

## RSE RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S DRAFT CULTURE STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND

### Summary

- *The RSE welcomes the development of the Culture Strategy, particularly its ambition to achieve a step-change in the way in which society and government view and value culture, including the intention to ensure that culture is embedded within all areas of government policy making.*
- *The vision, ambitions and proposed actions are, however, presented in very high-level terms, with no clear priorities and lack attention as to how the strategy will be implemented.*
- *The final strategy needs to give a clear, practical steer, including more clarity on timescales, on delivery, how change will be brought about and how progress will be assessed. Only then will it be possible to ascertain the extent to which the strategic aims and ambitions have been realised. The strategy states it is to have long-term applicability, but no timeframe is given, nor is it clear whether it will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains relevant. These aspects need to be clarified.*
- *The Culture Strategy needs to make clear its relationship and connections to other sectoral policies, strategies, infrastructure and funding that support culture in Scotland. The Culture Strategy should provide an overarching framework for sectoral policies and action plans. Clarifying these strategic connections should be a high priority for Scottish Government.*
- *The draft strategy proposes the creation of a single cultural leadership post within Scottish Government to help ensure that culture encompasses the breadth of Government policy-making. Scottish Government needs to clarify the role and remit of the new post, and its relationship to Scottish Ministers, Creative Scotland and the other public bodies and major institutions that support Scotland's cultural sectors. We believe that it will be very challenging indeed for a single post-holder to effect the organisational and cultural change required. The newly-created post of Paisley Partnership Strategic Lead within Renfrewshire Council could be considered a pilot for embedding culture within wider policy-making.*
- *The draft strategy does not adequately address the allocation of responsibilities between national and local government. There is no recognition of the perilous state of local government resources, and the implications this has for maintaining and managing the existing cultural estate and programmes, let alone supporting increased levels of cultural engagement. This emphasises the need for close cooperation between Scottish Government and its local government partners, given that the latter are crucial to supporting and facilitating cultural activity at regional, local and community levels.*
- *We welcome the importance that the strategy places on articulating the breadth of cultural activity to help address the misconception that culture is restricted solely to some sections of society. The strategy does, however, need to recognise the important distinction between equality of opportunity and diversity of outcome.*
- *To achieve the broader policy and institutional buy-in and connections required, we believe that the strategy would be improved by making more explicit reference to the existing evidence base and by using exemplars to demonstrate cultural value. We have highlighted examples and provided some references to relevant sources that might assist with this. The RSE is well placed to facilitate multifold connections between researchers in the arts, heritage, humanities and social sciences and Scottish Government in supporting a carefully evidenced approach to cultural valuation.*

- *The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has recently announced funding for the creation of a collaborative Centre for Cultural Value. The Centre is to have a key role in synthesising and communicating research on cultural value. It will be important that AHRC and Scottish Government work together so that Scottish interests can be reflected in the creation of the new centre as well as to ensure that Scottish Government and others in Scotland can draw upon its work. The Scottish Government needs to consider how the work of the centre might inform and support the Culture Strategy.*
- *It is regrettable that the strategy is silent on the current and future strategic relationship between the Scottish and UK Governments in supporting culture. This needs to be addressed. Links need to be made with the Creative Industries Sector Deal as part of UK Industrial Strategy and to connected UKRI research and development opportunities. There is a need for joint work between UK Government and the Scottish Government to ensure that, taking account of the balance of reserved and devolved powers, Scotland can access, benefit from and complement UK-wide cultural developments and investments.*
- *The strategy needs to further reflect the implications of Brexit for culture, especially in terms of what will happen to funding beyond Creative Europe 2020 and its successor programmes. EU regulatory competences in respect of IP, data and the audio-visual sector also have considerable bearing on how the strategy might develop.*
- *The RSE welcomes the recognition given in the consultation to the importance of evaluating the development and impact of the strategy, including the need for longitudinal, qualitative data. To achieve the aim of embedding cultural thinking across wider public policy, the proposed Measuring Change Group will need to include representatives from outwith the culture sectors. If appointed, the Cultural Leadership post-holder should be part of the Group given the intended role in seeking and making connections, particularly across Scottish Government. The work and visibility of the Group creates the potential for ensuring that not only*

