

A culture strategy for Scotland

Report summarising feedback gathered during the Engagement Phase in support of developing A Culture Strategy for Scotland

March 2018

Main Report

June 2018



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Background

1. The Scottish Government committed to developing A Culture Strategy for Scotland in the Programme for Government 2016-17 and underlined this commitment in its Programme for Government 2017-18. The strategy will show how important culture is to the future of individuals, communities across Scotland and Scotland as a whole - with a central ambition of enabling everyone to have an equal opportunity to take part in and contribute to culture in Scotland. To achieve this, the strategy is being developed in collaboration with individuals, communities, artists, practitioners, cultural organisations, other sector bodies and across the Scottish Government, ensuring that it is founded on the diverse knowledge and experience of those who work in the culture sectors and anyone with an interest in the future of culture in Scotland.
2. To help shape early thinking about the themes and priorities for the strategy, a series of 'Culture Conversations' were held between June and December 2017 to stimulate debate and discussion about: what matters most to people about culture in Scotland; what is working well and what needs to change to ensure that culture continues to flourish for the benefit of all in society. The launch event was hosted by the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, MSP at Glasgow Women's Library on 26 June 2017. This and other early discussions with stakeholders considered whether the core principles of access, equity and excellence should be at the core of the strategy and the relative merits of each were thoroughly debated. It became clear from those early discussions that whilst contributors found the principles a good starting point to stimulate discussion that they wanted a much broader and wide-ranging debate which would be open to the inclusion of as many ideas as possible.
3. Based on this initial feedback, a [Culture Conversation Resource Pack](#) was produced to support Scotland wide Culture Conversations based on three key questions to stimulate debate:
 - Why is culture important to you, your community?
 - What is good about culture in Scotland and what needs to change?
 - What do you want the future for culture in Scotland to be like?
4. These questions were designed to be open and non-prescriptive, enabling wide-ranging discussions to take place across the country with a diverse range of contributors - as well as online via an online ideas forum.

5. The Scottish Government hosted a series of nine Scotland-wide public events during the Engagement Phase which attracted nearly four hundred contributors in total (Dundee; Inverness; Paisley; Dumfries; Galashiels; Aberdeen; Skye; Edinburgh; Dunfermline) and more than fifty events were also held by partners and stakeholders. Written submissions were also made by organisations and individuals, and more than thirty contributions were received via the online interactive ideas forum.
6. [Annex 1](#) provides an overview of the main points raised at each of the public meetings held across Scotland and gives an indication of the issues and ambitions particular to each place.
7. [Annex 2](#) summarises in list form the breadth of engagement activity and feedback received during the Engagement Phase which has resulted in over a hundred substantive contributions. The feedback received illustrates just how broad the culture sector is felt to be, spanning tangible and intangible heritage and the historic environment; visual arts; music; dance, film and screen; literature; traditional arts and culture; computer games; voluntary arts; theatre; design and architecture; Gaelic, Scots and minority cultures and languages; and youth arts and culture amongst others.
8. We would like to thank everyone that contributed views during the Engagement Phase.

Engagement Report

1. The following report provides a high level summary of the main themes and ideas which have emerged from the Engagement Phase. The feedback gathered will inform the creation of a draft strategy which will issue for public consultation later in 2018.
2. This report provides an overview of the feedback received throughout the Engagement Phase drawn from what people said at events as well as written submissions received. The content of the report draws on the range of views and opinions expressed by contributors about the value of culture and their ideas about what needs to be done to support the future of culture in Scotland. The report has aimed to set out the main points accurately and objectively and is therefore a presentation of responses received and feedback given during discussion sessions. All feedback has been given equal weight in the report. There has been no attempt to qualify, analyse or reinterpret the feedback given and the report is therefore a straightforward presentation of the feedback gathered.

3. The report is structured by theme as follows:

Section 1: Overview - Scope, purpose & aims of A Culture Strategy for Scotland

Section 2: Theme - Access and participation

Section 3: Theme - Valuing the artist and creativity

Section 4: Theme - Young people, education and skills

Section 5: Theme – Funding culture

Section 6: Theme - International working

Section 7: Theme – Leadership and joined up working

Section 8: Theme - Evidence, impact and benefits of culture

Section 9: Conclusion and Next Steps

Section One: Overview - Scope, purpose & aims of A Culture Strategy for Scotland

1. Contributors expressed a broad range of views about what A Culture Strategy for Scotland should do and what it should cover, as well as what the priorities for action should be. Many of the 'Culture Conversations' held began with reflecting on what is important about culture fundamentally as well as to individuals and society before moving on to discuss the strategy itself.

Importance of culture

2. Contributors frequently highlighted the importance of culture at an individual, community and societal level. On the individual level, contributors expressed that culture is deeply personal and subjective, and means different things to different people. It is essential to personal and social growth, allowing us to be plural and multi-faceted. It is part of identity and diversity; of what coming from a place means - country or community; or what our many heritages mean to those of us who call Scotland home. It is creativity and the totality of human activity, fundamental to everything humans do, how we develop and the manifestation of human experiences. Culture is everywhere; it is not separate from everything else. There was a widespread assumption that everyone is cultural.
3. Many also argued that culture does and should raise difficult, uncomfortable questions and challenges as well as helping to address sensitive societal and personal issues.

Scope

4. Almost all contributors noted that any attempt to define culture within the strategy would be problematic and open to challenge and interpretation. There was much discussion about whether an all-inclusive view of culture or a defined set of priority areas would work best for the purposes of the strategy. On the whole most argued for the broadest and most inclusive possible approach but acknowledged that the strategy would not be able to deal in detail with every aspect of that expansive view. Other comments made by contributors about the scope of the strategy included:
 - Many thought that the notion of culture should be expanded to allow the everyday and informal, grassroots and emerging forms of culture to be held in equal value with the more visible, formal and established
 - It was suggested that the strategy should include both the traditional, and established, as well as new, emerging, forms of culture and new technology
 - One contribution proposed to 'scope' culture for the strategy to be practical and enabling rather than attempt to define culture
 - Many saw the strategy as a chance to review, challenge and change values, principles and priorities underlying cultural approaches and structures in Scotland today
 - Many contributors were keen to ensure that their particular area of cultural interest is represented in the strategy and this was especially the case for

those who perceive the culture they experience to be marginalised or receiving less funding or support

- A human and community rights approach to culture which could include a statute of minimum rights was also frequently raised in discussion.

