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From: MacPherson, Robin [r.macpherson@napier.ac.uk]
Sent: 29 March 2007 17:57
To: Cultural Bill Consultation
Subject: culture bill consultation response

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Local cultural entitlements

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

It will play a role but only if "entitlement" is defined in such a way that it can be used to establish benchmarks/minimum standards/expectations that can, with all the usual caveats about affordability/appropriateness, be enforced i.e. that Local Authorities and other provider/enablers can be held to account for what they do. Otherwise the term is essentially vacuous.

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

Any attempt to create a system of entitlements based on the consumption of cultural objects/activities etc. presupposes people's motivation, ability and access to the resources required (funds/time/mobility etc) in order to 'exercise' those entitlements. So addressing e.g. media literacy is a prerequisite of people's ability to fully enjoy an 'entitlement' to film and media artefacts. Similarly appropriate levels of education and training from pre-school to advanced professional level is a prerequisite of producing sufficient amounts and variety of film/media products in Scotland that can reflect our communities' distinct identities, concerns and values and thus provide what people are 'entitled' to.

In other words we cannot focus on entitlement solely in terms of consumption – we have to look systematically at what is required in order to produce work that people want and are able to access/consume or in which they can participate. In some areas, such as film, this may not always permit 'devolution' down to local level (not every Local Authority could sustain feature film education/training/funding) and therefore the focus must be on partnership between Local Authorities and national agencies e.g. Scottish Screen/Creative Scotland. Indeed this is an area which suggested the need for the Culture Bill to extend its reach to other bodies concerned with e.g. Further and Higher Education as these also impact on the capacity to deliver cultural entitlements. This in turn requires, in the screen area, a clearer conception of what the 'national' entitlement to media culture is (including indigenously produced work) and what conditions are necessary to make it possible to offer the possibility of an 'entitlement' to its consumption.

3. How do you think the Scottish Executive and local authorities can best utilise the influence and impact of cultural activity

In our specific area, screen based media, the Executive and Local Authorities have to acknowledge the need for a joint strategy that can harness creative and entrepreneurial talent from pre-school to advanced professional level, accepting that some elements of that strategy may best be delivered locally or regionally while others require a national focus. A joined up strategy would bring different national agencies (e.g. Creative Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Sector Skills Councils) together with local (e.g. film commissions, enterprise companies media access centres etc.) to ensure 'entitlement' is not a hollow

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term but is delivered to take account of varying local circumstances/capacity and national strategic aims.

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

Creative Scotland

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

Yes but it should have a very clearly defined and publicly/professionally/internationally visible screen-sector identity (including branding) and role to ensure that the coherence and focus of Scottish Screen as a 'one-stop shop' is not diminished or diluted through its absorption into the new body.

6. Do you agree with the remit proposed for Creative Scotland? Has it the right powers and functions?

Broadly yes but Creative Scotland *should* have an explicit economic development role (and resources) in relation to the screen industries, albeit one which in some respects will have to be shared with Scottish Enterprise/HIE (and indeed other agencies operating at, for example, a European level). Creative content, personnel and enterprises cannot be separated, especially in the early stages of company development and it does not make sense to separate out the support functions which enable e.g. a creative screen producer to develop their skills, specific projects and a business model in which they can be both culturally excellent and commercially successful. The critical dividing line between Creative Scotland/SE is likely to be defined in terms of 'cultural content' where no doubt many difficult 'test cases' lie ahead but that does not negate the importance of a holistic approach to cultural content companies.

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

Yes but it is vital that it retain at least the same degree of autonomy in respect of decision making when it concerns individuals/companies/projects as the 'arms length' principle which has historically applied to the Arts Councils.

National Collections

8. Do you agree that the National Collections should remain as constitutionally separate centres of excellence?

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?

12. Do you agree that the Collections have the appropriate powers to obtain,

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loan and dispose of objects for or from their collections? If not, what would you change?

Dealing in tainted cultural objects

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

Powers of local authorities to broadcast information

14. Do you agree local authorities should have a general power to broadcast information about their activities?

Yes.

15. Do you think it 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?

The power to broadcast should be explicitly expressed in the Bill in order to provide encouragement and legislative authority for what, in the 21st century, is a central means of both disseminating information and stimulating citizenship as well as participation in culture.

ADDITIONAL POINTS

The potential for Scotland's people to exercise any entitlement to screen (and indeed any other branch of) culture is critically dependent on the ability of our citizens to produce, distribute and critically consume media content of all forms that speaks to their lives and concerns. This cannot be achieved without an equally serious commitment locally and nationally to ensuring that sufficient (and sufficiently diverse) talents and skills are encouraged and nurtured to ensure the supply of media content that is as good as or better than that which we increasingly import from elsewhere. Any commitment on the part of the Executive (or any other body) to ensuring an 'escalator' of talent and opportunity has to acknowledge the necessity of *national* centres of excellence in training and education to provide the requisite final tier of an integrated education and training system. As in other fields – music, dance, drama – the screen arts require and now, thanks to the pump-priming support of the Executive, have such a centre in the Screen Academy Scotland, but its longer-term integration with the strategic mechanisms for supporting screen talent skill and entrepreneurial ability (i.e. Creative Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, Scottish Enterprise) needs to be addressed by the Executive if it is to fully and sustainably play its part in delivering cultural entitlement for all.

Robin MacPherson, Director

Screen Academy Scotland