



Scottish **Arts** Council

Confidential

Appendix 1

Strategic Review

Council and Committees Workshop on 20 April 2005 at Scottish Arts Council

Report compiled by Carol Warner, Arts Development

1. Agenda outline for the day and Membership
2. Workshop Notes
3. Participants' post workshop feedback

1. Agenda outline

‘To ensure that we are applying our expertise and resources
to best strategic effect for the arts in Scotland’

1.1 Purpose of the day

- to test the thinking and ambitions outlined in the optimum and radical scenarios, before we go into the consultation phase
- to identify and explore overarching themes and priorities including education and audience development
- to seek Council & Committees' approval for the proposals at this stage that will be tested with colleagues in the sector

1.2 Briefing

Chairs and workshop recorders briefing given by Morag Arnot, Carol Warner and Jim Tough

1.3 Session 1 – Presentations - Introducing broader scenarios (1hour)

- Workshop format & desired outcomes – Graham Berry
- Cross Council priorities - Graham Berry
- Education - Joan Parr, Head of Education

- Audience Development - Fiona Sturgeon, Head of Audience and Organisational Development

1.4 Session 2 – Testing the optimum and radical scenarios (2 hours)

6 x individual groups (table of workshop membership and apologies available)

Purpose:

- to look at scenarios in detail to test, question and challenge the visions prior to a process of wider consultation
- to identify overarching themes that may suggest some higher level priorities

Invited questions prepared in advance by members of the groups

Each group chaired by nominated Council/Committee member

Officers recorded the key comments, issues, and challenges raised on the scenarios.

Statements prepared on the Chairman's briefing.

1.5 Session 3 - Groups discuss the scenarios and the bigger themes (1 hour)

- Creative Arts group
- Performing Arts group
- Arts Managers group

Purpose:

- Discuss the scenarios and the bigger themes without artform heads and officers involved.
- Identify emerging corporate themes, issues and challenges
- Artform Managers form their own group.

Statements produced by the recorders for the Chairman's briefing

Arts Managers joined their respective CA /PA groups (1/2 hour)

- Continue the dialogue – discussing findings from the group sessions and seek points for clarification before the final plenary session.

1.6 Chairman's briefing Feedback from recorders and statements read by Chairman

1.7 Session 4 – Plenary - Cross Council themes and emerging priorities (1hr)

Led by Richard Holloway and Graham Berry and informed by feedback from the workshop groups

1.8 Session 5 – Agreement and next steps (1/2 hour)

**Membership
(Session 2: Workshop Groups)**

	Crafts	Dance	Drama	Literature	Music	Visual Arts & Area Development
Heads of Department	Helen Bennett	Anita Clark	David Taylor	Gavin Wallace	Nod Knowles	Amanda Catto Caroline Docherty
Council Group chairs	Dale Idiens (chair)	Joanna Baker (chair)	Ben Twist (chair)	John Scott Moncrieff (chair)	Roy McEwan (chair) Bob Downes	John Mulgrew (chair)
Committee Performing Arts	Margaret O'Connor*		Grant Williams		Ronnie Gurr* David Wilkinson	
Creative Arts						Colin Greenslade
Capital *						Catherine Woodford (later)
Independent Advisor	Elizabeth Goring NMS	Steve Slater Senior Programmer Tramway	Julie Ellen Playwrights Studio	Faith Liddell Freelance	Tom Bancroft Musician & Caber Music	Mungo Campbell Hunterian Museum Jane Jeffrey An Tuireann
Officer (recorder)	Clare Hanna	Susan Hay	Jaine Lumsden	Jenny Attala	Carolyn Paterson	Maggie Maxwell & Gillian Shaw

Richard Holloway, Chairman (part)

Graham Berry, Director

Jim Tough, Deputy Director, Head of Arts

Liz Sams, Head of Funding and Resources

Morag Arnot, Director of Planning and Communications

Carol Warner, Arts Development

Joan Parr, Head of Education

Fiona Sturgeon, Head of Organisational Dev and Audience Development

Iain Munro, Head of Capital

Norah Campbell, Head of International

Michelle Jordan, Senior Communications Officer

Apologies : **Council** - Louise Mitchell, Arthur Cormack, Annie Marrs , Arthur Herman, Steve Grimmond, Jennifer Hawksworth

Performing Arts Committee - Matthew Lenton, John Evans, Ethelinda L-Johnstone, Sheila Allan, **Creative Arts Committee** - Phil Long*, Carol Dunbar, Bob Grieve, Douglas Gifford, Katherine Pearson*, **Capital Committee** – Penny Cousins, Neil Gillespie

2. Workshop notes

2.1 Session 1 – Introducing broader scenarios

Copies of the presentations from Graham Berry, Joan Parr and Fiona Sturgeon are available.

