

Cumbernauld Theatre



Response to Cultural Commission Stakeholder Consultation Phase 2

Introduction

Cumbernauld Theatre's phase one submission was based on my "Theatre of Opportunity" which is a practice/methodology and tool to enable the full range of applications of creativity and arts to be managed across as wide a spectrum of cultural and educational activities as possible.

The initial submission also suggested the formation of two umbrella organisations- Creative Scotland(CS)and Creative Enterprise Scotland (CES)- that would interact, inform and respond to local national and international organisations and initiatives. It also referred to "the Creative Cycle" which was a method of supporting, creating and nurturing talent. CS and CES along with the Creative Cycle could be the mechanisms by which we could develop and deliver the need to "realise potential" "nurture talent" and find solutions to the questions posed by the culture commission in phase two of it's consultation.

In response to phase two the following paper aims to develop the thinking and application of the Theatre of opportunity and more specifically the development of the above agencies to support the future.

Some of it is aspirational but lots of it could be achieved with some joined up thinking and re direction of resources.

I have structured my responses around the same structure as the 62 questions as best as I could but, through necessity, have approached some of the thinking tangentially. Obviously the focus is on theatre, but when referring to "theatre" I am referring to the "Theatre of Opportunity" and the full range of "Theatrical" experience which includes all art forms and creative industry practice. The emphasis on theatre is due to my belief that the network and infrastructure of theatre and theatre venues is one that can realise the ambitions and aspirations of a confident culture in Scotland.

Hopefully it all makes sense and is of some use in the deliberations of the commission.

Simon Sharkey
Director Cumbernauld Theatre

Creative Scotland

Below is an extract from my original submission. It introduces the idea of a new “arms Length” body that oversees the development of arts and creativity within the subsidised sector.

The most significant achievement in the past decade is undoubtedly the creation of “Creative Scotland.” While many may reminisce about the old institutions like SAC, Scottish Screen and Scottish Enterprise no one will argue that the new body is much better equipped to respond to the opportunities for investment in individuals, companies, organisations and networks as the need arises and as the strategic demands emerge. In any case the new legislation dictated that the current cultural bodies had to be re constituted.

It was this responsive and pro active approach that allowed for

- *Development of the physical infrastructure which already existed but had been neglected for some years .*
- *Support and development of networks needing consolidation of resources to support clear organisation and sustainable long term planning.*
- *Increased access and opportunity to the creative activity by accessing local activity and using it as a portal to national and international experiences.*
- *Evolution of theatre practice to meet 21st century imperatives. The methodology and practices supported expression and development of all art forms and mediums.*
- *Fully costed and extremely cost effective business planning that responded to, but was not a slave of community planning.*
- *Integration of theatre practice in the creative curriculum development and the social sector.*
- *The best practitioners and producers to sustain careers in Scotland.*

Please see original submission for full detail.

These aims should not be read as exhaustive but indicative of how CS could support the foundations, logistics and develop resources that would in essence become the research and development function that could interface with the more dynamic “Creative Enterprise Scotland.”

Creative Enterprise Scotland

Below is an extract from the original submission suggesting the creation of a body functioning autonomously within the enterprise Scotland network and connecting with Creative Scotland by acting as a partner and conduit to the consumer and “commercial” exploitation of the products and by products of creativity.

It was James Boyle who first turned the phrase “Cultural Venture Capitalism” when describing what he thought the SAC’s role should be. He subsequently demonstrated exactly what he meant when he led his “Cultural Commission” to persuade the executive to invest millions in the physical, social, artistic, educational and leisure infrastructure of our cultural institutions.

Creative Enterprise determined to

- *Place theatre at the cutting edge of developing creativity, confidence and entrepreneurial flair.*
- *Place theatre and theatre network at the heart of cultural tourism*
- *Create direct funding from enterprise to invest in creativity via theatre practice.*
- *Create clear routes of articulation/exchange between theatre, new media and broadcast.*
- *Create new ways of supporting the arts entrepreneurs.*
- *Place theatre and theatre network at the heart of social economy development.*

Please see original submission for full detail.

Creative Enterprise Scotland and Creative Scotland would work with each other in realizing potential, nurturing the talent, directing the resources and identifying and managing the routes of supply and demand in a shifting economy and environment.

This in turn would support clear routes of articulation and application of creativity across all sectors, working on local national and international scale.

The Creative Cycle

The Creative Cycle is a method of supporting artists and creative industry practitioners throughout a life long learning cycle that doubles as a career path. It identifies potential and nurtures the talent from school age through higher and further education, through industry led training, sabbatical development, learning through teaching and mentoring. This in turn supports the identification of talent at an early stage and allows practitioners who have completed the cycle to re engage at any point in a creative and nurturing role. Within this cycle are tangential/cross sectoral applications of the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the process. The cycle works symbiotically with the audiences/consumers of the activities.