5. Contributors also suggested that the strategy should be:

- Ambitious, bold, radical and dynamic
- Pioneering and create a paradigm shift in how culture is valued across society and government
- Inspiring, with a long term vision that is future facing
- Build on existing expertise and strategies to offer real strategic support for culture and heritage to thrive
- Act as a route map that achieves change and positive outcomes
- Informed by and relevant to everyone across the country
- Be representative with an emphasis on diversity
- Provide a unified voice for the culture sector(s)
- Drive real action to support change
- Face the challenges and embrace change whilst making room for future debate
- Celebrate Scotland's many cultures and heritages
- Be an evolving, adaptable document, with mechanisms that allow it to be adjusted in the future.
- Use accessible language and be accessible to all via e.g. translation or easy read formats.

Purpose and Aims

6. Contributors expressed a range of views on what the strategy should do and generally supported the move to develop a strategy for culture in Scotland, citing the potential the strategy has to achieve greater recognition of the crucial role that culture plays across society, and helping to identify and agree priorities for the support of culture in the future. A range of the main points raised by contributors about what the strategy should do is given below.

7. Contributors believed the strategy should:

- Value culture in and of itself
- Identify strategic aims, resources and delivery mechanisms that will bring about longer term change
- Celebrate, recognise and value all art forms and cultural/creative expression across Scotland, representing the wide range of cultures and heritages in Scotland
- Establish greater parity between art forms and cultures
- View diversity and difference as strengths
- Recognise and build upon Scotland's unique history of creativity and innovation for the present day
- Re-evaluate and broaden the view of what culture is and value all types of culture equally

- Create the conditions for culture to thrive freely as an integral part of a progressive democratic society
 - Recognise and value the benefits of culture to society including the transformative effect it can have on the lives of individuals and communities in helping to address societal challenges in the long term (for example, education, health and wellbeing)
 - Clarify the role of government in supporting culture going forward ensuring that the 'arm's length' principle is respected
 - Allow people to set their own priorities in response to the strategy
 - Underline the government's role in using its levers and strategic reach to create the conditions for culture to thrive and to be recognised as a fundamental part of society
 - Celebrate what we have: culture perceived as prospering in Scotland and this is underpinned by an expert, creative and highly capable workforce with a strong cultural and heritage infrastructure.
 - Recognise that culture is something that Scotland does really well: there are high levels of public participation and engagement and a strong sense of pride in culture and heritage
 - Consider a needs based approach to culture rather than a deficit approach
 - Look at how culture strategy is done in other countries internationally such as Ireland's Culture Strategy.
8. Common themes, including the challenges faced now and opportunities for culture in the future, which were raised by contributors, are set out in the following sections of the report.

Section 2: Theme – Access and Participation

1. Inequality was raised consistently by the majority of contributors in relation to opportunities to access and experience culture and cultural activity, and the relative status of different types of culture. Some of the reasons perceived by contributors as to why inequality and lack of diversity persist, what might be done to tackle these issues and related observations are given below:
 - Many contributors said that there was a lack of diversity across the culture sector itself in terms of: the cultural workforce including decision makers and employees; development opportunities; access to funding and support leading to a lack of diversity in programming, output and audience; and lack of employment/promotion opportunities for minority practitioners. This can lead to disengagement amongst particular groups.
 - There was a wide-spread view that there are a number of barriers to access including poverty, poor health, disability, cost, transport, language and geography.
 - The view was held by many that there appears to be unequal engagement in cultural activity with people from lower socio-economic backgrounds or deprived areas and other minority groups (such as people from different ethnic backgrounds and races and religions, of different sexualities, disabled people and those with multiple and complex needs) being less likely to engage in culture than other people.
 - It was thought that children living in poverty may not get the same opportunities or be encouraged to participate in culture as their better off counterparts.
 - Many thought the term ‘culture’ itself can be perceived as ‘elitist’ and ‘not for me’. Some suggested that it could be called a ‘Creativity Strategy’ instead of a ‘Culture Strategy’.
 - It was highlighted that those who become successful professionals, particularly as practising artists, are increasingly from higher socio-economic groups (and less often from a minority ethnic background) with the means to draw on other financial support to study the arts and embark on a culture career that can be marked by employment insecurities and financial instability.
 - Contributors suggested that many people do not feel represented by what is available culturally and are therefore less likely to get involved.
 - Many stated that they think lack of diversity characterises all levels of cultural delivery and decision-making including, for example, representation on organisations’ Boards, in senior management teams or in representative bodies. There was a sense that culture institutions and organisations could be more pro-active in widening participation and accessibility through employing people from a variety of backgrounds, and for Boards to also consider their own diversity as a priority.
 - Many raised the importance of relevant role models delivering culture who are from a more diverse range of backgrounds in terms of age; socio-economic background; gender; ethnicity; race; disability; and sexuality; , to enable a wider range of people to identify with and inspire them.

- Access to and competition for funding was viewed as a barrier to participation. The current funding system was described by some as favouring people with established networks and privileged backgrounds and excluding those without access to networks and expertise in how to access funding and other resources.
- Some called for funding to be targeted at underrepresented groups.
- The 'central belt' was perceived as having privileged treatment in terms of funding and support with rural and island areas seen as losing out. There was a general call for equal access to funding and participation opportunities across the regions and communities in Scotland.
- Concentration of national performing companies and cultural national representative bodies (and therefore jobs) in the central belt was felt by some to be unfair.
- There were also perceived inequalities within the central belt itself with activity focused on the cities rather than the suburban areas and smaller towns in between Glasgow and Edinburgh, and that there was also inequality within cities, with funding and infrastructure concentrated in city centres.
- Health inequality and disability were viewed as factors limiting access and participation. For example, those with significant health issues and care needs or responsibilities could struggle to have their culture needs met. At the same time culture can be immensely beneficial for people with health needs or disabled people and many felt that their access and participation needs should be addressed by the strategy. It was suggested that a needs based approach, where everyone is regarded as having basic cultural needs that should be met, would help to address this.