2.2 Session 2 – Testing the optimum and radical scenarios

2.2.1 Crafts Summary

Present: Dale Idiens (Chair), Margaret O'Connor, Elizabeth Goring, Helen Bennett, Clare Hanna

The group were happy with both the range of activities and the division of resources proposed in the optimum scenario. In brief the group have prioritised the following 4 areas from the Crafts paper with the related schemes or projects.

Researching the audience for Crafts – When referring to the audience for crafts it is important to note that it is composed of both the attendee and the participator. 'Audience research and pilot intervention £50,000 over 2 years' is of most importance, with out knowing more about the audience it will limit the impact of activities proposed.

Education

'expand the crafts residencies in schools scheme £300,000 over 3 years' An established scheme where demand is far greater than supply and the benefits and impacts are already being seen.

Strategic devolved funding

'Devolved funding schemes for professional development £180,000 over 3 years' To devolve funds to Local Authorities to provide local awards for individual makers which can be a stepping stone for them to progress towards national awards from SAC. It will help address issue of makers' lack of confidence as support and advice will also be local.

'Programme development in key locations £200,000 ongoing' + 'curatorial development £75,000 over 3 years' + 'assist professional development for gallery education officers £60,000 over 3 years'

To provide a package to say 5 galleries/venues to develop crafts in their programme. Support for both the curator and education officer to develop skills within crafts interpretation, understanding and practice is essential to ensure the exhibitions will impact on and grow audiences for contemporary craft.

Visibility of crafts

'National Market Development Manager and promotional programme £300,000 over 3 years'

In order to change perception of craft an appreciation of quality needs to be developed through promotional activities and establishing links.

Additional points.

It was felt that whilst the National Centre for Craft was an aspiration in the longer term, other activities would possibly create the building blocks to sustain this and may well provide guidance for it. Leaving out the National Centre from Craft at this

time would realistically mean that the other activities could sufficiently grow the sector determine the desire and need for a National Centre for Craft in the future.

The group also felt the leadership role of SAC was important as there are activities and projects which can only happen with SACs support, those projects where risks are high.

2.2.2 Dance Summary

Present: Joanna Baker (Chair), Steven Slator, Anita Clark, Susan Hay

The current optimum scenario needs to go further not just build on existing infrastructure.

Objectives:

- Dance in Scotland should be recognised internationally for its strong identity for creation and innovation
- There should be a handful of choreographers creating work here/abroad challenging the boundaries and exciting the audience, making more people want to be involved as participants/audiences
- A way into dance needs to be obvious to people – not just closed if you haven't attended dance classes from an early age
- Space is always an issue for artists
- There should be a fully funded contemporary company in every city
- There should be thriving dance centres in all cities

How do you encourage/find new choreographers? Encourage diversity or cross fertilisation from other art forms – take risks on unknown artists to see if they have the capacity to create dance work

SAC needs to be agitators:

- By challenging artists to take risks, to be more ambitious and to create excellence. Artists should not curtail their vision initially to meet funding restrictions. Don't accept mediocrity
- By being more pro-active in supporting artists e.g. brokering deals with local councils for use of unused space with limited/no rent for local artists.

Dance that is making an impact internationally e.g. Brussels and Amsterdam have better government support, longer rehearsal periods and expect a piece to have a shelf life of about three years. This is what we should aim for. Companies would bring on new dancers to tour work and continue to create new work on the core company.

Regional choreographic centres in France encourage new work (good and bad) to be created and toured within France.

Linking into the existing networks in Europe should be facilitated to allow companies to tour abroad and be supported to do so to extend the shelf life of the work.

Dance should not be a one night stand. Often audiences have no time to learn about a piece until it is over. Word of mouth is too late.

People are not risk averse – they are being told that they are and will start believing it!

Scottish Arts Council not keen to take risks because protecting limited budgets.

The game needs to be raised by bringing in international companies to work with local artists for a long term project in the hope that this develops new creative individuals.

A massive impact is to be had when children interact with artists – more quality experiences in school

Scottish Arts Council needs to be able to accommodate individuals/companies that don't fit within categories – cross art form to encourage more exciting work.

