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Matthews B (Barry)

From: Duncan Hendry [Duncan.Hendry@aberdeenperformingarts.com]
Sent: 29 March 2007 12:37
To: Cultural Bill Consultation
Subject: FAO Barry Matthews - Response to Culture Bill

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Dear Barry
Please find attached the response from Aberdeen Performing Arts to the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill and the respondent information form.

Best Wishes
Duncan Hendry

Duncan Hendry
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Aberdeen Performing Arts Response to the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill

Aberdeen Performing Arts (APA) is a non profit distributing company set up to operate His Majesty's Theatre and Aberdeen Music Hall and provides education and outreach activity for all age ranges. A subsidiary commercial company runs Aberdeen Box Office and catering within our two venues. We stage over five hundred performances each year attracting over 400,000 customers.

Aberdeen Performing Arts welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Culture Bill and welcomes the importance the new bill places on cultural provision in Scotland.

The Board and managers of the company have considered the draft bill – in particular the parts of the bill that affect the performing arts - and the following responses to the questions in the consultation summarise the views of the Board and managers. APA is also part of the Cultural Forum for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and some of the views expressed have emerged from discussion of the bill within that forum.

Cultural Entitlements

Q1 Do you think that developing local cultural entitlements will help to increase participation in cultural activities?

APA welcomes the concept of local cultural entitlements and believes that this initiative will increase participation in cultural activities. The concept of agreeing local entitlements through the community planning process will ensure that appropriate entitlements are established for each locality.

We believe that the development of local cultural entitlements will lead to increased expectation and demand from local communities and without increased resources it may not be possible to meet these demands without a realignment of resources. There will be a human resource and training requirement for practitioners to deliver entitlements if demand rises significantly (which it is likely to do).

We are however concerned about the nomenclature – “Cultural Entitlements” - when these “entitlements” will have no legal position with the bill. The word entitlement indicates that they will be enforceable rights and it appears this will not be the case. It may be prudent to think of a more appropriate word to replace “entitlement”.

Q2 If you believe further or alternative measures are necessary, what are they?

As well as consideration as to the name, consideration should be given to resources required - both financial and human - as we believe demand will increase significantly once these provisions are publicised. There may also be training issues to consider in order to ensure that there are adequate practitioners available to deliver entitlements.

Q3 How do you think the Scottish Executive and Local authorities can best utilise the influence and impact of cultural activity?

The benefits of cultural activity to health, regeneration and community spirit should be publicised and cultural activity should be strongly advocated and celebrated by both the Executive and local authorities.

Q4 Do you think that the initial draft guidance under this part of the Culture Bill is clear and helpful? Is there anything else it should contain?

For most part the guidance is clear however our recent discussions in the cultural forum in Aberdeen have highlighted concerns about inconsistency of terminology in the document eg National Bodies, National Organisations.

Creative Scotland

Q1 Do you believe that there should be a single national cultural body?

APA is supportive of the idea of a single national cultural body, Creative Scotland to replace the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen.

Q2 Do you agree with the remit proposed for Creative Scotland?

APA is broadly in favour of the powers envisaged for Creative Scotland however we feel that clarification is required on the relationship between Creative Scotland and the Executive specifically on their respective roles in formulating national cultural strategy. The role of the responsible Minister and the team of Ministerial advisors and their relationship with Creative Scotland should be clarified.

We believe the economic development role for creative industries would lie more effectively with Creative Scotland rather than Scottish Enterprise as they will have a better grasp on projects and businesses that deserve support.

APA strongly believes that Creative Scotland should have a regional element within its staff structure to avoid funding imbalances that have been prevalent within many of the existing national funding bodies such as the SAC and Heritage Lottery. The current systems have given rise to many areas of the country where there has been a low uptake of funds. This in turn has necessitated agencies targeting these areas to try to deliver more funds to these funding "black spots".

This situation could be avoided in future if the structure of Creative Scotland has a number of regional officers tasked with the dissemination of information on funding schemes. These officers should be proactive in giving advice and assistance on the development of funding applications.

Q3 Do you agree that Creative Scotland should work in concert with the Scottish Executive to implement national cultural policy?

Creative Scotland must work in concert with the Executive to agree arts strategy and should then take the lead role in ensuring delivery of the objectives set out in the strategy

Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the consultation document are not directly relevant to APA and we have therefore not expressed an opinion on these areas of the legislation.

**Duncan Hendry
Chief Executive
Aberdeen Performing Arts
27 March 2007**