Communities

2. Many contributors highlighted the importance of considering the community view and experience of culture and recognising the importance of each community's own forms of culture in generating a sense of place and identity, acknowledging that communities do not always feel the need to engage with more formal, publicly funded or high profile forms of culture. There was also discussion about what is meant by 'community' in a modern society and there was general agreement that this would extend beyond place to include 'communities of interest' such as online users or service users. Many questions and ideas were raised by contributors about how community involvement and engagement should be approached to ensure equity across Scotland when it comes to accessing and participating in culture and a range of these views are set out below:
 - Some contributors asked the question are communities hard to reach or is it the cultural organisations that are hard to reach? Many suggested that a better understanding of the experiences of communities who do not engage, particularly in more economically deprived areas is needed.
 - Many raised infrastructure issues including the impact of poor digital connectivity in some areas and lack of knowledge about the opportunities afforded by digital access. Some expressed the view that local expenditure on culture is reducing and that culture budgets should be protected.

- Some contributors suggested that lack of availability or poor access to cultural spaces, facilities and building, including access to unused spaces in empty buildings in cities, towns and villages hampered cultural participation.
- Opening hours at community venues, timetabling of events and the closure of premises where culture activity takes place were felt to further accentuate the problem of lack of space. It was suggested that public venues such as schools could be opened up at weekends and in the evenings as there was a perceived need to provide safe, accessible and if possible, free, spaces for creative expression.
- There was general support expressed for mechanisms which will help to ensure that communities are actively included in cultural decision-making in their local area.
- Some stated that the importance of being able to express one's own culture and heritage as well as understanding the cultures of the country dwelt in cannot be underestimated particularly for minority cultures and those migrant communities who have made Scotland their home. Language was identified as an important factor for many of these communities.
- The importance of places to local communities and visitors, whether natural or built, was recognised and seen as both shaping and inspiring local and national culture as well as reflecting the heritage of the past. Safeguarding and making Scotland's historic environment accessible for future generations was viewed as a priority.
- Museums, galleries and collections were seen by some as vital both locally and nationally in telling the stories of our collective past and present through their collections and exhibitions. There was discussion about the expanded role museums could play in working with local communities.
- Encouraging cross-sector joined up working to improve access, e.g. transport in rural areas as well as empowering communities to broker solutions to local issues was raised.
- Many contributors raised the issue of lack of job opportunities making the retention of talent a major issue particularly for rural and island communities and communities beyond the central belt. This was also perceived to have an impact on the cultural life of these areas. It was considered to be important to find ways of providing more opportunities locally to encourage talented people to stay. For example, it was suggested that investing in support for graduates could help to increase the culture that is available and make these places more attractive to live and work in. Contributors from minority, small, rural and/or island communities stressed the importance to them of their own cultures, language (especially Gaelic or Scots) and heritage. Many expressed the need to encourage, preserve, collect, record, store and showcase culture and objects from folklore, traditional art and art forms, including how the traditional has influenced the modern and contemporary.
- Many wanted more support for small projects, developed and delivered locally which were believed to make a tremendous difference to a community and which were felt to potentially have more impact and be more accessible than arts delivered at the national level through national institutions.

- The role of volunteers and the “connectors” (key people from the local community who galvanise activity) were seen by many as critical to fostering culture/ cultural activity at a community level.
 - There were also examples given of places where artists and communities are working closely alongside each other to foster a sense of place and making efforts to regenerate the locality. A ‘cultural high-street’ in each community where artists, local designers and creative producers can work and have access to a shop window was suggested as a good way of using culture to revitalise local high streets.
 - There was also a sense that sometimes culture is “done to” communities not in cooperation with them or led by them. It was suggested that sometimes “outreach approaches” that have been used in deprived or marginalised areas could undermine or fail to respect local communities’ own cultures and views (not even recognising these as being “proper culture”) or threaten traditional forms of culture. It was therefore considered important to have a good understanding of local communities’ interests and needs and to use local people to deliver cultural interventions.
 - Enhancing the role of heritage bodies, civic trusts and communities in regeneration projects, supporting community-led regeneration projects and continuing to support local development trusts was put forward as a suggestion for enhancing local culture delivery.
 - It was proposed that communities should be included in decision-making that affects them and their resources, for example, through participatory decision-making models.
 - The notion of community ‘ownership’ of local history and culture and of decision-making on local assets such as libraries was raised. Communities should be able to use spaces and be consulted in any decision-making processes about local spaces that affect them.
 - Community asset transfers should take place as soon as buildings are identified as a possible community assets to ensure they are maintained in a good state of repair from the outset
 - Some contributors suggested that there could be better promotion of what is going on culturally in a local area via local and national media and website signposting.
 - Some stated that local organisations often have national and international ambitions that could be supported, for example, through development of touring networks or mentoring schemes.
3. There was a range of ideas expressed about what changes could be made locally to help promote access and participation in culture across communities in Scotland. The majority of ideas expressed the need for communities (including communities of interest) to be involved in decisions which affect them and many called for locally devolved budgets for culture which enable communities to influence who and what is funded in their area. Another idea was to embed artists in communities to share their skills and creativity, support local organisations and individuals as well as to inspire the next generation of artists and creative producers.