Radical scenario: Status quo

Overarching themes:

- Promoters/producers
- Venues
- Role of companies as centres that employ a wide range of expertise – collaborative working
- Demand ambitious artists

2.2.3 Drama Summary

Present: Ben Twist (Chair), Grant Williams, Julie Ellen, David Taylor, Jaine Lumsden

Acknowledged that it was difficult to consider scenarios when we do not as yet know the impact of the National theatre of Scotland (NToS)

Flexibility was a key theme throughout all areas of discussion. (In method of creation of art, its delivery, and also to enable SAC to meet its strategic nationwide priorities.)

Artistic judgement Scottish Arts Council does have a role to take in making decisions based on artistic judgements. Scottish Arts Council's knowledge and judgement relates to strategy and policy more than to the relevant merits of individual artists. Quantity of audiences is not sufficient to deserve Scottish Arts Council support – if an organisation produces work of poor quality it should not be supported, regardless of audience figures.

Governance is a key issue (cross Council implications.)

Agreed that Boards do not necessarily have the right knowledge and impetus to appoint artistic directors that will ensure a vibrant and forward thinking programming policy and range of product. Creative hubs and new way of funding/delivery increase importance that the right people are artistic directors. Scottish Arts Council should consider paid Board members with specific expertise, a more pro-active relationship with organisations' Boards, in relation to artistic appointment and artistic management.

Creative Hubs were considered to be a positive idea. This has implications for other artform, specifically performing arts, as creative hubs would not necessarily be for one artform only. Provide opportunities for theatre practitioners (not just directors) to experiment with artform development, new ideas.

Agreed that there is not a "one size fits all" model. Hubs could be based around producing theatres that are building based; around non-building based

companies; around presenting building based theatres. Leadership of hubs could be co-operative or provided by artistic director of hosting organisation.

Suggested Scottish Arts Council could provide incentives (not just financial, including ensuring adequate personnel and resources) for organisations hosting these.

This model could help to ensure that more delegated decision making would not have the effect of “dumbing down” product. It could also mean that the status of education, technical and production personnel could be enhanced. It could also provide opportunities for those who were not being used by the NToS and provide challenges for NToS.

Flexibility – New Ways of Funding/Delivery

Model – artistic/producer team could “bid” for tenure of a building for a 5 year term, on basis of a broad artistic plan. (This might include creative hub for some.) Possibility of second 5 year term would be considered in 3rd year. There would be no possibility of a further term. This would require a seismic shift in way sector thinks and operates. Advantages would be that funding decisions would be based on strategic need and would break decisions based on historical patterns. More likely to create exciting work.

Additionally noted regarding education/ continuing professional development:

- Scotland has potential to be centre of excellence for further education training in the arts
- Existing excellence of further education training means many new theatre professionals start careers in Scotland, which contributes greatly to vibrant theatre scene. This should be encouraged.
- Issue of CPD for actors as well as other sector professionals needs to be addressed

2.2.4 Literature Summary

Present: John Scott Moncrieff (Chair), Faith Liddell, Gavin Wallace, Jenny Attala

Optimum Scenario:

- Paper demonstrates that Literature does not fit easily into existing Scottish Arts Council **structures** of funding and development – problem not solved
- **Organisations:** all CFOs are national, aspirational and co-operative but appear **strategically stunted** because of under-resource and reliance on project funding
- **Audience Development,** Literature has largest audience of the artforms: more **research** needed to identify, define and evidence different audiences e.g. for Lit Festivals, Readership etc.- who, what, how, motivation and effect, also barriers.
- **Interpretation** a good concept and intrinsic to high proportion of Literature activity e.g. Book Festivals, spoken word events, Readership initiatives, Literature Development Officers and Writing Fellows.
- Literature Development Officers seen as essential new initiative but **starved of resource**– there should be one in every local authority: question how to

manage and support: issues of knowledge and consistency within **LAs**, role for Scottish Arts Council in providing CPD

- **LAs** – growth of **Literature/Book Festivals** – ties in with above
- **International**: National Centre for Translation essential: look at Welsh model
- Agreed Professional Development Funds for artists should be trebled plus dev of words@work.
- **Creative Industries**: possibility of % of Bursaries and Publication awards being returned on success. Work with Scottish Enterprise on support for publishing.
- Plan to develop **Creative Hubs**: to deliver on overarching themes and give CFOs and EWCL lead role in developing particular ones, in co-operation with the others:
 - Advocacy
 - International
 - Readership Development/Events
 - Education
 - Creative Industries
 - Research
- Libraries: agreed on need for **legislation** on libraries to stock and develop Readership of Scottish books
- Language organisations (SLDs) **structurally burdensome** and not well integrated in terms of aspirations: partnership funding essential plus creation of Institute for Languages of Scotland.

Standstill Scenario

The obverse of the above – in particular.

