

## 1. General points on the strategy

### KEY ISSUE: Language of the document not accessible enough

- Culture is sometimes described as a vehicle for other outcomes, and sometimes used as an outcome or output in it's own right within the document - this could be clearer - culture as a verb not a noun. Referring to 'cultural activity' might be clearer in some instances.
- Language used is quite vague - If culture is everything - the openness could be a problem - could be that it becomes unquantifiable as it doesn't allow us to know if something has improved.
- Is culture an attitude, a type of practice, or things/outputs/stuff? Suggestions included culture being the 'attitude that dissolves boundaries' or the thing that 'flattens power imbalances and allows the planner and the activist to learn from each other'.
- Some of the language risks alienating people who don't necessarily see themselves as involved in 'culture' - only those 'in the know' would apply for support - words such as empowering, culture and innovation are examples. There are many examples of people doing creative activities that aren't thinking of themselves and their output as cultural. How does this become relevant to them?
- Supporting grassroots and local variances in culture and what culture means is important.
- The document is not accessible to everyone - what about the voices not heard?
- There was feeling of wariness towards top down approaches and being careful not to impose these through the culture strategy.
- However, some responded that there was an over-emphasis on participatory culture to the detriment of the higher arts; that potentially the lack of distinction between consumable culture (tending towards consumption of more high-brow forms) vs participatory engagement is perhaps confusing within the strategy.
- It was thought that crafts and making was not given enough mention or priority within the strategy [the word "craft" does not appear anywhere in the document?].

## 2. Transforming through culture

### KEY ISSUE: What is meant my leadership and could we change it to advocate/champion/protector?

- Leadership in arts and culture - could we have a 'Champion', 'Advocate' or 'Protector' instead? The idea of a Cultural Makar (refreshed after eg. 1-3 years) was also noted. This role is not decision making but a representer rather than leader. Culture should be inherent and mostly leaderless, representing non-hierarchical nature of arts practice.
- Keen to see leadership which encourages others to take leadership rather than a leader themselves. Potentially the 'face of' to excite/draw attention. Not top down but bottom up. Leader not just listening to those who shout the loudest - but a cross-departmental approach. Leader should look at the environment for culture to flourish, not to try to understand all of culture (yoghurt analogy utilised).
- Currently culture is too siloed. With the strategy is the intention for it to bleed into other aspects of society. How do we know what the potential of this is with this wider remit? Innovation and

creativity needs to be more embedded in our societal structures (primarily educational structures mentioned).

- Needs embedded across sectors - education, health and planning mentioned.
- What about unseen culture - low level every day culture (latent/emerging) - village halls - doesn't attract funding unlike programmed culture (which is less accessible but valued higher) - how can you support the unseen culture - this is about equality.
- It was noted that Arts orgs play a huge role as 'gatherers', facilitating groupings of people around their activities and enabling other sectors (eg.NHS) to tap into these groups as a ready-made resource. Potential for this to be recognised further when considering cross-disciplinary impact of culture, and to acknowledge the work that goes into this before artistic activities are even started.
- Points about structural factors which impact on transformational potential of culture were widely varied in scale from the impact of PFI schools for activities and art on walls mentioned, to the former role of the Cultural Coordinator within councils.

### **3. Empowering through culture**

#### **KEY ISSUE: What is the place of culture within the Scottish Government's approach to inclusive growth?**

- The connection between economic growth, inclusive growth and the role of culture within that could be clarified.
- Outwith the economic framing, inclusion is also about empowerment. Can the strategy be both an economic document and empowerment. Should arts funding be tying to do both of these things or do we need to separate 'arts for economy' and 'arts for social development'?
- Empowering is 'making it happen'
- What are the barriers that prevent communities defining their own culture?
- Communities need to feel empowered before you focus on culture.
- 'Innovation' often a barrier - having to measure, having to prove. Innovation can devalue the most excluded communities (as not necessarily 'innovative' in their output [potentially starting from fewer levers of cultural capital, so not a level playing field])
- Participatory budgeting/democratic approaches to funding decisions - approaches such as Citizens' Juries with both artists and local people to decide on funding bids could work.
- Should try stay clear of creating popularity contests which favour the 'old guard'.
- Does empowerment happen through government interventions?
- What's empowerment? Demystifying the term.
- When talking about community control in relation to culture it would be good to highlight what sort of control we are talking about - how strategic, and how would this be supported. How would we make sure that community control is not used to accept less Local Authority commitment to cultural activity?
- Less emphasis on measuring impact or transformative potential on small pools of people - too time constraining for small organisations.

- Sustainable economy 3 staples mentioned (social, economic and environmental) but not in the document - where might culture fit into this and does it conflict with others?

#### **4. Sustaining culture**

##### **KEY ISSUE: What are the actions/deliverables associated with the strategy and how will progress be measured?**

- Unclear what the actions are that will come out of the Culture Strategy?
- How will the performance of the strategy be measured?
- Culture Strategy is interdepartmental, cross-sectional and impacts on other policy areas, how will government work together to deliver this? How will inclusion of cultural aspects within other areas be measured or encouraged?
- Universal Basic Income discussed positively - would combat some accessibility issues both for those participating in culture and pursuing cultural careers.
- Interest in better understanding the Scottish National Investment bank but appreciation that it invests in ideas and knowledge.
- Longer term funding to allow people to make the 'leap' into Cultural careers and to sustain and grow existing successful cultural projects - more funding to include culture as part of the infrastructure spend - like libraries and museums - this takes away some of the access problems as people don't have to pay to get in. EQUALITY = SPACES.
- Why is "culture" reliant on funding?
- Is Arts "culture"?
- It all has to start at pre-school.
- Interesting that the Culture Strategy is being worked on while funding in schools for cultural programmes is cut. Schools are a good place to introduce a wide range of cultural activities to inspire young people to work in culture and to participate in culture.