be they artists, volunteers, socially excluded groups, cultural minorities, etc. There cannot be one leadership, potential leaders and voices do and will continue to emerge from a variety of sectors: private, public, academic and the arms length body/ies should provide the opportunities for these voices to be heard and acknowledged. An effective structure is suggested by VOCAL/COSLA in their interim position statement.
- 3.5 Effective leadership also depends on a clear view of the larger purpose. The question was asked at a recent conference, what is the big social project towards which cultural provision is directed? The present structures of provision had their origins in the Victorian era, and were designed to support industrial manufacture and economic empire. Is the emphasis now on developing creativity and responsibility to support economic and social independence, environmental sustainability, global connectedness and complexity?

#### **4. Pan sectoral planning**

- 4.1 A balance needs to be struck. On the one hand, planning should be conducted beyond silos to maximise the value of wider input. On the other, the genuine differences in values, purpose, practice and priorities should be accommodated.
- 4.2 Pan-sectoral planning should not in its turn create a cultural silo. There are valuable partnerships to be made between the constituent parts of the cultural sector, perhaps even more valuable ones to be made between those constituent parts and other sectors.

## **5. Funding arrangements**

- 5.1 Funding arrangements need to reflect a genuine belief in the value of culture to a healthy society. Levels of public funding of culture in Europe reflect culture not merely as a right or entitlement, but as a social necessity. This produces more effective leadership, because having the funding, cultural providers are expected to deliver.
- 5.2 The final decision on how much funding is required by the cultural sector needs to be re-evaluated; Agenda 21 for Culture suggests that national governments should be working towards a minimum of 1% of national budget to be allocated to culture. This will not be achieved without a greater confidence in the value of culture to the nation as well as the need to move away from traditional approaches/calculations/divisions of funding and look from the perspective of what each sector *requires* to deliver on the new cultural agenda. (This is not to suggest that everyone gets what they want, however, any new approach to supporting culture must set new priorities).
- 5.3 Local authority spending on culture cannot exist in a vacuum and must relate back to a clearly articulated and agreed minimum level of provision (see Section 2: Rights, entitlements and responsibilities above).
- 5.4 There is the need for longer funding horizons, opportunities for organisations to develop reserves, to invest and to experiment. Again this refers to a move away from the 'hand-out/justification' culture. The need to focus more on revenue rather than project funding will particularly enable smaller, independent organisations to develop and flourish. There is also a need for a more integrated approach to government funding particularly generic pots such as Quality of Life funding.

## **6. Standards and Evaluation**

- 6.1 A recent Demos report<sup>ii</sup> suggests a new approach for understanding cultural impact and the need to look beyond systems and measurements appropriated from other disciplines which fail to truly capture precisely what culture (its artefacts, its processes) can achieve. There is a danger that existing systems of monitoring and evaluation stifle rather than encourage experimentation and diversity.

## **7. Operations and administration**

- 7.1 The tension between resources allocated to artistic production and participation and the management and administration required to deliver these refers back to standards and evaluation and the need to achieve

balance. By seeking more effective ways of measuring cultural value, the reduction in project funding and a move towards an integrated approach to reporting results should mean a reduction in the level of administrative support required. However, this support should not be pared back to the point where artists/performers/facilitators are over-burdened with administrative tasks.

## **8. Local authorities**

- 8.1 This issue is dealt with in Section 2 in the discussion on the need for a clearer definition of 'adequate provision' and perhaps this needs to be done at local level through debate and discussion to take into account local needs and aspirations. This is also applicable to the idea of developing national standards; there is a need to pursue and encourage excellence whilst also acknowledging that this is a discourse fraught with controversy.

## **9. Regional bodies**

- 9.1 If Community Planning is to work effectively, it has to work beyond the purely local authority defined boundaries to regional level where facilities and services can work together to create cultural capacity and maximise resources. The mechanisms and strategies already exist to ensure more effective cultural planning.
- 9.2 However, under the present structural framework, whether we need additional regional cultural bodies in a country the size of Scotland is debatable. Regional planning bodies would simply create an unnecessary level of bureaucracy and cost which cannot be justified in a sector already struggling for resources.

## **10. National**

- 10.1 It is important to be clear in the definitions of 'national' and 'Scottish' to acknowledge cultural diversity, traditional/indigenous cultures, contemporary work and international links. 'Scottish culture' should be outward looking and a national cultural body should have an international profile and should be resourced accordingly.
- 10.2 From an internal perspective within Scotland, the concept of national also implies blanket coverage. The idea of a distributed national collection in the museums sector implies that all museums in Scotland are effectively part of one network. It is a useful basis for cross-sector co-operation and, if there are organisations within such a network carrying the label 'national', then their activities, standards of practice, resourcing and

services to the remainder of the sector should be appropriate to that status.

- 10.3 In the coming months a consensus must be reached as to what, artistically, is expected of the national companies and how this can help fulfil a wider range of objectives: for example, can Scotland afford Scottish Opera's aspirations? Does the National Theatre of Scotland offer an alternative model for the future development of national companies? It is likely that by offering special privileges to national companies will only cause resentment among smaller organisations (TAG is not strictly a national company but it operates throughout Scotland). It is more important that all state support carries with it responsibilities relevant to the organisation/individual receiving that support.
- 10.4 To ensure a pan-sectoral perspective, a pan-sectoral national cultural agency makes sense, although (see Section 4 above) a balance needs to be struck between this overview and the specific requirements of constituent parts of the sector.

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14 January 2005

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<sup>i</sup> John Holden, *Creating Cultural Value*, Demos, December 2004, [www.demos.co.uk](http://www.demos.co.uk); Scottish Arts Council, *Towards a Cultured*, Creative Scotland, 2004, p10.

<sup>ii</sup> *ibid.*