- Writing Fellowships turned into Literature/Readership Development posts which would be rolled out in selected LA areas.
- Small group of key CFOs prioritised at expense of others: e.g. Scottish Book Trust, Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish Storytelling Centre prioritised; devolve languages organisations to e.g. education?
- Key CFOs share existing resources e.g. Marketing and Education Officers meaning that most cease to have these functions in house.
- Edinburgh World City of Literature and Centre for the Scottish Children's Book in jeopardy as no new resources to develop
- Education Department/Audience Development could prioritise artforms in turn for e.g. two year periods.

Over arching themes:

As identified for Creative Hubs: with potential for designated CFOs to lead on each working with LA s and other partners.

- Advocacy
- International
- Readership Development – Audience Development
- Education
- Creative Industries
- Research

2.2.5 Music Summary

Present: Roy McEwan (Chair), Bob Downes, Ronnie Gurr, David Wilkinson, Tom Bancroft, Nod Knowles, Carolyn Paterson

The group recognised the importance of the music strategy which is open to all styles of music. However there were discussions on whether or not funding should be directed at styles of music where there was the possibility of commercial success.

Historical patterns of funding affect music department more than any other, and is stifling development of music. It is impossible within the current budget to sustain and develop the national companies, as well as nurture and progress new projects.

The needs of the different music styles are very different, almost requiring individual strategies for development. It would be desirable to be able to fund more projects more holistically, e.g. rehearsal, recording and touring, instead of only one element.

Discussion ensued about the impossibility of making significant changes to the current budget when the majority (over 80%) is being directed towards the 3 national companies, and the particular problems this brings to the music department.

To move on from this impasse, it was thought the 3 national companies within the music budget could be brought together with Scottish Ballet and the National Theatre, and managed separately under their own budget heading – possibly outwith Scottish Arts Council.

This would allow the music department to move forward in significant areas without being always dominated by this issue, but would also allow a full debate about the way forward for the national companies, given that they are struggling to operate effectively within current budgets.

The 'radical' scenario was not seen as radical but a worst case scenario. The proposal of merging an orchestra has been tried unsuccessfully in the past, and there was doubt about how realistic that would be to attempt again. Also, any monies freed up through such a merge may only allow the other national companies to operate more effectively.

Whilst most of the discussion involved the national companies, several other key points emerged:

The way forward should be for Scottish Arts Council to lead partnership initiatives with key bodies including Scottish Enterprise (particularly regarding companies which have commercial potential). Areas such as creative industries need more recognition and support.

The need to be clearer about Scottish Arts Council priorities as funds are being spread too thinly. Better strategic use of lottery funds required.

Scottish Arts Council needs to recognise the changes in digital technology, which affects the distribution, marketing and access to music.

Cross-artform (including new media) does not fit into current artform structure.

It was thought the new committee structure within Scottish Arts Council was not working.

2.2.6 Visual Arts & Area Development Summary

Present: John Mulgrew (Chair), Colin Greenslade, Mungo Campbell, Jane Jeffrey, Amanda Catto, Caroline Docherty, Gillian Shaw, Maggie Maxwell

Visual Arts

- A strategy for **Visual Arts for Scotland** is required.
- Need for **shared vision** across the country in partnership with key players for the visual arts sector. Scottish Arts Council's support for contemporary visual arts is part of bigger Visual Arts picture – the continuum of art history. E.g. in Scottish Arts Council interests to support National Galleries (not in competition, but partners in national picture).
- **Reputation** of Visual Arts in Scotland very high internationally. A confident and quality visual arts sector. But need for more **visibility** (a problem in this sector cf to performing arts), and a clearer **articulation** for politicians.
- **Intellectual access** is of paramount importance.
- Need for **investment plan** with supporting data / figures. (1 in 4 in Scotland attend contemporary art events).
- Better **ratio of partnership funding** required. (How should Scottish Arts Council respond to Local Authority (LA) areas where our per capita investment vastly outstrips that provided by the Local Authority?)
- Is it really a question of us funding work which meets national objectives and LAs focusing on local activity?
- Should Scottish Arts Council be rewarding LAs which are developing as opposed to delivering?
- **Education**: need for training/ CPD for art teachers; use of existing networks (e.g. Cultural Co-ordinators; schools as centres of excellence in arts); closer working with SHEFC to broaden access / diversity in art schools
- Visual Arts organisations who are embracing their educational role need to be supported in order to cope with the increasing demand for their work. This demand is being generated from education initiatives such as Cultural Coordinators in Schools (CCiS).
- Cutting funding to small galleries and individuals is not an option. The SAC investment ratios in many small galleries are too high to enable those galleries to survive were funding cut. SAC staff time, however, could be redeployed to enable more meaningful development work

Area Development

- Oxymoron of core funding for developmental organisations.