*would evaluation be embedded in the operations of the many organisations to whom the strategy will apply, but that the highest possible standards in research and evaluation design might become more widely adopted. The RSE would be pleased to discuss with Scottish Government how we might harness the breath of disciplinary expertise available to us to contribute to the plans for evaluating the impact of the strategy and the establishment of the Group.*

## Introduction

- 1 The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on a Culture Strategy for Scotland.<sup>1</sup> As Scotland's National Academy, the RSE can draw upon its breadth and depth of disciplinary expertise and knowledge in helping to inform and shape the development of the strategy. Our disciplinary breadth relates not only to drawing upon those operating in the cultural sectors, including practitioners and academics, but it also enables us to bring together and make connections with those working across different disciplines, including the arts, heritage, humanities, social, natural and physical sciences and business. This includes not only access to the expertise within the RSE Fellowship but also to the RSE's Young Academy (YAS).<sup>2</sup> YAS provides a platform for innovative young entrepreneurs, professionals and academics from across the disciplines and professions to come together to discuss and take action on contemporary and future societal issues in Scotland and beyond. We are therefore well placed to facilitate interdisciplinary connections in support of the Culture Strategy.
- 2 We have framed our response with reference to the key headings in the strategy rather than responding to every question. We would be pleased to discuss our comments with those leading the development of the strategy to explore how the RSE might harness its resources in supporting the development and implementation of the strategy over the longer term.

<sup>1</sup> Draft Culture Strategy for consultation; Scottish Government; June 2018 <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/culture-strategy-scotland-draft-consultation/>

<sup>2</sup> Information about the RSE Young Academy is available at: <https://www.youngacademyofscotland.org.uk/>

## Effecting Change

### *Delivery mechanisms*

- 3 We welcome the development of the strategy, particularly its ambition to achieve a step-change in the way in which society and government view and value culture. The strategy has eschewed definitional detail by embracing a wide and inclusive approach spanning the arts, heritage, creative industries and popular culture in their many forms. The strategic vision and related ambitions are wide-ranging and the intended breadth of coverage poses challenges, raising questions about how the strategy is to be implemented. The vision, ambitions and proposed actions are couched in very high-level terms. There are no discernible priorities and the document is silent on the delivery mechanisms. While we understand that the Scottish Government may prefer to avoid prescriptiveness, the final strategy does need to give a clear, practical steer, including more clarity on timescales, on how the strategy is to be delivered, how change is to be brought about and how progress is to be assessed. Without greater clarity on these points, it will be very difficult to ascertain the extent to which the strategic aims and ambitions are being realised, including the aim of embedding culture as a central consideration across all policy areas.
- 4 While the strategy seeks to encompass the breadth of cultural activity, interconnections and relationships, there is a risk that this approach fails to articulate how such diverse activity can be supported and developed, particularly in the context of competition for finite resources. This reinforces the need for the strategy to be clear on its priorities.

### *Strategic leadership, connections and relationships*

- 5 Careful consideration needs to be given to the roles and responsibilities of those expected to lead and support the delivery of the strategy. Notably, while there is a short section of the consultation document dedicated to the role of government<sup>3</sup>, apart from the statement that “the role of government in supporting culture should continue to be part of ongoing debate and scrutiny”, the strategy does not make clear the

Scottish Government’s role in taking forward the strategy. Given the major focus on ensuring that culture is considered across all policy areas, it will be necessary for Scottish Government to take a leadership role in delivering the strategy since realistically only Scottish Government is able to provide the breadth of policy oversight required. As well as making clear the strategic priorities, a key role for Scottish Government will be to provide the enabling environment for the networks and partnerships envisaged, and to report on progress against the aims and ambitions of the strategy, including making connections to the new national outcome for culture in the refreshed National Performance Framework.

