

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leisure and Arts Services Committee – 20 January 2003

REPORT ON: Draft Guidance for Scottish Local Authorities on the Implementation of the National Cultural Strategy

REPORT BY: Director of Leisure and Arts

REPORT NO: 70-2003

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider Dundee City Council's response to the Draft Guidance for Scottish Local Authorities on Implementation of the National Cultural Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that members remit the Director of Leisure and Arts to submit the attached response from Dundee City Council to the Scottish Executive on the Draft Guidance for Scottish Local Authorities on the Implementation of the National Cultural Strategy.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications of this report.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Draft Guidance is consistent with the themes that local needs are met locally, access to cultural provision is available to all, and contributes to the wellbeing of the local population.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Draft Guidance is consistent with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 In 2000, the Scottish Executive published the National Cultural Strategy for Scotland, following which members approved the adoption of the Dundee Cultural Strategy 2001-2006 (Arts and Heritage Committee and Leisure Services Committee, 15 October 2001, Report No. 635-2001). The City Council also has in place the Dundee Sport and Physical Recreation Strategy, and the Dundee Public Open Space Strategy.

6.2 The Scottish Executive has now circulated, for comment, the document "Draft Guidance for Scottish Local Authorities on the Implementation of the National Cultural Strategy", which sets out ways in which Local Authorities can contribute to delivering the Strategic Objectives and Key Priorities of the National Strategy. The document encourages each local authority to:-

- Recognise and embrace the broad definition of culture and cultural provision outlined

in Scotland's National Cultural Strategy.

- Develop local cultural policies and strategies/plans
- Relate these policies and strategies/plans to the National Cultural Strategy and appropriate policies in cultural and other fields (eg social justice).
- Make full use of relevant powers in legislation to promote cultural provision.
- Recognise that cultural provision features in 9 key areas of local authority activity (arts; community recreation; economic activity; health and social care; heritage; learning; libraries and information; records; sport).
- Recognise that these 9 activity areas do not always correspond to political and management structures and the implications of this for developing and co-ordinating policy and practice.
- Evaluate its effectiveness in each of the 9 areas.
- Recognise that cultural activities have both an intrinsic and an instrumental value.
- Consider how well the authority's particular organisation and management arrangements support the development of its cultural policy and practice.
- Make full use of community planning and appropriate forms of partnership to maximise opportunities for developing cultural provision and advancing community well being.
- Ensure that resources for cultural provision are applied in ways that are consistent with Best Value.
- Gather and use appropriate information and research to assess and develop the impact of cultural policy and practice at both authority-wide level and also at the level of the 9 activity areas.

7.0 DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE

7.1 General

Dundee City Council broadly welcomes the Draft Guidance. It provides a comprehensive guide to the major leadership role of local authorities in the delivery and enablement of cultural provision, and the part local authorities play in partnership working arrangements which are crucial to the success of this provision. It will assist in cohesive service delivery, cultural planning and development, service planning and budget setting.

In its current format the Draft Guidance is not easy to read, or accessible. Consideration should be given to providing a shorter executive summary which clearly highlights the key areas and issues.

7.2 Definition

The Draft Guidance and the National Cultural Strategy take a broad view of what is culture. The Dundee Cultural Strategy reflects that breadth of definition. While this represents a challenge in ensuring coherent focus in cultural development, it offers opportunities to stress the inclusive nature of culture. It ensures that we can move beyond arguments over high and low culture in recognising that culture touches everyone's lives in some of its various areas.

7.3 Areas of Cultural Provision

The Draft Guidance identifies nine areas of local authority activity which have cultural impact. These are arts; community recreation; economic activity; health and social care; heritage; learning; libraries and information; records (archives); sport.

“Parks and Open Spaces” should be highlighted as a key activity in its own right in local authority cultural provision. Local Authorities’ involvement in the sciences and technology could also be reflected. Dundee City Council provides financial support to Sensation Science Centre and directly provides the Mills Observatory. Both these facilities represent important aspects of the cultural interface between key knowledge areas and the public, many of them children and young people.

7.4 Decision Making Structures

Dundee is one of a number of local authorities which has a director with responsibility for cultural services and a political structure which provides a forum to discuss this same area of provision. The National Cultural Strategy (and Guidance) provides an opportunity to signal the benefits in having a political and management structure which ensures a focus on cultural provision

7.5 Partnerships

Partnership working is indispensable to the development of cultural provision. Dundee City Council has long played a key role in partnerships with a very wide range of local, regional and national cultural groups and organisations. Cultural interests also frequently cut across local government boundaries. Many examples of these cross-boundary working relationships already exist, eg. Tayside Sports Development Group; the Traditional Music Initiative of Dundee, Perth & Kinross and Angus; and the Scottish Arts Council-led local authority cluster groups. The need for the on-going development of cultural provision would point to a growing role for partnerships between local authorities and national agencies if an efficient, sustainable and adequately funded Scottish cultural infrastructure, as envisaged in the National Strategy, is to emerge. Issues concerning the allocation of nationally funded resources and the balance of roles between local authorities and the national agencies should be further examined.

7.6 Moving Forward

While the draft guidance is comprehensive and could be a useful reference manual for local authorities, it is advisory and not intended to be published as a policy circular. This raises key issues and questions and, in particular, how the guidance can be made more meaningful and more dynamic in playing a part in the realisation of a National Cultural Strategy including how it will contribute effectively to policies on health, education, social justice, community learning, community safety and economic and urban regeneration.

The draft guidance also highlights the need for structured approaches to planning, decision-making, delivery, evaluation and review processes. As such the provision of guidance to assist evaluation at the local level would be useful.

In addressing these key issues and questions, Dundee City Council considers that the draft guidance should prompt the Scottish Executive to undertake a formal review of current cultural provision which would lead to the issue of a policy circular addressing future arrangements for the delivery of cultural provision in Scotland, restate the role of cultural services in delivering the Scottish Executive’s priorities and examine national funding arrangements on an organisational basis.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Support Services, Director of Finance and Director of Corporate Planning have been consulted on this report and are in agreement with its content.

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DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND ARTS
6 JANUARY 2003