- Arts Centres (outwith the central belt) are able to cross artform boundaries. They are therefore well placed to have a role in developing new work and supporting artists and creation. Their cross artform perspective also gives them opportunity to have a strong audience development focus. However the expertise to work across artforms and deliver programmes which give parity to each artform needs to be invested in.
- We need to find a way of evaluating success in arts and cultural provision. How Good is Our School? Which is helping school heads evaluate themselves was cited as a possible model. An evaluative framework is what Scottish Arts Council staff needs in order to make the difficult decisions that will need to be made if we are to be truly radical.

Comments on Scottish Arts Council in general

- A **VISION** for Scottish Arts Council is required.
- **Demands** on Scottish Arts Council unsustainable. Need to move up a stage from **micro management**.
- Need for **developmental** model.
- **Status** of Scottish Arts Council – need to define remit for more proactive **high level** partnerships.
- Problem with letting go of historic funding patterns will only be addressed through rigorous **audit and evaluation** (inspection model?).
- Need for **relationship with Local Authorities** to be redefined. (If we move to a more defined developmental model, the issues of under-investment by Local Authorities would be easier to tackle).

- **Next steps**

A vision for the organisation needs to be defined

A professional working group for the Visual Arts sector needs to be involved.

A costed strategy

Identifying roles of each partner in development of a National Strategy

2.3 Session 3 - Groups discuss the scenarios and the bigger themes

2.3.1 Creative Arts Committee Group

Present: Dale (Chair), John M, John SM, Fiona, Mungo, Jane J, Elizabeth, Morag Arnot (recorder)

1. What is required is a sharper strategic focus to the work of the Scottish Arts Council – this requires the following:
 - A determination of priorities – allowing us to take a leadership role in the areas we prioritise
 - A clear evaluative framework
 - A commitment to work together internally – improving cross council working
 - A clearer link between corporate priorities and individual work priorities – allowing the best use of staff time
 - Better co ordination and management of key partnerships which add value and give leverage of funds – esp. LAs
 - Improved research – esp. audiences

- To adopt the role of a development agency. Based on the use of the evaluation to measure impact and on going continuous improvement.
- Manage our relationship with the executive in a more strategic and political way – seeking out opportunities which allow us to move forward as it addresses a political priority – ‘strategic opportunism’

2. When there are published strategies, they should be not the Scottish Arts Council’s but national and for the nation – put together through a collective – which is then owned and implemented through a ‘coalition of responsibilities’

3. Research – research and sound information must drive our work. Delivering commissioned research, including analysis of trends and others research and using that analysis of the research to shape our policy and work and that of the sector.

4. Creative Hubs – giving the opportunity to serve the whole of Scotland – they will:

- promote, display and deliver various different arts forms,
- act as a creative exchange for artists
- be centres of expertise for art, audience and education.
- Their leaders/managers could act as mentors in the sector

5. Large CFOs and national companies should be funded and managed in a different way – example three year funding with exit strategy as part of approved plan with monitoring, evaluation and standards agreed at start and reported on throughout. Their role to influence and develop the sector should be linked to this funding management model.

6. Whatever standards and frame works are developed they should allow and promote risk taking at both the individual artist and the creative organisation level because we have a unique role in supporting these individual organisations

7. Communication of our purpose and developmental strategies we wish to sell esp. to the executive have to clear and simple – using concise language. This is part of our advocacy role to act as interpreter of the complex nature of the ‘eco systems’ and organisations/projects we fund.

2.3.2 Performing Arts Committee Group

Present: Joanna Baker (Chair), Roy McEwan, Ben Twist, Grant Williams, Julie Ellen, Steve Slater, Ronnie Gurr, Tom Bancroft, Jim Tough (recorder)

Summary

1. Dynamic creative hubs with creative leadership, clear governance, a cross arts approach, and terms of office that are time limited
2. Scottish Arts Council needs to be tougher, interventionist, and assert a leadership role
3. Scenarios not ambitious enough. And radical should read flexible
4. Need to accommodate cross artform flexibility
5. International profile and resource needs highlighted
6. National companies approach needs to be managed better and tackled through a more radical approach
7. A radical structural alternative is a “federal” structure building on artform strengths

Governance

- Need for good people in key leadership and artistic positions
- How can Scottish Arts Council ensure this?
- e.g. appointments for limited periods of arts/management terms re 5 yr programme

Creative Hubs

- Creative hubs that offer focus/inspiration for areas
- Is it Scottish Arts Council's role to intervene in "areas" – to act or to respond?