Summary

Creative Scotland, Creative Enterprise Scotland and practitioners working within the Creative Cycle would connect across all sectors, all audiences, all educational establishments, on a local, national and international scale and provide the architecture, foundations, supports and structures that would in turn support the atrioms of aspiration, ambition and enlightenment with the dynamic for change.

In doing this these three elements would be able to explore and develop the solutions to the questions below. There are no hard and fast answers to these challenges and we must, instead of setting out to achieve consensus, lead with a vision that inspires but is allowed to develop along with a confident cultural voice.

Rights Entitlements and Responsibilities

Cultural rights should be enshrined in law. The individuals rights and entitlements should be articulated through on going consultation, dialogue and identification of emerging demand and opportunity.

This dialogue should be facilitated by CS CES and the Executive. It should be articulated through local authorities, local enterprise, local education and the voluntary sector.

The individuals rights and entitlements should be qualified through criteria developed within a framework and strategy informed by local authority areas, existing and emerging networks and articulated through CS and CES.

CS and CES would then identify the routes of supply and demand and manage the resources, direction of finances and advocacy to support access to rights and entitlements.

The responsibilities of the individuals and groups accessing and exercising these rights should be through contracts and conditions agreed on individual, local, national and international perspectives.

Guardianship of the above relationships and exercising of authority should sit within a scheme of delegation that would begin with the individual and rise to the Scottish Executive via voluntary groups, individual companies and providers, networks and consortia, government bodies and local authorities, CS, CES and the culture and enterprise committee.

Review of all of the above has to be led by CS and CES but be informed by a full dialogue. The responsibility to amend should sit with CS and CES, thus protecting the arms length principle.

CS and CES along with LA's and should identify the relevant mechanisms and direct resources to infrastructure on a local, regional and international scale.

Cultural Leadership

The arms length principle is sacrosanct.

The Scottish Executive should interface with the cultural sector by mapping the landscape of needs and opportunity then should finance the resources to traverse this landscape. This should happen principally through CS, CES and LA's, but also through connecting with the creative cycle by financing and underwriting the career development of the practitioners and supporting the outcomes of their development i.e projects, research, placements, residencies, mentoring schemes. (essentially a massive expansion of creative Scotland awards, but within a strategic context that can feed back in to policy strategy and infrastructure)

The executive should also support cross sectoral planning by ring fencing a percentage of each departments budgets for cultural spend and directing it to individual and community spending power tied in to local and regional community planning.

There is a real paucity of cultural leadership in Scotland. We need visionaries with inspirational manifestos and a clear voice that will engage a wide range - specific and general - of stakeholders in a strategy that will be dynamic, responsive and achievable.

These visionaries need to be able to operate within a structure that allows for long term development. They need to be supported by a team and national network that connects the local, regional national and international activities together in a landscape of opportunity and designed sustainability.

They should be protected from the need to deliver strategy and policy so that they can concentrate on the formation of same. They should be allowed to focus on the gathering of intelligence, knowledge and skill that will allow responsive, dynamic, effective and robust mechanisms to deliver on policy and strategy

The leaders should be identified through consultation with all stake holders including artists, organisations, networks etc.

The Creative Cycle could easily throw up some leaders and allow them to lead at a chosen level of operation. That is to say that Universities, local authorities, private and commercial sector, voluntary sector and government could support the leaders through regional clusters, academic networks, theatre and venue networks, museums, libraries and through individual bespoke development programmes that are part of the creative cycle. Their activity and development would feed back into strategies and policies of CS, CES, La's and government.

This would allow the leaders to engage with individual artists, grass roots organisations, private and corporate sectors, government departments etc and then translate needs and opportunities into policy and strategy via structures outlined above.

Pan Sectoral Planning

The leaders and teams described above could be placed within sectors and maintain a dialogue between CS, and CES in order to keep the flow of supply and demand open.

Demand would come from ring fenced monies and strategy would be determined by ability to direct resources.

This should be done within an all encompassing scope and timeframe i.e room for short, medium and long term planning and responses to be achieved on local, national and international scale. It should be very detailed when appropriate and very open when needed.

It should be able to respond to "instant fixes," but aim to support generational development.

The governance of pan-sectoral planning would ultimately be led by the enterprise and culture committee but should feed and direct resources to CS and CES in order to respond to pan-sectoral needs.