Section 3: Theme - Valuing the artist and creativity

1. Valuing the artist and creativity more widely and a focus on the cultural workforce dominated many of the sessions, with some contributors arguing that this should be one of the core aims of the strategy. The financial challenges facing artists and creative producers who are often freelancers was raised as well as the perceived lack of value often placed on creators, the creative process and their contribution to society which can be taken for granted. The important contribution of volunteers and grassroots activity to culture in Scotland was also highlighted.
2. The challenges that were highlighted by contributors that are felt to be faced by artists and creative producers across the sector are set out below:
 - Lack of level playing field for those wishing to enter the sector for those without established networks and connections
 - Unpredictable, uneven, short term funded and poorly paid work
 - Sometimes being expected to work for free
 - Lack of employment security, as mostly freelance
 - Non-eligibility for some welfare benefits, sick pay or a pension
 - Drop-out of those with caring responsibilities
 - Often voluntary, unpaid work is carried out by young people seeking to get a foot in the door
 - Often working from home, because of lack of affordable work spaces
 - Health issues, such as stress
 - A lack of confidence due to having to continuously justify career choices
 - Perceived geographical and rural-urban discrepancy in paid, sustainable career opportunities as well as an income divide between cultural management/administration and everyone else in the sector.
 - Need to relocate to find work
 - Working across more than one job to make ends meet
3. Some suggestions were made included exploring ways to better support the creative and cultural freelance workforce including fair work/pay, innovative taxation such as Citizen's Basic Income, improvements to funding and greater advocacy for the central role of artists and other creative roles in society. Other ideas included ensuring that the funding system encourages risk-taking, experimentation and innovation; encourages family/carer friendly working patterns and practices; fosters better peer to peer support; and ensures that artists are more visible across public and civic life as cultural role models. There was a widely shared sense of the need for more inclusion of artists in decision making, in policy and strategy development as well as across civic and public life. It was noted that artists and other creative roles could provide a more radical edge to strategies and policy development across a number of areas.

4. Many of the issues affecting the cultural workforce, artists and those engaging in creativity more generally link to the issues of inequality and lack of diversity described in [Section 2: Theme - Access and Participation](#).

Volunteers and grassroots activity

5. Many contributors noted that not everyone currently engaged in cultural activity and creative expression is looking for paid employment or to derive an income from it. It was widely believed that local arts and heritage organisations in particular rely heavily on volunteers who are often highly skilled and knowledgeable ex-professionals. Boards are also often populated by those who have retired from a broad range of occupations. Contributors emphasised that the volunteer dimension of the sector needs recognition of its value in its own right and support extended to help more people to take part, if they so wish. One idea put forward was to provide more professional support for volunteers, including how to navigate local government structures and access funding.
6. It was widely agreed that cultural activity at grassroots level also contributes to community strength, place-making and a sense of pride and confidence. Contributors felt that there is a need to better understand and support grassroots activity and to provide groups at grassroots level with more mechanisms to influence strategy and decision-making locally and nationally. There was a call not to overlook the small scale and grassroots by overly focusing on the big, static, formal and institutional level.

Section 4: Theme - Young people, education and skills

1. Young people, education and skills were areas where many contributors saw potential for addressing the challenges of inequality of access and participation and through which they believed the benefits of culture could be extended society-wide. At nearly every public event education (formal and informal) and creative learning were discussed and raised as key to supporting the future of culture in Scotland, as well as ensuring that Scotland is preparing for a future in which automation will dominate and where creativity and innovation will be essential skills. Contributors were also aware of the many pressures and challenges facing young people including the impact of social media and challenges around social deprivation and attainment.
2. There was general agreement that culture and creativity are a huge resource which can support a young person's development not only for those who want to pursue a career in culture but to support learning and skills across the board. The positive impact of cultural participation on young people's mental health, including the boost it can give to self-confidence and self-esteem, was also seen by many as a key reason why all young people should be encouraged to get involved in culture.
3. Contributors acknowledged the important cultural role that young people play today but also that the future of culture in Scotland is in their hands. Many stressed that it is critical to involve young people in the development of the strategy to ensure that it is relevant to them and that their voices are adequately represented.
4. It was widely acknowledged that the main way to reach out to and support all young people in Scotland is through the formal education system, though early years and out of school activity was also viewed as being of importance. Some of the perceived challenges and suggested priorities for action that were raised by contributors are included below:
 - Promote the value of cultural and creative learning from early years onwards so that it is understood and valued by teachers, parents, children and society in general both for its own sake but also the many benefits it brings to personal welfare and learning.
 - Some felt that although Curriculum for Excellence offered a broad framework that allows for the inclusion of culture and creative learning, more could be done within the framework to provide opportunities for creativity. There were perceptions amongst some that STEM subjects tend to be prioritised in schools. It was suggested that some expressive arts subjects could be offered as non-exam based subjects.
 - Creativity was broadly viewed as an essential skill for tackling the challenges of an uncertain and technological future and it was acknowledged that embedding it across all school subjects provides for better learning outcomes.
 - Digital skills were also viewed as essential for young people as well as how to engage meaningfully with new and emerging technologies, particularly

social media, without adverse impacts on health and wellbeing. It was acknowledged that digital skills need to be continually updated and therefore support should be available for lifelong learning.

- Many stated that local and national cultures and heritages are a major asset for teachers in the classroom as well as community groups and local organisations. More could be done to support use of these resources and promote their worth to ensure that both traditional and new culture in Scotland is understood, celebrated and passed on to the next generation. Some suggested that real cultural and heritage experiences at school can inspire young people to get involved in culture.
 - There was strong support for language learning in schools and other educational institutions including Gaelic, Scots, Doric, minority ethnic languages as well as foreign languages.
 - Contributors acknowledged the difficult funding decisions that schools and colleges have to make but many expressed a desire to ensure that arts and music specialists are retained in schools as far as possible.
 - It was also recognised that there are some outstanding examples and models of best practice in terms of creative learning within schools and that these can be promoted and shared to make sure everyone has the same opportunities.
 - There was a perceived need for better sign-posting for careers in culture as well as the need for tailored-made apprenticeships which respond to the broad requirements of the sector.
5. Young people themselves reported high levels of interest in culture and wanted to ensure that the varied ways that young people are making, sharing and participating in culture, often on line, digitally or in self-organised ways, are viewed as authentic by older generations. Creative learning, arts and culture by and for young people was also identified as a key strength of many of Scotland's cultural organisations. It was also suggested that improved linkages across local and national government and the major publicly funded cultural organisations in Scotland, as well as networks and partnerships across schools, universities and culture organisations, could help to build on those successes going forward.
6. Although many of the discussions held focussed on the skills needed for young people to pursue a creative career, there was also acknowledgement of the broader skills needed to support the culture sector in Scotland including administration, finance and business skills. Secondments and other work exchanges were cited as possible ways of sharing key skills across the sector.