Ambition

- Scottish Arts Council should drive things more
- push companies to be ambitious
- e.g. capital model – from ideas to 'organisational change'

(links to selection of artists/ devolved funding or program funding)

Structure of Scottish Arts Council?

i.e. education department and x artforms etc?

International – lack of priority, focus, resources

Historic funding balance (in music especially)

- limited programs re parity of opportunity.
- Locus of major companies?
- Seed funding?

Integrate education re artforms

Scottish Ballet/Scottish Dance Theatre – how can they be a resourced to nurture the sector?

- creative hub idea?
- City focus?

Cross artform

- cover cross art form perspective sufficiently
- dance links to other artforms
- do audiences across over?
- Venues do?
- Look at performing arts

Scottish Arts Council structure and specialist officers

City hubs?

Scottish Arts Council broker e.g. re space owned by Local Authorities

Broad development focus → development sector

Detailed investment focus → SAC £ responsibility

Scenarios not ambitious enough

- not transformational

- not radical
- defensive
- “free to cut things”

= new flexible creative dynamic

Scottish Arts Council leadership and intervention

- People’s money
- ambition and excellence
- cross commission requirement?

2.3.3 Arts Managers Group

Present: Fiona (Chair), Helen, Anita, David, Gavin, Nod, Amanda, Caroline, Joan, Iain, Norah

- Need for clear Scottish Arts Council leadership – internal and within sector – to inspire confidence and clarify who does what and why (for officers and partners) and reduce tension of trying to be all things, to all people, all of the time.
- Need to “stop hand-wringing” and be confident in our ambition which is based on clear visionary foundations.
- Need clarity of purpose in the strategic review to prevent misinterpretation and enable clear communication of messages.
- Want to see clear basis and rationale for decisions taken in strategic review process. Not a beauty contest!
- Should develop strategy for Scotland not just Scottish Arts Council. Need to scope strategic possibilities with other funding partners. A development plan alongside an investment plan.
- Need for research to underpin strategy and vision.
- Support for idea of creative hubs which draw artistic excellence from every artform. People focussed, not building focussed.
- National companies – a self-fulfilling prophecy? Should tackle ‘problem’ head-on and proactively manage it, perhaps through a separate relationship, to create space for support and development of other organisations.
- Should we reward success which enables us to invest/disinvest where appropriate? Should stop compensating for other partners.
- Need to ensure older people are considered in strategic planning.
- Support for integrated working on education and audience development reinforced.
- Support for clear international working reinforced.

- Over reliance on project funds renders us “strategically stunted”. Need to stop “passing the funding buck” and be empowered and confident to say no.
- Strong desire for unclouded development role but currently inhibited by time and limited human resources. Need to exercise judgement and expertise but not micro-management. Need to find ways of enabling staff capacity internally.
- Need to ensure internal structures in place to enable delivery of the review. Currently inhibited by competing priorities on time. Can we disinvest ourselves of some aspects of current work to create proper space for the review?

2.4 Session 4 – Plenary Cross Council themes and emerging priorities

Led by Richard Holloway and Graham Berry

Recorded by Carol Warner

Key Points raised

- “breaking up the empire”
Building on artform sector strengths – elements and implications of dismantling cultural institutions
What replaces this? Need a National plan not an Scottish Arts Council plan
Role of National Companies / larger core funded organisations - development role for sector; should they be directly managed by the Executive? Would the Exec want them?
Need for collective strategies (i.e. cultural partners / national companies)
Intellectual debates – the tension between heritage culture vs development, is it possible to do both?
- Research
Position Scottish Arts Council as a source of expertise
Evidence based development
Clearer focus and increased resource
Strengthen evaluation and networks
- Creative Hubs
- definition? Different options – i.e centres of excellence or arts centres
Creative leadership and expertise
Centralise / de-centralise / federal structures – different options and implications; maintaining quality while devolving responsibility
- Scottish Arts Council’s Leadership role
“Success is seizing the opportunity” – take the lead and create a policy coalition.
Scottish Arts Council different character - A tougher, confident, assertive leadership role; pro-active
Creating time to develop muscular leadership
Interpretation / education? Telling the story better? i.e lecture/seminar series, publications
- Scottish Executive Targets
Need to be clear when targets effective and manageable, and to say when not.
Need to set our own targets, rather than have them imposed on us