Funding arrangements

There needs to be a broader context for the calculation of cultural needs. The first consideration needs to be informed by the needs of artists and

organisations who's futures are not viable with the current level of resource. We then need to factor in the expectation of growth within cultural enterprise and cultural development.

We need to make a realistic calculation on the resources required to maintain access to cultural experience via existing and developing venues, organisations and networks. This needs to have parity over population centres.

£25 million could secure the future viability of theatre and theatre networks in Scotland. This would support a wide range of delivery but resources required to deliver on a growing expectation from pan sectoral demands and increased enterprise would have to be supported by new money.

The New money would have to be determined by a broad audit and realistic growth plans across all sectors. This should be conducted by CES as the first step in determining the future market for growth in cultural enterprise.

A large contingency fund should be ring fenced for culture.

CS and CES along with LA's should determine where and how funds are disbursed. The contingency should be able to complement and contradict the strategies for dissemination of funds by CS and CES and should be governed by executive responses to individual and organisational demand.

This would allow the executive to empower the individuals and support resources for initiative based activity and or artist led activity.

National agencies should not have any influence over local decisions, but should compete in the market place by forming alliances and accords with local and regional clusters. In order to allow this to happen LA's and local organisations should have ring fenced funds for alliances and accords.

Examination of the benefits of endowments should take place along side examination of large scale investment funds aimed to create commercial exploitation of resources supported by endowment funding.

Effective use of all of the above and accountability has to be the responsibility of the organisations spending it. They should be able to demonstrate targets built round criteria of Vision, Viability and Value.

Standards and Evaluation

Standards and evaluation are relative and open to subjective consideration of the vision and value of the experience. However there are clearer measures of consideration to be built around the viability of outcome and output.

CS should determine the measures standards and evaluation over vision and value and CES should determine the measures, standards and evaluation over viability.

Each of these measures should inform the other so that the balance of the artistic integrity is in harmony with the individual and local purchasing power i.e the intrinsic and instrumental Vision, Viability and Value are balanced into an holistic set of standards.

There should be a chain reaction of check lists to be achieved throughout the life of an activity or business plan, this should be self regulatory but informed by national benchmarking.

Operations and Administration

39. There is huge potential for a cultural porthole to link education, venues, tickets providers, libraries, visit Scotland, enterprise companies, training companies, artists audiences, suppliers and consumers.

The port hole could be structured around elements of the "theatre of Opportunity"

40. Buildings should be put in to trust and looked after with endowments that are then supported by investment in order to exploit the resource commercially. The commercial exploitation would enhance the grant aid and allow the organisation to interface with CES with realistic resources that can sustain growth.

41. responsibility for international cultural development should lie with CS and CES.

43. The value of the arts and the ability of artists to be visionary and sustain viable environments needs to be clearly articulated to artists as well as across all sectors of society.

There needs to be money and incentives, training (the creative cycle) and clear routes of articulation for the knowledge and skills of artists to be translated into value for money in terms of community and commercial gain.

The gulf between subsidised and commercial art form development and creative industry practice needs to be bridged- the creative cycle can achieve this.

Local Authorities

Local authorities should have ring fenced resources to sustain access to cultural activity. They should also have funds that are directed to regional and national initiatives agreed with CES and CS.

They should not be tied to national agreements but should seek to satisfy local demands through regional and national resources as well as local.

They should have a light touch and aim to be removed from the delivery of activity and instead finance and support resources for artists and organisations to interface directly with initiatives led by local demand and informed by CS and CES.

The justification to have ring fenced monies directed into local, regional and national resource is that the authority will then be contributing to and benefiting from a strong economy and environment conducive to growth and change.

Arts and creativity, culture and enterprise are the most unique selling point of any area, local authorities can brand their aspirations, ambitions and quantifiable benefits of residing in the area with all of the culture and creative outputs and outcomes.

Regional Bodies

CES and CS should co ordinate regional aspects to cultural planning. They can develop and sustain clusters and networks that will inform develop and deliver across pan sectoral demands and individual and organisational resources.

The cost of regional clusters and networks would be justified in the savings to be made in delivering strategically to education, and 3rd sector economies. There is also justification in increased co ordination of strategy to exploit creativity commercially and share in success- financial and social.

National

We should expect the very best from all our national bodies. They should be the pinnacle/ example to which we all aspire. They should be autonomous and answer directly to the executive but should be tied in to be responsive to CES and CS as mechanisms for delivery.

They should explore resource sharing but in doing so guard against homogeneity in marketing, design, resourcing and commercial exploitation routes.

Cross Cutting

Creative Scotland and Creative Enterprise Scotland would have cross cutting built in to its operation. This would be supported and informed by the creative cycle and the leaders emerging from the creative cycle.