

Consultation Questions

Local Cultural entitlements

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

No

Additional Comments:

We do not feel that this alone will help to increase participation. It would be easy for a local authority simply to describe its existing service. Simply providing information about

	what is provided may not necessarily increase or diversify participation.
2. If you believe further or alternative measures are necessary, what are they?	We do not believe in setting down minimum standards, as that would be taken as a benchmark which local authorities could use to reduce existing levels of provision. But we do feel that a baseline should be taken, then a tool developed for measuring participation. This might mean reduced participation in some areas, and increased participation in others. At the moment, a large amount of volunteer led arts activity is invisible. A good model would be the Glasgow cultural statistics digest which John Myrescough developed in 1990.
3. How do you think the Scottish Executive and local authorities can best utilise the influence and impact of cultural activity?	This is a strange question. How can you utilise an influence? But let us try to answer it nonetheless. First of all, we need to get things the correct way round. Cultural activity will only have an impact if it is of the highest quality. Poor arts makes poor impact. So it is absolutely NOT the best way to identify social or economic outcomes and look for arts which will deliver them. On the contrary, Scottish Executive and Local authorities need to create an environment where good quality art can flourish, then choose the best emerging artists. Work with these artists to think up fantastic projects that could deliver the outcomes desired. If you do it the other way round, there is a danger that we will get the Solvent Abuse Musical, delivered by out of work actors because there is money in drug prevention.
4. Do you think the initial draft guidance under Part 1 of the Culture Bill is clear and helpful? Is there anything else it should contain?	No
	There needs to be a very clear code of good practice for consultation with volunteer-led groups. We would suggest working with a group of umbrella bodies (not just Voluntary Arts Scotland), to write such a code. A good model was the COSLA/SAC Code of Practice on Arts and Disability produced in 1990, where a group of passionate arts activists in the field worked with SAC and COSLA to produce a guide which was then confirmed as recommended practice. SCDA would be very happy to participate in such a working group. Why is this necessary? Just look at the consultations which the Cultural Commission ran. Sessions aimed at the "citizen consumer" were held on a Thursday afternoon, when most

Is there anything else it should contain?

of said citizens were at work. Not surprising that they got the local authority arts officers along and few others. You must guard against consulting only with the motivated articulate few, or the professional arts officers with time and resources to respond quickly. What are the issues that can have a negative impact on local community consultation? Firstly, if you have never had a particular arts experience, how do you know you want it? We all recognise that some local authorities are better than others at arts provision. Some small local authorities lack good quality arts organisations, but may be reluctant to engage with companies from outside their boundaries. How might a specialist arts provider from outwith an LA boundary persuade that LA that they offer a different service, better quality service, than a less high quality organisation operating within the boundary. How do they persuade that authority that their work should become part of the cultural entitlement for their area. For SCDA, operating across Scotland, this is a particular problem - one outreach officer to engage with so many community planning agendas. The second issue is a major one - conflict of interest. We are already beginning to see local authority arts development officers acting as gatekeepers to all cultural funding. They are both funder and direct provider of arts opportunities. In governance terms, this is a clear conflict of interest. SCDA has heard of a number of cases where funding for a youth play festival was refused, then a similar sum awarded to the in house arts team to run.....a youth play festival. The arts team effectively awarded themselves the grant and turned down the grant request from SCDA. The guidance needs to consider the local authority as arts development agency, as grant funder, and as direct arts provider. There needs to be some open funding available for imaginative arts projects which are not part of the internal agenda. Otherwise, arts could stagnate, and arts become a form of patronage, open only to those favoured by a few very powerful arts officers within a local authority. (Please not that the writer of this report was such an officer for 22 years, so this is knowlege, not prejudice talking) The third issue is, consultation methods and timescales. Many voluntary arts committees meet only quarterly. So you need to give a volunteer led arts organisation at least three months notice of any consultation. Once

they receive a paper, they need three months to discuss it. So lead in time and response time is crucial. Remember, these passionate arts enthusiasts have day jobs, and already give up evenings, weekends and holidays to practice their art. They need time to add consultation responses to this busy schedule. Before planning a consultation, the LA must be sure that it has mapped the sector properly. Many local authorities are only aware of groups that they fund. It is almost unknown in SCDA's experience for a local authority to have an up to date list of community drama groups and their contact details. Usually they pass enquires to SCDA. If a group is working happily in an area, and do not access local authority grants, they are unlikely to be invited to a consultation meeting. Most volunteer arts bodies do not engage with the CVS network or volunteer centres either. They do not see themselves as part of the voluntary sector, and often do not realise what kind of support they can get there. Once you have found the volunteer groups, you need to consider the best time and place to hold a consultation. This may be on a Sunday afternoon, or an evening. You may need to bring a signer, or provide large print materials. You need to chose a venue that is comfortable - many volunteer led groups are afraid of what they see as formal, imposing buildings. Some research is needed, if a consultation is to be truly meaningful. Once the consultation has happened, look at the results - who did not turn up to meetings or submit written responses? Are there issues? Do you need to go along to the deaf clubs, or the special schools, or pitch up at a few drama clubs, just to get the balance right? Don't just assume that if they did not come along, they are not interested. It is just as important to find and consult the non-engaged. These are just some simple suggestions. It would be important, we feel, to produce a "Good Practice Guide", with some practical ideas and case studies. Engage with us to create this, please!