Need to clarify relationship with SExec i.e. protocol between

- Scottish Arts Council's Development and Funding roles
Clarity of developmental role – brokering partnerships, exerting influence. High level interventions
Notion of coalition of responsibility and how we nurture this.
Balance clarity of our funding role – articulating the value of public funding (not just justifying our existing funding).
Impact of Lottery funding as a UK distributor
- Internal
processes – review
victims of own success – accruing work
Clarity of role between Scottish Arts Council and Local Authorities – set of compacts
Approaching partnerships with clear role and remit
Need the long view with a framework to say no – clear priorities.
Staff development - when do we say 'no'?
- building in thinking time

Next steps

Restate vision and long term strategy
Agreed the development of a National plan
Work up the overarching themes and priorities for Council's June Meeting
Develop scenarios for the consultation phase
Embark on wider consultation

3. Post workshop Feedback

3.1 Participants general feedback

Comments were invited on 10 aspects.

1. The format of the day

Good as far as I was there (left 2.30)

Very clear and open.

A great idea - sorry that I wasn't able to be present throughout.

Straightforward, if ambitious.

Mostly fine. It was good to talk in small groups and then come together. The introductions weren't as useful - I knew most of this already. The whole thing was quite difficult - I found it hard to get my head round it. Maybe it was a bit too broad and generalised. I found it hard to get my teeth into a real analysis of David's (and the others') paper(s). Perhaps because, as was suggested, they weren't really ambitious and striking enough. A bit of motherhood and apple pie, perhaps?

Well thought through and made good use of the time.

Worked very well.

2. The venue

Cramped

Ok - but it's not the best building to hold such an event - maybe it would have been better to be on "neutral ground".

Better than the Grosvenor - more pleasant surroundings and must be much more cost effective!

Adequate

Fine

Very comfortable

Ideal

3. The papers

- The amount, quality, time to read and prepare

Very varied in quality and coherence - despite a template. Clearly all hampered by an apparent absence of an articulated confident vision for the future role of SAC (even if in provisional form)

About the right amount, and all the officers papers made very interesting reading. It would have helped to have the papers a few days earlier, so they could have been read over a weekend.

Spot on.

A lot to get through ---not surprising given the range and aspiration

Found it difficult to read all of them because I was in rehearsal and couldn't start until just before the meeting. So I wasn't that prepared. I think had I been slightly less busy it might have been all right. The papers were fine in quality, but see above.

There were some very important issues to absorb and consider – it would have been good to have had more time to read and prepare comments/questions. The quality of the papers was generally good, if uneven, with some particularly well presented.

Quite a lot of reading, but good to have the chance to look beyond your own specific area of interest. Preparation time was adequate

4. Membership

- The mix of Council. Committees, outside experts and Staff

Generally good.

This aspect was fine

Good

Fine, but the group moan at the end in front of some outsiders may have been a bit dangerous.

The mix worked well, enabling a useful interchange of views and different perspectives. The presence of outside experts allowed internal positions to be challenged, tested and defended.

Good mix but the blending of the groups was a little difficult in the afternoon. A more formal feedback session from the various post lunch groups before going into the final discussion may have improved this situation.

- The partial Council and Committee representation

I thought more of the Council should have been there

Again, this was fine with me.

Appalling

A shame, but what can you do. There were some notable absences. We have done an awful lot of these days recently, and I think there was (from Capital Committee) a bit of a feeling of 'More? To what avail?'

This was the most disappointing aspect of the day. I was surprised at the high number of apologies from both Council and Committee members: surely a strategic review is one of the most important activities an organisation can undertake? It was noticeable that two of the chairs were retired members of Council.

5. Session 1 Presentations

See above. The opening presentation gave worryingly little sense that SAC can articulate a clear vision for its future role. This was supposed to be about strategy for SAC but was chiefly about operational decisions

It was a good way for those outside the organisation to "warm up".

Good

Graham's intro was too long in a tight day. The others were fine but covered some ground that I already knew.

Good. Fiona's was particularly impressive.

Simple and straightforward - fine

6. Session 2 The individual workshops:

- Chairs

Good

Great

Good

- Level of discussion

Animated but constructive

Wide ranging and engaging

Reasonable. It wasn't an easy session. I don't know how far we really got. Whether David felt it was useful and whether we really challenged or interrogated his thinking.

It was easy to get sidetracked into our own ideas rather than interrogate his

Good (hope it was what was wanted!)

- Ability to feed in

Excellent

I never felt left out or sidelined.

Very open

- Outcomes

Chair's summary appeared to have lost the guts of discussion - a shame.

Might have been better to have one of the outsiders summarising.

Varied, but I left feeling we had made a good start.

Crafts was enjoyable, lively and unanimous

See above.