Section 5: Theme – Funding Culture

1. Protecting, increasing and rethinking public funding and other forms of investment in culture to ensure they are equitable and sustainable, and the need for on-going investment in people and the cultural infrastructure were raised frequently throughout the engagement phase. Many of the debates considered what the funding priorities should be given the perceived likelihood of budget reductions going forward and how decisions on where public subsidy need to be applied should be made. There was also discussion about how to diversify the funding base more generally, acknowledging that culture and heritage is not only valuable in itself but that it is also an invaluable resource which supports national and local economies, for example heritage tourism and creative industries. Some of the main topics of discussion about investing in culture in the future are set out below:

- A general view was that public funding is essential and reflects culture's value and contribution to society. Public funding was often reported as having a value beyond the monetary in that it also acts as a lever for additional types of funding and brings a sense of status.
- Perceived need to review current funding mechanisms, to offer long term stability, allow greater flexibility and support risk taking, innovation and experimentation including supporting the emerging, not yet established artists and organisations
- Many contributors expressed a desire to better understand the totality of the current funding system, including the proportion of culture expenditure across Government as well as the operations of the major culture funders in Scotland. Some also expressed a desire for increased information sharing about the overall approach to the public funding of culture across all major funders.
- It was acknowledged that operational demands such as funding administration can hamper an organisation's efforts to be more strategic and joined up even if the will, knowledge and expertise is there.
- There was a sense that a review of funding and priorities could help to achieve broader goals such as supporting artists, providing equality of opportunity, increased equity of support between rural and urban communities and investing in more deprived areas.
- Competition for funding is increasing but available funding is not increasing at the same pace and may be unlikely to in the future. Costs are rising, funder applications are perceived as increasingly complex and there is a perception that more organisations and people are applying or pursuing funding from a limited number of funders and trusts who are all asking for a range of differing outcomes adding to the complexity. The funding landscape is also viewed as being unfairly advantaging those who are already established, particularly those located in the central belt.
- Participatory budgeting could be considered, with local communities and communities of interest being involved in decisions about where devolved funds should be invested in their physical area, and specialism.
- It was suggested that funds could be raised by applying levies to local and national businesses who enjoy the benefits of culturally generated income in their area.

- There was a general perception that culture budgets are amongst the most vulnerable in terms of cuts in times of financial austerity. This led to a feeling that culture was not valued as much as other policy areas, as well as feelings of financial insecurity which are also aggravated by short term funding awards. There were calls for increased, secure and longer term funding for culture which would also help to alleviate the difficulties faced in retaining talent in Scotland.
- The need to change perceptions of culture as being of value to local communities and individuals and society as a whole and raise its status to protect it against potential budget cuts.
- Many contributors called for more sustainable and flexible funding and investment. Some feedback centred on thinking about how resources and infrastructure could be used more strategically. Some suggested looking at how to grow budgets and set clear priorities for funding.
- There were some calls to provide smaller pots of funding to more people and small organisations, particularly those working at the grassroots, rather than focussing on national initiatives to diversify the cultural output and impact directly on local communities.
- Many celebrated the role of volunteers across the sector but cautioned that some feel forced to offer their creative and cultural services for free due to lack of secure funding.
- There were calls to explore new funding options, partnerships and possibilities, so that the overall funding model is fit for purpose in the 21st century. Some suggestions included commercial partnerships; philanthropic partnerships; taxation and other fiscal levers; as well as looking at where there can be joint funding for projects and initiatives which have a cultural element but also support broader aims, such as health and education.
- Contributors raised the importance of continued investment in the cultural infrastructure particularly at a local level to sustain and improve buildings and spaces where culture happens and also to maintain the historic and traditional buildings. It was acknowledged that closure of local facilities can have a major impact on small communities in particular.
- Challenges faced by music venues were raised by a number of participants around noise abatement where many fear that they may lose or have already lost their licenses. This has implications for the availability of small, local venues for up and coming musicians to play. Changes to licensing and planning regulations were suggested to tackle the issue.
- There was felt to be a lack of affordable artists' studios, particularly in the major cities.
- It was acknowledged that infrastructure goes beyond the physical spaces where culture happens and extends across the digital infrastructure but also the cultural networks that operate locally and nationally.
- Continuing to fund a wide variety of cultural content on local and national media which is relevant to audiences in Scotland was viewed as important.

2. Overall, there was general consensus on the need to review current funding structures and mechanisms, involving those affected by decisions in any review, to ensure any revised proposals respond to their concerns and needs. Some of the main concerns raised were around greater equality and access to funding; funding being more responsive to the needs of individual artists and communities; funding being more flexible and less risk averse; and more long term, diverse and sustainable funding models. Ideas around how to diversify the funding base for culture included working better across sectors and industries to increase knowledge and understanding and to raise awareness of all relevant funding and investment opportunities; encouraging different sector organisations to work together with funding agencies, linking smaller collectives with larger organisations to benefit from their knowledge skills and economy of scale; developing new creative pathways and drawing on private funding where possible.
3. Generally, it was suggested that local venue space could be used more flexibly, for a wider range of purposes, and that the focus should be on making best use of what is already available, including revitalising disused or derelict buildings where possible. Many suggested that strategic planning was needed locally to consider long term investment and ensure an integrated approach around transport, parking etc. as well as factoring in local digital infrastructure requirements.