Creative Scotland

5. Do you agree that there should be a single national cultural development body?

Yes

Another question in which our answer should

Additional Comments:

be MAYBE - SCDA believes that the Cultural Commission had a good point to make in separating the funding from the arts development. We have touched on this with regard to local authorities. The same principal applies. If Creative Scotland is the sole gatekeeper, how do the "mavericks" get past them? There is evidence that SAC currently operates to influence funding, by keeping funds which are not openly accessible - you have to be invited to apply. If the funder is the development agency, do they start to fund their friends, or only their own ideas? Will they fund something that is not in their plan? Is this a problem? We appreciate that creating two bodies would be expensive and impractical. But we do need to find some way, in terms of good governance, to safeguard the relationships between funder and funded. For example, SAC wants to fund "arts of quality" But with committees made up entirely of professionals, and no representatives of the amateur drama sector, will their definition of quality in drama be appropriate for amateurs? Will the music department judge an amateur music project by Guildhall School of Music standards? We do not argue that this is the case, but do feel in drama that there is attitudinal discrimination at present. SCDA's funding from SAC can only be used to fund those activities that meet SAC strategic priorities, but what about the strategic priorities of the amateur drama world? They do not always match, and this is not a problem unless our funder makes it so. Will Creative Scotland recognise that what is important to the amateur drama movement may be just as valid in its context, as the higher arts aspirations? Why are we made to do things that actually don't develop community drama much. As experts in the community drama field, why are our strategic priorities not always valued? Why assume that the new body is always the expert? In summary, a single national cultural development body must have room for all the constituent parts of the arts community. It must have room for old-fashioned, unadventurous drama as defined by professionals if it is what is needed for the large community drama sector. It must recognise the need for the volunteer support bodies like SCDA, and should fund them to do just that - serve the sector, not run arts projects itself. IF such a body would do that, then we would support it. Now we come to the question of merging SAC

	and Scottish Screen. We do not have a strong view on this. However, we do feel there should be ringfenced resources. Certainly, much theatre now includes multi media work, and it would be very interesting to see some funding emerge for collaborations between film and theatre makers, particularly in the voluntary drama sector.
6. Do you agree with the remit proposed for Creative Scotland?	Yes
Additional Comments:	There should be room for "maybe" at all questions. We do have concerns about the link between Creative Scotland's funding and the local authority agendas. We see more and more grants already going to local authorities to deliver their local culture plans. This makes it difficult for umbrella bodies like SCDA to get funds to work across these boundaries. There should be within the remit of Creative Scotland a requirement to support bodies like SCDA. This should be two-fold: 1. Funds to support the national headquarters of Scotland wide organisations that support local volunteer led activity - this should include core staff costs, and training programme. 2. There should also be funds for such bodies to provide high quality arts programmes in local authority areas, where those authorities cannot or will not fund bodies not housed within the area. For example, SCDA gets no funding from Edinburgh City Council, and cannot use the Edinburgh CVS, because we are a national body and not an Edinburgh one. But we can't get core funding as a National Body from SAC. Catch 22.
Has it the right powers and functions?	No
Additional Comments:	
7. Do you agree that Creative Scotland should work in concert with the Scottish Executive to implement national cultural policy?	Yes
Additional Comments:	There are real dangers in the loss of the "arms length" principle. We would want to see very strong safeguards built in.

National Collections

8. Do you agree that the National Collections should remain as constitutionally separate	Yes
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centres of excellence?	
Additional Comments:	
9. Do you think the powers and functions proposed for the Collections in the draft Bill are right?	
If not, how would you improve them?	
10. What do you think of the name 'National Record of Scotland'?	
11. Do you agree that the Faculty of Advocates should be able to contribute to the board of the National Library by having at least one representative?	
Additional Comments:	
12. Do you agree that the Collections have the appropriate powers to obtain, loan and dispose of objects for or from their collections?	
If not, what would you change?	

Dealing with tainted cultural objects

13. Do you agree that an offence similar to that in the 2003 Act should be introduced in Scotland?	
Additional Comments:	

Powers of local authorities to broadcast information

14. Do you agree local authorities should have a general power to broadcast information about their activities?	
Additional Comments:	
15. Do you think it is necessary to give authorities this power in this Bill, or should local authorities be left to rely on 'the power to advance well-being' in section 20 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003?	

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