The workshop I attended was well-chaired, had a high quality, informed discussion in which all participated fully, and produced clear outcomes.

Not thoroughly defined, but I felt things were offered for SAC staff to then consider so therefore appropriate

7. Session 3 Group workshops

- The private Committee workshop

Again this was very good

Good. This moved us on more, I thought.

- Chairs

As an outsider asked to provide a supportive critique, I found the chair and other Council member present over-defensive about the SAC and the status quo.

Very good

Joanna did it well

- Level of discussion

Stimulating and animated

Again, very interesting and informative.

Mixed - but mostly good

- Ability to feed in

Good

I was given ample opportunity.

I had no problem!

- Outcomes

A good summary appeared to be in progress

Varied, but I left feeling we had made a good start.

Surprising level of agreement on priorities

We had some good thoughts and there was a lot of consensus.

- The joint workshop staff and members

Good

I didn't think this part of the meeting went that well, and I am not sure whether it moved us on from the previous bit. Some people were almost totally silent, although Joanna did chair it well.

This was less effective - good mix but the blending of the groups was a little difficult in the afternoon. A more formal feedback session from the various post lunch groups before going into the final discussion may have improved this situation.

- Chairs

See above

- Level of discussion

It continued to engage and develop ideas

Mixed.

- Ability to feed in

Again I never felt out of the loop

See above.

- Outcomes

Again, these were inconclusive, but there was a positive move to develop the ideas.

Good, although people getting tired

I am not sure

A very well chaired exchange of views extending beyond the immediate concerns of individual artforms, with an interesting mix of consensus and difference. There was a tendency for some members to dominate the discussion in this session, but the chair dealt with this very effectively.

8. Session 4 The Plenary

Very interesting - if a bit depressing to see so many talented people, so frustrated with their current lot.

Enjoyed this exchange of views and ideas and found it very stimulating and also useful to learn more about some of the issues facing SAC.

The important issue is how useful this was for Richard? He will certainly, and with good reason have a clear impression of how beleaguered staff are.

This changed direction considerably. The Arts Managers are clearly unhappy, but we didn't hear from other members of staff, which might have been interesting. I thought Richard's chairing was interesting and useful. I didn't come away with a sense that we had completed our task. I don't know whether those who set up the day thought it was useful. I left rather unsatisfied, and unsure that we had had the right day to do what we wanted to achieve.

Not present for session 4.

Did not attend

9. Overall were the outcomes for the day, as outlined in the agenda, achieved?

I think you have made a good start.

The first two, yes. But with such a poor showing by C & C members I wonder about the third. But there's no time to repeat the exercise, so bash on!

I am not sure. I don't think we are much further forward. I feel we have regularly not quite centred on the controlling idea for the organisation. The artists/audience question has not been fully resolved or interrogated, and it needs to be because that is going to be central to the Executive's relationship with the SAC and the SAC's relationship with the arts organisations and artists that it funds and works with. And because until we all know precisely where we are going and how our work fits into that we can't really move forward with the 20:20 review. We have started a process but not quite finished it. Often during the day we got bogged down in structures and discussion about how the SAC should be rather than how the arts/culture should be. Only when we know the latter can we work out our role in nurturing/championing etc etc it. There is always a danger than organisations focus on themselves rather than what they are there to do - and we are not quite doing that, but get a bit close sometimes!

Not present for session 5, but by the time I left it was clear the first two outcomes had been achieved

Yes

10. Any other comments

As the Director observed, whatever the outcomes of the Commission, SAC will be in the driving seat during a crucial phase in the development of cultural provision in Scotland; your map - this strategy - needs to be clear to all. I am afraid that I got little sense from the documentation and an otherwise thought-provoking day that the creative energy and enthusiasm of the sectors represented and of the artform officers is finding clarity of expression within the overall culture and ethos of the organisation. The SAC and its Council members must be able to voice advocacy and support with the energy and conviction shown daily by the creative communities with which SAC engages. SAC does for the present remain an NDPB and not an agency arm of the Executive; Council must use events such as this to strengthen the conviction of its vision and structure the pragmatism of its strategy.

It was great to be involved and the overriding impression I left with was of a dedicated team of professionals who are deeply committed to the arts and working hard to remain a relevant and vital force for the Arts in Scotland. I sincerely hope you succeed.

I think that this was a valuable opportunity for various ideas, opinions, problems etc. to be put across and there appeared to be a real willingness to listen to different views.

Thank you for all your hard work.

I really appreciated being invited and hope that the officers found my contribution valuable.

Carol Warner
Arts Development
27 April 2005