Section 6: Theme – International working

1. Culture was widely recognised as being critical to how Scotland is viewed internationally, and also how Scotland sees itself as a confident and open, diverse society. It was broadly accepted that much of the sector is highly expert in working internationally and much international work occurs out with the view of government and is a natural part of the sectors' daily activity. There was a general desire to build on existing strengths internationally and there was much discussion about how best to represent culture overseas in a way that conveys its authenticity and its celebration of the traditional along with the vibrancy of the new, the emerging and the contemporary. The key role that culture has in international diplomacy was widely acknowledged and there was a sense of pride in Scotland being viewed internationally as a centre for cultural excellence. A range of the other main discussion points raised are given below:

- Contributors noted that how Scotland embraces New Scots and celebrates diverse cultures is a key element of how it is viewed positively on the international stage and how it sees itself. Some suggested that it is important that alternative stories of and from Scotland are showcased abroad to ensure that this diversity is fully recognised and cultural exchange represents modern society in Scotland.
- Showcasing and promotion were described as only one aspect of international working. The curiosity to develop new relationships, to learn, experience and share ideas and to be open to new and different cultures and languages described as equally important
- It was widely acknowledged that culture and heritage tourism (including ancestral tourism) and the creative industries are major economic drivers and attract inward investment in Scotland, by helping to make it a desirable place to live, work and do business.
- There were suggestions that Scotland is often portrayed internationally as a place to visit because of its wilderness landscapes as opposed to the places where people make culture and that more could be done through international marketing to promote the year-round vibrancy of culture and heritage in Scotland particularly beyond the main events held in the major cities. It was suggested that more could be done to promote Gaelic culture abroad and to make it more accessible for visitors.
- It was acknowledged that many in the culture sector are experienced at working internationally and could help to up skill others across the sector who may be lacking in knowledge and experience to make the necessary international connections. Some smaller organisations felt that it was hard to fund international activity.
- Many contributors raised concerns about the potential impact of Brexit on European cultural relations, opportunities and in terms of the logistics of international working. There was general agreement that international cultural collaborations both inward and outward are mutually beneficial and enhance education and culture in Scotland.
- International ambition in Scotland extends beyond the central belt and Scotland is well known for its internationally renowned festivals. It was also recognised that digital technology now enables many to reach

international audiences without the need to relocate into urban areas. There were some calls to ensure that the opportunities afforded by digital resources are fully explored and shared widely across the sector to ensure everyone can benefit from what it has to offer

- There were calls to learn from international culture policy as well as what is working well culturally in other countries including funding and taxation models which support culture
2. Overall, most contributors considered that making connections across the culture sector in Scotland and more peer to peer support would help to make international working more widespread across the country. It was also suggested that international links could be strengthened via the diaspora including Gaelic speakers. Some contributors also suggested that the culture sector could support Scotland's credentials as a world leader in other areas of global interest beyond culture, for example, sustainability and climate change with its ability to imagine and communicate new futures.

Section 7: Theme – Leadership and joined up working

1. Joined up working was recognised as taking a number of forms, including within the sector, between local and national government and across government policy areas. Most suggested that improving linkages between different government strategies and between the sector, local government, communities and others sectors (private and third sectors) would benefit culture in Scotland. Some of the perceived benefits described included raising the profile and value of culture; aligning synergies; making cultural considerations a normal part of decision-making; avoiding duplication; information and resource sharing; mentoring and skills sharing; and improved communication. Overall contributors expressed the hope that the culture strategy would support a more joined up approach to culture policy and provision in Scotland. Some of the challenges and ways that a more collaborative approach might be fostered are set out below:

- Contributors noted that the culture sector can be fragmented with some elements of the sector being isolated and not connected across Scotland or even, in some cases, beyond city boundaries. There are also many good examples of partnership working within the sector yielding benefits and a desire to learn from them by sharing good practice and avoiding the need to ‘reinvent the wheel’
- Competition for work and funding can be an obstacle to cooperation within the culture sector. There was a shared perception that these existing divisions are detrimental to the overall success of the sector as it harms its capacity to develop, to inform about the benefits of culture and to influence decisions
- There were calls for more joined up working at the strategic policy-level across the Scottish Government, and with local authorities and cultural trusts, with culture at the heart of government and reflected across policy areas and supported via innovative cross-budgeting models.
- Education, health, the environment, digital and technology, the economy, justice, communities and local government, social policy (including New Scots and poverty prevention), tourism, international and transport were raised as some of the main areas of policy overlap where there is capacity for greater partnership working across policy areas.
- A considerable number of contributors mentioned that culture should feature on the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework as a mark of its importance to society.
- The respective roles of national and local government and how the strategy will clarify or impact on those roles was discussed. Some suggested that as much decision-making as possible should be devolved locally whereas other thought that, for example, local government culture budgets should be ring-fenced. It was agreed that the relationship between local and national culture policy should be beneficial to individuals and local communities. Some contributors argued for a “rights based” approach to culture and cultural activity, so that each individual should have a right to a minimum cultural entitlement.
- Some raised the issue of the potential for more joined up working with the private sector including, but not exclusively, around funding for culture.

- There was some discussion about whether incentives could be made available to promote collaboration with the culture sector and to ensure that culture features consistently as a consideration in decision-making at local and national level.
2. Generally, contributors favoured more networking opportunities across the culture sector and the sharing of successful collaborative projects with key partners like NHS or Education Scotland. In terms of creating new networks and joined up ways of working, there was discussion about how best to foster links with local communities as well as encouraging those out-with some of the more formal and established networks to work together where it is in their interest to do so. It was acknowledged that urban/rural/island models and needs would differ and that much of the success of partnership and joined up working lies in effective leadership locally and nationally but also from within communities and through individual artists and creative producers.

Section 8: Theme - Evidence, impact and benefits of culture

1. Most, if not all, agreed that culture should be valued in and of itself first and foremost. There was also a strong desire for the sector to better articulate the overall benefits of culture and cultural engagement, in order to advocate for the sector and raise its profile. This often related to leadership and joined up working ([Section 7](#)) which describes the desire for culture to have stronger profile in other policy areas.

The benefits of culture

2. Many contributors noted the benefits of culture and creative practice and the ways that it can help us to see and think differently. There was felt to be great potential for creativity to have a more central role in reimagining long term and preventative solutions to major challenges. Cultural activity from the perspective of audience and/or creators was also discussed in this context. This ranged from community development and confidence to health and wellbeing via the impact on employability and inclusive economic growth. The impact of culture was particularly mentioned in relation to:
 - Communities and overall society
 - Economy
 - Education
 - Individuals' overall health
 - International relations
 - Mental health
 - Tourism
3. Other areas were also highlighted where culture plays a key role to tackle challenges including housing and regeneration, poverty, justice (for example reducing reoffending) and the environment.
4. A sizable number of contributors spoke of culture as a need and argued in favour of a "needs-based" approach for the strategy. This approach is based on the rationale that all people have basic cultural needs that require to be fulfilled and that cultural activity and experience bring a range of benefits to individuals and communities.