- 6 The overarching strategy needs to make clear its relationship and connections to other relevant policies, strategies, infrastructure and funding that support culture in Scotland, especially those derived from Scottish Government. For example, Creative Scotland has a 10-year plan with sectoral strategies for the arts, screen, creative industries and youth arts; while Historic Environment Scotland has a strategy for the historic built environment. We would expect the Culture Strategy to provide an overarching framework for the sectoral policies and action plans. There are other Scottish Government strategies and plans in related policy areas that are relevant to culture including languages, education, digital, and health and social care. However, the document is silent on how synergies will be created between the overarching strategy and existing policies, both within the cultural sector and beyond. Clarifying these strategic connections should therefore be a high priority for Government before finalising the Culture Strategy.
- 7 Similarly, many of the public bodies with formal responsibilities for delivering existing and sector-specific cultural strategies are referenced in Annex B of the document. However, it is currently unclear what specific roles they are expected to have in taking forward the new strategy. The Scottish Government therefore needs to work closely with them to secure their buy-in to the strategy and to develop mutual understandings of what is to be delivered. This serves to emphasise the inescapable role of national government in helping to create the conditions for delivering the ambitions of the Culture Strategy.

<sup>3</sup> P.16, section 4.2

8 In relation to the need to harness widespread support for the strategy, the document does not adequately address the allocation of responsibilities between national and local government. While the strategy states that local government provision and support is the backbone of cultural infrastructure in Scotland, there is no recognition of the perilous state of local government resources, and the implications this has for maintaining and managing the existing cultural estate and programmes, let alone supporting increased levels of cultural engagement. This needs to be explicitly recognised, alongside other challenges highlighted in the document, including demographic change and Brexit. This emphasises the need for close cooperation between Scottish Government and its local government partners, given that the latter are crucial to supporting and facilitating cultural activity at regional, local and community levels.

## **Ambition 1: Transforming Through Culture**

### *Culture as a central consideration across all policy areas*

9 The strategy aims to make culture a central consideration across all policy areas, notably in relation to improving health and wellbeing, the economy, education, innovation and reducing inequality. We wish to emphasise that while the contribution that culture makes to these areas is very important, we must not lose sight of the intrinsic value and impact that culture has on people as individuals and, in turn, how this shapes our society.

10 The document tends to assert the value, contribution and benefits of culture. To achieve the broader policy and institutional buy-in and connections required, we believe that the strategy would be improved by making more explicit reference to the supporting evidence base and by using exemplars to demonstrate cultural value. The Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Cultural Value Project is a highly pertinent resource in this regard. It has examined the question of why the arts and culture matter,

how we capture the effects they have, including progress being made on the emergence of increasingly sophisticated models for developing our understanding of how to capture cultural value.<sup>4</sup> Part of this project looked specifically at measuring the economic value of cultural institutions.<sup>5</sup> It has initiated exploration of the advantages and limitations of the methods for ascribing economic value to cultural engagement. The RSE is well placed to facilitate connections between researchers in the arts, heritage, humanities and social sciences and Scottish Government in supporting a carefully evidenced approach to cultural valuation. It does, of course, need to be acknowledged that despite the emergence of increasingly sophisticated ways of capturing cultural value, this will remain a highly contested area, given divergent views of the value of culture itself.

11 There is already a large and increasing evidence base on the contributions that culture makes to many aspects of society. We append, below, a small number of examples and references, among many others, that the strategy could draw upon in showcasing the varied and valuable contributions that culture makes. We would be pleased to provide the Scottish Government with a wider set of references and source material were this to be helpful. The Scottish Government should also certainly inform its evolving strategy by making use of evidence it has already commissioned. We are aware, for example, of the Scottish Government's analysis of the relationship between taking part in cultural and sporting activities, attending cultural places and key quality of life measures in Scotland.<sup>6</sup>

12 The UK Parliament All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing was established in 2014 to improve awareness of the benefits that the arts can bring to health and wellbeing. Following extensive engagement with patients, health and social care professionals, artists and arts administrators, academics, policy makers and parliamentarians, the All-Party Group presented findings of two years of research and evidence-gathering that demonstrated the beneficial impacts of the arts in health and social care.<sup>7</sup>

