



Scottish Arts Council

Reference: JT/mp

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Dear Peadar

National Plan for Gaelic Consultation - Response from the Scottish Arts Council

The Scottish Arts Council is the lead body for the funding, development and advocacy of the arts in Scotland distributing around £60 million of Scottish Executive and National Lottery funds to the arts in Scotland. We offer a unique national perspective on the provision and development of the arts which seeks to balance the needs of all arts sectors and all communities in Scotland. The Scottish Arts Council published its first Gaelic arts policy in 2003 and maintains strong and regular dialogue with the Gaelic arts sector. Our Gaelic arts policy states:

'The Scottish Arts Council believes that the Gaelic arts play an essential role in developing the Gaelic language and culture as part of the arts mainstream and cultural diversity of Scotland, and have an important international dimension.' (Gaelic Arts Policy 2003)

National Plan action areas: Culture

The Draft National Plan for the Gaelic Language (The National Plan) outlines culture as a key action area. The Scottish Arts Council also believes that the arts can play a role in helping the language survive and grow and are pleased to be acknowledged as a key partner in this area.

However, we would like to take this opportunity to offer some comment on this section.

2011 Census Target (page 30)

The target of 3.5% of those aged 16 – 74 with some Gaelic language activity in Scotland employed in culture media and sport occupations. (an increase from 2.6% in the 2001 census)

The Scottish Arts Council does not at present set specific targets for increasing those employed in the culture/ arts sector overall or for any specific group. Therefore we would

not be in a position to actively support this target actively . However, with increased Gaelic usage as a result of the Bill this figure may increase de facto.

In addition the 2001 census revealed that people with some Gaelic were already well represented, accounting for around 5.7% of the sector.

Section on the Arts

The Scottish Arts Council's definition is wider than that used in the consultation of 'Gaelic Language art event.'

The definition which was agreed during the consultation process for our Gaelic policy states that Gaelic arts are 'inclusive arts activity informed by Gaelic culture and / or presented through the medium of the Gaelic language.' This would therefore include practice which does not necessarily use the language directly. Bord na Gaidhlig may wish to consider this wider definition which certainly allows the Scottish Arts Council to take a wider view of support.

The focus of the priorities outlined in the National Plan appear to be primarily on marketing and developing audiences rather than supporting artists or ensuring quality. Although the Scottish Arts Council is committed to developing audiences this is only one strand of our three corporate priorities of Artists, Audiences and Education. In addition an outcome of our recent strategic review has led to a decision to increase our focus on the needs of the artist and artist led organisations from 07/08.

All of our work aims for artistic excellence embedded in a diverse and inclusive Scottish society, within reach of all the people of Scotland, and respected world-wide. The Scottish Arts Council's Gaelic Arts Policy reflects these objectives and the important contribution that Gaelic cultural activities make in this context.

We have already demonstrated our commitment to developing and supporting Gaelic Arts by ensuring that four major Gaelic organisations - Proiseact nan Ealan, Feis nan Gaidheal and Feis Rois and the Gaelic Books Council - are all designated as Foundation Organisations in our forward planning for 2007/09.

The key priority for the Scottish Arts Council is focused on pursuing our own corporate objectives for the coming years. As detailed above there is a great deal of common ground between the aims and priorities of the Bòrd and the Scottish Arts Council and we look forward to working with the Bòrd on these areas where there is such common ground. We are currently in the process of developing our Corporate Plan for 2007 – 2009 which, when published, we will forward to the Bòrd for information.

Creative Scotland and Gaelic Language Plans

The Scottish Arts Council is aware that we will be asked to produce a Gaelic Language Plan in 07/08.

As you are probably aware, the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport announced in January 2006 the creation of a new agency Creative Scotland which will replace the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen.

The creation of the new agency provides an appropriate opportunity to develop and implement a Gaelic language plan and we will note our work in this area with the new board that is being recruited for Creative Scotland, and with Scottish Screen, the other major agency that will become part of the new body.

We will develop our plan in the context of a range of commitments to other communities of interest and policy concerns in Scotland – including Scots Language, cultural diversity and equalities.

Finally we will explore, as part of the process of developing the plan, the related resource issues, and the means of progressing our commitments in this area to best effect.

Yours sincerely

Jim Tough
Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Arts