Measuring the benefits of Culture

5. Many contributors discussed the difficulty of measuring and presenting information which fully articulates the benefits of culture to society. Some stressed the need to define clear goals and outcomes and to produce evidence to articulate culture as a good investment and justify spending on it. There was a feeling amongst some that good evidence exists but needs to be better articulated and used to advocate for the sector. Some expressed concern that the burden of evidence and impact was often put on small organisations and individuals to 'justify' funding. Some of the main challenges that contributors wanted to tackle are included below:

- Better integration of evidence about the benefits of culture into the general narrative about culture to make the case for utilising cultural interventions more widely understood. For example, it was perceived that the health benefits of cultural interventions both as prevention and therapeutically are not yet fully understood in clinical settings, in turn impacting on funding for culture in health initiatives.
 - Many were keen to evidence the economic benefits and the cost savings from preventative expenditure on culture. However, some contributors also recognised the difficulties in relation to evidencing impact including the challenges of:
 - Quantifying the impact and benefits of qualitative and deeply personal, indirect effects
 - Demonstrating longer term and preventive effects and attributing them back to cultural interventions or activities
 - Measuring a broad range of effects in different policy areas
 - Measuring effects at individual as well as societal level
 - Culture being seen merely as a tool of economic development or social engineering
 - It was suggested that the intangible aspects of culture and heritage and the intrinsic value of culture are difficult to measure.
 - Some suggested that culture could be included in the National Performance Framework. A needs based approach developed with an underpinning comprehensive measurement framework could also be useful.
 - Social Return on investment was suggested as a possible tool to help to quantify the economic impact of culture
 - It was suggested that better use could be made of existing evidence and that a more joined up approach to evidence-based communication and advocacy would help to communicate the benefits of culture more effectively
6. Generally, contributors saw the importance of providing evidence of the positive impact of culture on individuals, communities and society, in order to fully articulate the benefits of culture and to therefore attract broader investment. Many artists in particular were keen that the perceived need for measurement should not impact artistic or creative freedom of expression or development.

Section 9: Conclusion and Next Steps

1. This report has summarised the key points that were raised throughout the engagement phase held in support of the development of the Culture Strategy which ran from June to December 2017.
2. The sheer breadth of the views received during the Engagement Phase is reflected in this report, yet not every art form or aspect of culture or person's view has been reported in detail to maintain the balance of the report and to keep it as succinct as possible for ease of readability.
3. In the report, the feedback is grouped into a series of themes. Each section summarises contributors views on the challenges faced, examples of what is working well and suggested solutions. Key themes are listed below:
 - Scope, purpose & aims of A Culture Strategy for Scotland
 - Access and participation
 - Valuing the artist and creativity
 - Young people, education and skills
 - Investing in culture
 - International working
 - Leadership and Joined up working
 - Evidence, impact and benefits of culture
4. All views and opinions received to date about priorities for the future support of culture in Scotland will be taken into consideration when drafting the public consultation on A Culture Strategy for Scotland which will issue later in 2018.

A Culture Strategy for Scotland - Public Events

The 9 Scottish Government Hosted public events held around the country were open to anyone and in most cases a local partner helped with organisation and promotion. Adverts were taken out in local media prior to each event in addition to extensive on line and social media promotion. Some of the main issues raised specific to each area are set out below:

Dundee – 45 attendees

- Challenges of attracting and retaining a cultural workforce out with the central belt
- Perceived lack of cohesion locally to support cultural delivery in the city. Some expressed concern that it was easier to find support and collaborate out with the city, including Europe, than within
- The importance of grassroots cultural engagement and how best to foster it
- Growing challenges around funding the cultural infrastructure including ways to support both the emerging and the established
- Tackling the poor perception of artists, lack of understanding about the contribution they make and celebrating their value

Inverness – 23 attendees

- The success of the Feis model of engaging young people in traditional arts
- The specific challenges of both producing and engaging in cultural activity posed by the geography and population spread in the Highlands & Islands
- How best to financially support artists to ensure their economic security and that their contribution, particularly to small communities, is fully valued
- Challenges of most national organisations being based and ‘thinking’ from the central belt
- Strength of traditional cultures and language in Highlands and Islands that informs and shapes contemporary cultural expression
- Inverness as a growing city

Paisley – 51 attendees

- The role of the community and culture in healing, developing and reimagining communities and places
- Culture brings life and gives voice to communities
- Access to culture for all – culture as a democratic right
- Better support for the freelance work force
- Culture sector can feel unequal
- Flexible funding models to support grass roots culture, freelancers and smaller organisations
- The importance of culture to health and wellbeing
- Culture as way to reimagine the High Street

Dumfries – 33 attendees

- Community decision-making and participatory budgeting for arts and culture

- Challenges of maintaining a flexible infrastructure and cultural spaces in a rural setting
- Recognising the importance of passing the value of culture from one generation to another.
- Embedding culture within Government and existing strategies out with the culture sector
- Generational divide in culture, let in new voices and young people to influence and develop ideas
- Dumfries is using culture democratically and it's led by artists and communities working alongside each other
- Cultural leadership isn't just from the central belt, Scotland thinks from the central belt and this needs to change
- Culture as a key way to retain and attract young people by creating jobs and things to do

Galashiels – 31 attendees

- The importance of young people to the success of culture in the area now and in the future. It was acknowledged that there are not currently enough young people getting involved in the culture in the area mainly due to problems with young talent retention.
- Challenge with people needing to be financially secure in order to volunteer which favours older members of society and may exclude the young
- Freelance cultural workforce is in crisis and existence is so hand to mouth
- More support for traditional music
- Ensuring arts specialists and creativity are valued in schools
- Arts organisations should work together with one another rather than in competition in the regions in particular
- There is untapped potential between volunteering and culture

Aberdeen – 65 attendees

- The perceived inequity of 'central-beltism' came through keenly with calls for the national companies to move out of the central axis, or they are not 'National'
- The potential of establishing a national centre in the north east which celebrates the language and culture of the region
- The impact of 'Agent of Change' was raised and its direct impact on grassroots music venues in particular
- The need to work across city and shire boundaries and to have an international outlook in order to flourish
- The need for a post-graduate talent retention pilot scheme/s, Aberdeen loses its talent to central belt/London
- Build on strengths of art school, university and organisation in the city and shire