4 Geoffrey Crossick & Patrycja Kaszynska; Understanding the value of arts and culture; the AHRC Cultural Value Project; 2016 <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/culturalvalueproject/>

5 Measuring Economic Value in Cultural Institutions; A report commissioned by the AHRC Cultural Value Project <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/measuringeconomicvalue/>

6 Healthy Attendance: The Impact of Cultural Engagement and Sports Participation on Health and Satisfaction with life in Scotland; Scottish Government; 2013 <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/08/9956>

7 All-Party Parliamentary group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry, Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing; July 2017 <http://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/>

- 13** In addition, an increasing number of studies are seeking to fill the evidence gap regarding the relationship between cultural heritage engagement and a range of health and well-being outcomes. This growing body of evidence<sup>8</sup> suggests that cultural attendance and participation enhance human health and well-being to the extent that people may live longer as a result. There is evidence of the benefits of participatory arts for older people, especially relevant to Scotland given its changing demography, particularly the growth in the proportion of the population aged 65 and over. Glasgow Museums have responded to the challenge of addressing the high level of health inequality within the city by introducing one of the most active museum health and well-being programmes in the UK.
- 14** In relation to the role of culture in enriching community engagement, the Wigtown Book Festival, founded in 1999 and reliant on a large number of local volunteers, is one of the largest annual literary gatherings in Scotland, which, incidentally, creates an economic impact annually of more than £2.5m in an economically-challenged, ‘remote’ rural area.
- 15** We note at the UK level that the AHRC has recently announced new funding for the creation of a collaborative Centre for Cultural Value.<sup>9</sup> The Centre aims to function as a custodian and communicator of cultural value by bringing together different perspectives. The Centre will have a role in synthesising and communicating research on cultural value. A key role for the Centre will therefore be to help ensure that the evidence base on the value of cultural contributions is made widely available, including to policy makers. It will be important that AHRC and Scottish Government work together so that Scottish interests can be reflected in the creation of the new centre as well as to ensure that Scottish Government and others in Scotland can draw upon its work. The Scottish Government needs to consider how the work of the centre can inform

and support the Culture Strategy. Likewise, the establishment in September 2018 of the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre led by the innovation think-tank, Nesta, with its Scottish hub based at the University of Glasgow, could be another source of high-quality research to underpin the strategy.<sup>10</sup>

### *New cultural leadership post*

- 16** Recognising the need for greater and better joined-up working, the strategy proposes the creation of a single cultural leadership post within Scottish Government to help ensure that culture encompasses the breadth of Government policy making. Before we can take a definitive view on this proposal, we believe that Scottish Government needs to clarify the role and remit of the new post, and its relationship to Scottish Ministers, Creative Scotland and the other public bodies and major institutions that support Scotland’s cultural sectors. To help to gauge its effectiveness, it would also be useful if Scottish Government could confirm whether this proposal is based on existing practice elsewhere. The strategy states that the post holder will ‘highlight’ the benefits of greater policy and culture connectivity rather than ensuring that culture is embedded across government. This implies a fairly limited role, which is not surprising given that it will be very challenging for a single post-holder to effect the structural change required.
- 17** We note that the Scottish Government’s Head of Culture Strategy will this autumn join Renfrewshire Council in the newly-created post of Paisley Partnership Strategic Lead.<sup>11</sup> This appointment could provide a pilot study of how to embed culture within wider policy-making in complex organisational structures, partnerships and networks. We hope that appropriate evaluation mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that there is scope for national and local government to learn from this exciting development.

<sup>8</sup> Helen J. Chatterjee & Paul M. Camic (2015); The health and wellbeing potential of museums and art galleries, *Arts & Health*, 7:3, 183-186  
Mark O’Neill; Cultural attendance and public mental health – from research to practice; *Journal of Public Mental Health*, Volume 9; Issue 4; December 2010 pp.22-29  
Lackoi, K., Patsou, M., and Chatterjee, H.J. et al. (2016); Museums for Health and Wellbeing; A Preliminary Report; National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing; <https://museumsandwellbeingalliance.wordpress.com>

<sup>9</sup> Information about the establishment of the collaborative Centre for Cultural Value is available at: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/newsevents/news/funding-announced-for-new-collaborative-centre-for-cultural-value/>

<sup>10</sup> Information about the new AHRC-funded Policy and Evidence Centre for the creative industries, as well as the nine new UK cultural and creative industries partnerships (two being based in Scotland, at Abertay University and the University of Edinburgh) is at <https://ahrc.ukri.org/newsevents/news/r-d-investment-set-to-provide-step-up-for-creative-industries/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/7548/Government-Culture-Strategy-head-Leonie-to-lead-Paisley-transformation>

## Connecting culture with education and health

**18** The AHRC Cultural Value Project makes clear that there is extensive systematic research that demonstrates the contribution that culture in education makes in terms of supporting the learning process, promoting motivation and confidence, problem solving and communication skills. We have already referred to ways in which cultural engagement can enhance health and wellbeing. While we agree that culture should be embedded in education and health policy, among other sectors of public life, it is important that financial resources earmarked for culture are not used to fill funding gaps in other policy areas. If there are to be stronger connections between culture and other areas of public policy, these must be underpinned by their own dedicated resources and funding, as well as by distinct strategic and structural connections.

## Ambition 2: Empowering Through Culture

**19** The draft strategy recognises that there is inequality in access to culture. We welcome the importance that the strategy places on articulating the breadth of cultural activity to help address the misconception that some forms of culture are restricted to some sections of society. However, the strategy would be greatly strengthened by recognising the distinction between equality of opportunity and diversity of outcome. This also reinforces the key challenge that the strategy faces in being able to accommodate the spectrum of cultural activity and engagement while being seen as meaningful, relevant and demonstrating added value to what is a large and diverse audience. The strategy also needs to recognise that taking a broad approach to culture means acknowledging that culture may divide us as well as bring us together.

**20** As we have commented elsewhere, the strategy would benefit by referencing specific examples which illustrate the impacts that culture can have on inequality. This section could, for example, very usefully highlight the independently evidenced impact that Sistema Scotland's Big Noise orchestra programmes have had in deprived communities.<sup>12</sup> Not only does this help demonstrate

the value of investing in this activity, it also showcases the partnership approach that will be required for successful delivery of the strategy.

- 21** We suggest that the strategy could also be strengthened by drawing upon more fully the specific detail contained in the Equality Impact Assessment<sup>13</sup>, particularly in relation to promoting inclusion and addressing the barriers arising from material deprivation.
- 22** The RSE recognises and supports the strategy's drive for greater geographical equity, recognising that cultural opportunities tend to be clustered in Scotland's major cities. Through our RSE@ outreach programme, the RSE delivers inspirational and educational activities in local communities around Scotland including the Borders, Lochaber, Dumfries and Galloway and Arbroath.<sup>14</sup> RSE@ is based in different regions of Scotland for a two-year period to enable community engagement on a sustained basis. Our current RSE@ Inverness programme was launched last year and has included school talks, story-telling events, writing competitions and a wide-ranging programme of public discussion events.
- 23** While the needs of rural and more remote populations need to be addressed and supported, this should not be at the expense of Scotland's cities, particularly given the continuing need to address the cultural inequality which exists within cities themselves. In relation to these points, we would encourage those leading the development of the strategy to make connections with the UK-wide Cultural Cities Enquiry<sup>15</sup> which is chaired by Jayne-Anne Gadhia FRSE as well as the SCDI's Rural Commission.<sup>16</sup>
- 24** In respect of equity issues concerning access to, and uptake of, cultural activities, while reference is made to statistics relating to publicly-funded schools, no mention is made of the independent school sector. However, analysis of inequality of cultural experiences cannot be properly undertaken without taking account of the independent school sector. In making connections between culture and education, Scottish Government and local government might review the extent to which children from schools located in different parts of Scotland and serving diverse communities are provided with cultural engagement activities.