Skye – 30 attendees

- Recognition of the unique cultural appeal of Skye and how to market it better as well as joining up the cultural offer across the Island to create a year-round, accessible experience for visitors and locals alike, across Gaelic, heritage and contemporary aspects on offer

- The importance of transport and digital infrastructures to attracting visitors and retaining talent
- Culture is at the centre of Skye's sense of itself. Need to support cultural excellence locally to retain talent and maintain national and international outlook and appeal.
- 'Cultural crofting' and the need to improve the social and economic status of the cultural workforce
- The need to value and embed culture and creativity in schools, local schools should be deeply cultural places
- The need for more flexible funding to support the unique demography and topography of Skye and more rural places
- Excellence and quality don't emanate from the central belt alone
- Dynamic around touring and sharing needs to change so that it's an exchange of equal terms

Edinburgh – 65 attendees

- Culture can be a diverse sector for the many, ensuring there are spaces where culture can happen within communities is vital, including affordable studio space for artists which is a big issue in the city
- Culture is not just about the big festivals and the iconic city centre venues, the Strategy is a chance to show how much value we put on grass roots culture and think of ways to support it. Fantastic work goes on across this city that may not be as visible to everyone as the cultural icons in the city centre
- The need to support variety and diversity through culture funding and encourage broad collaboration across public, private and third sectors as well as across the sector itself
- The culture sector is a unique asset, supporting diverse careers and enterprises. We need to develop bespoke apprenticeships and career development approaches that take account of this rather than using off-the-shelf models which are not relevant
- More people live between Edinburgh and Glasgow than in them. Is this reflected culturally and how can we ensure the cultural offer, skills and expertise extends across and beyond the city boundaries?

Dunfermline – 45 attendees

- Celebrate and build on existing culture and heritage infrastructure by encouraging more partnership working and collaboration across generations and the public and private sectors to create new experiences for locals and visitors.
- New uses for communal spaces and inviting young and old to experience what it has to offer.
- Fife has a vibrant cultural heritage. Need to recognise everyone has their own culture which can be intimate and personal and allow that diversity and that fundamental need for self-expression to flourish. Do not operate a deficit model where people need to be 'educated' about culture.
- Bottom up funding models will generate accessible funding for the many and support smaller organisations who have a greater social impact locally.

- Improve and support good leadership in the sector including local democracy and decision-making.
- As well as improving rural broadband, we need to have a better understanding of what digital can do for culture and for our young people in particular.
- Citizens basic income for freelancers or related tax incentives to improve their economic stability.
- Use better the resources we have; publically funded museums and galleries should sell good Scottish design and craft
- Every child in Scotland has the right to access Scotland's heritages first hand

A Culture Strategy for Scotland – Summary of Engagement Activity

A summary of the events and feedback received as part of the Scotland-wide culture conversations is listed below.

Public Meetings	
1	Aberdeen, The Lemon Tree,
2	Dumfries' Culture Conversation,
3	Dundee's Culture Conversation,
4	Dunfermline's Culture Conversation
5	Galashiels' Culture Conversation,
6	Glasgow Women's Library,
7	Inverness' Culture Conversation,
8	Leith Theatre, Edinburgh,
9	Paisley's Culture Conversation,
10	Skye, Portree High School,
Partner events (With SG Support)	
11	Arts and Business Scotland, Development Forum, Glasgow,
12	Arts and Health Network Scotland's Culture Conversation,
13	BEMIS
14	Cross Party Group: Culture
15	Cross Party Group: Health Inequalities
16	Culture Counts session
17	Facebook Live Q&A with Young Scot and Scottish Youth Parliament
18	Federation of Scottish Theatre
19	Festivals Edinburgh Board Meeting
20	Knowledge Exchange, Diversity Discussion
21	Museums Galleries Scotland
22	Royal Society of Arts
23	SenScot Social Enterprise Conference, Cumbernauld
24	Sporta Leisure and Culture Conference
25	VOCAL
Partner Led Events/ Stakeholder Submissions	
26	Arts in Healthcare
27	BEFS
28	Big Lottery Fund Scotland
29	Bòrd na Gàidhlig Culture Conversation in Sabhal Mor Ostaig,
30	Bòrd na Gàidhlig Culture Conversation in Sabhal Mor Ostaig,
31	Bòrd na Gàidhlig Culture Conversation, Fort William,
32	Bòrd na Gàidhlig Culture Conversation, Uist Events
33	British Council
34	Galashiels - Stowed Out Festival
35	Comar's Culture Conversation, Tobermory,
36	Creative Carbon Scotland Conference, Glasgow,

37	Edinburgh Festivals Conference
38	Equity
39	Fèisean nan Gàidheal
40	Frobel Group
41	Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh,
42	Gaelic Books Council
43	Heritage Lottery Fund
44	Highland Print Studio
45	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
46	Historic Environment Scotland
47	Literature Alliance Scotland
48	Making Music
49	Museums Association
50	National Creative Learning Networks
51	National Trust of Scotland
52	North Edinburgh Arts
53	Perth's Culture Conversation, Perth,
54	Playwright Gatherings in (i) Glasgow, (ii) Edinburgh,
55	Regional Screen Scotland
56	Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
57	Scottish Library Information Council (SLIC) Members.(i)
58	Sistema
59	Sound festival
60	South Ayrshire, Culture Conversation
61	Surf
62	The Sound house Organisation
63	Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland
64	Traditional Music and Song Association of Scotland
65	Traditional Music Forum in collaboration with Friends
66	Voluntary Arts Scotland
67	The Work Room Cultural Blether
Individual Feedback	
68 - 82	15 individuals provided feedback
Online Feedback	
83	Creative Carbon Scotland Blog
84	Dialogue - discussion forum (*35 contributors)
85	Euan Leitch Blog
86	Harry Giles Blog
87	Julie Tait Blog
88	Museums Association Blog- Alistair Brown