<sup>12</sup> Sistema Scotland [https://makeabignoise.org.uk/files/9014/6467/0789/Sistema\\_Scotland\\_Final.pdf](https://makeabignoise.org.uk/files/9014/6467/0789/Sistema_Scotland_Final.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Partial EQIA for Culture Strategy; Scottish Government; June 2018 [https://consult.gov.scot/culture-tourism-and-major-events/culture-strategy/supporting\\_documents/SCT0518615438102.pdf](https://consult.gov.scot/culture-tourism-and-major-events/culture-strategy/supporting_documents/SCT0518615438102.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Information about the RSE@ outreach programme is available at: <https://www.rse.org.uk/events/rse-at/>

<sup>15</sup> Cultural Cities Enquiry: <https://www.corecities.com/cultural-cities-enquiry/about>

<sup>16</sup> SCDI Rural Commission: <https://www.scdi.org.uk/ruralcommission/>

## Ambition 3: Sustaining Culture

- 25** The sustaining culture section refers to an intention to explore new funding models to support the culture sector and to develop the creative economy. While we welcome the commitment to explore new approaches, including taxation, legislative powers and investment bank models, as with many aspects of the draft strategy, the mechanisms and steps to be taken are unclear.
- 26** A mandatory precursor to this is the need to map the current administrative and infrastructure landscape, particularly the connections, interrelationships and boundaries for supporting culture and the creative economy, including the public bodies and organisations referred to in Annex B. Part of this exercise should include a review of cases indicating what presently works in cultural support and what does not.<sup>17</sup>
- 27** In advance of exploring new funding models, we would have expected the strategy to refer to current developments, but this is not the case. For example, there is no reference in the strategy to the Bazalgette Report<sup>18</sup> which provides a key locus of argument for future investment in the creative economy given its disproportionate role as a driver of cultural business and sector growth. Nor is there any reference to how funding for culture can be leveraged through the City Region Deals (and how to ensure parity of access to City Deal funding across the creative and cultural industries) or on the role of Creative Scotland's Place Programme or Heritage Lottery Fund's Great Place Scheme in Scotland.

### Future Proofing

- 28** The document states that the strategy will have long-term applicability, although it is silent on the envisaged lifespan. This needs to be clarified. It also needs to be made clear what mechanisms will be used to ensure that the strategy remains relevant, especially in terms of 'future proofing'. For example, is there an intention to review the strategy at regular intervals with the outcomes

from the review process being used to enable the strategy to evolve over time?

- 29** The strategy needs to give more consideration to the transformative nature of future interactive and digital developments, given the implications that they have for the ways in which people will in future engage in culture. Increasingly, the boundaries between cultural creators and consumers will blur given the growth in co-production and user-generated content.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, more attention needs to be paid to the ways in which culture will be impacted on and also contribute to increasing automation. In this context, the RSE and other partners continue to explore how Scotland can capitalise on the Fourth Industrial Revolution to increase economic and social prosperity.<sup>20</sup>
- 30** While the document touches on the implications of Brexit, particularly in relation to freedom of movement and EU-derived financial support for culture in Scotland, the strategy needs to provide more clarity on post-Brexit contingency planning, especially in terms of what will happen to funding beyond Creative Europe 2020 and its successor programmes. EU regulatory competences in respect of IP, data and the audio-visual sector also have considerable bearing on how the strategy might develop.
- 31** It is regrettable that the strategy is silent both on the current and future strategic relationship between the Scottish and UK Governments in supporting culture. This needs to be addressed. Links need to be made with the Creative Industries Sector Deal<sup>21</sup> as part of UK Industrial Strategy and to connected UKRI research and development opportunities, some noted above. This makes clear the need for joint working between UK Government and the Scottish Government so as to ensure that, taking account of the balance of reserved and devolved powers, Scotland may access, benefit from and complement UK-wide cultural developments and investments.

<sup>17</sup> For an analysis of creative business support, see Philip Schlesinger, Melanie Selfe and Ealasaid Munro, Curators of Cultural Enterprise: A Critical Analysis of a Creative Business Intermediary, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Sir Peter Bazalgette's Independent Review of the Creative Industries; UK Government; September 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-creative-industries>

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 4

<sup>20</sup> Automatic... for the People?; SCDI; 2018 <https://www.scdi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SCDI-DigitalReport-Automation.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Industrial Strategy Creative Industries Sector Deal; HM Government; March 2018 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/695097/creative-industries-sector-deal-print.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/695097/creative-industries-sector-deal-print.pdf)

## *International connections*

**32** The draft strategy acknowledges that there are specific aspects of Scottish culture which will not feature in any other country's culture strategies, including Gaelic and Scots; literature and oral culture that use these languages, including song and music; some traditional arts and crafts; heritage, historical and other built-environment aspects of culture unique to this country. There is, moreover, scope to strengthen the strategy in terms of what it says about Scotland's cultural relationship with the wider world, particularly in relation to how Scotland is viewed externally from a cultural point of view; how international flows and influences contribute to culture in Scotland; and how Scotland can learn from the experiences of other nations, not least those of similar scale, in devising a novel culture strategy. It is pertinent therefore to engage in comparison to reveal what Scotland shares culturally with other countries and what makes Scotland distinctive. By developing a better understanding of these aspects, Scotland's specific cultural credentials could be more illuminatingly showcased by the strategy.

## **Monitoring the Impact of the Strategy**

- 33** We are pleased that the document recognises the importance of monitoring and evaluating the development and impact of the strategy. We welcome the fact that the Government is seeking to put in place arrangements for measuring change from the outset.
- 34** The recent decision to develop a National Outcome for culture within the National Performance Framework (NPF) is important in helping to ensure that culture is embedded within strategic decision-making and policy. The availability of evaluative evidence on the impact of the strategy will therefore be an important component in enabling the Scottish Government to report on progress against this outcome in the NPF.
- 35** The importance of research and evaluation will need to be acknowledged by the wide range of stakeholders operating in this area, not least the organisations and institutions with formal responsibilities for development and delivery of culture strategies and policies. This will be required to ensure strategic alignment and a shared sense of purpose between the overarching culture strategy and those organisations and institutions with responsibility for its delivery.
- 36** The establishment of the proposed 'Measuring Change Group' offers a means to achieve this. To ensure that the Group is able to draw upon as wide a range of expertise and experience as possible, it

should include academic, policy, practitioner and cultural user input. To achieve the aim of embedding cultural thinking across wider public policy, the Group will need to include representatives from outwith the culture sectors. As well as helping to secure buy-in from 'external' perspectives on the contribution that culture makes to society, it offers a means of learning from other sectors in terms of how they assess impact. If appointed, the Cultural Leadership post-holder should be part of the Group given the intended role in seeking and making connections, particularly across Scottish Government. The work and visibility of the Group creates the potential for ensuring that not only is evaluation embedded in the operations of the many organisations to whom the strategy will apply, but that the highest possible standards in research and evaluation design become more widely adopted.

- 37** The RSE would be pleased to discuss with Scottish Government how we might harness the breath of disciplinary expertise available to us to contribute to the plans for evaluating the impact of the strategy and the establishment of the Group.
- 38** The document indicates that the Group will explore a range of methodologies and data requirements for evaluation. This is important as there is no one-size-fits-all approach to evaluation, particularly given the diversity of cultural activities and communities that will fall under the strategy. Nuanced research and evaluation approaches tailored to the aims and objectives of what is being evaluated will be required.
- 39** The consultation document rightly identifies the need for longitudinal, qualitative data. This will require the Scottish Government committing to long-term, sustainable funding for this research. In taking this forward, along with ethnographic research already undertaken in Scotland, the Scottish Government should consider the work of the AHRC Cultural Value Project which identifies areas in which longitudinal studies could help to close gaps in our knowledge and understanding about cultural engagement, particularly in relation to how individual tastes and participation in culture may change over the lifespan of an individual.

### *Additional Information*

This Advice Paper has been signed off by the General Secretary of the RSE.

Any enquiries about this Advice Paper should be addressed to Mr William Hardie (email: [whardie@theRSE.org.uk](mailto:whardie@theRSE.org.uk))

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