

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE
17 SEPTEMBER 2009

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	ECS/37/09

HIGHLAND CULTURE UPDATE

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on a range of cultural developments that have come to fruition as part of the legacy of Highland 2007. This is directly related to the commitment in **Strengthening the Highlands** to provide opportunities to enjoy the arts, sport and cultural experiences and the Single Outcome Agreement commitments towards taking pride in a strong national identity.

1. Highland Culture Strategic Board

- 1.1 Work has been ongoing since the conclusion of Highland 2007 by its member organisations (The Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Scottish Government) to maximise on the positive legacy of Scotland's first themed year. To ensure this outcome, a short term working group was established to undertake the following tasks:
- i) To assess the outcomes of the Highland 2007 Evaluation Report
 - ii) To map the existing cultural services provided by each partner organisation
 - iii) To consider possible future structures which would maximise on the opportunities to enhance the cultural sector and minimise duplication between agencies
- 1.2 Membership of the Review Group included representatives from The Highland Council, HIE, Scottish Government, Scottish Arts Council, EventScotland, Eden Court Theatre and HI-Arts (part)
- 1.3 The review process examined the following issues:
- i) Cultural themes supported and prioritised by more than one partner organisation
 - ii) The current "health" of each cultural theme
 - iii) The current contribution to each cultural theme by each partner
 - iv) Key improvement objectives and strategic priorities which, if delivered, would progress each cultural theme to the next level of development
 - v) Possible structures that could facilitate the desired improvements, implement the strategic priorities and avoid duplication of provision

- 1.4 The cultural themes reviewed and prioritised by the group were those into which more than one partner organisation contributes. They were agreed as theatre, dance, music, visual arts, crafts, literature, adventure sports and business support. The group's evaluation of the 'health' of each theme and the key improvement objectives for progress are presented in Appendix 1.
- 1.5 At a meeting of the Highland 2007 Legacy Group on 4 August, the outcome of this review was presented and agreement was reached by senior representatives from the Council, HIE, the Scottish Government, Scottish Arts Council and EventScotland to establish the Highland Culture Strategic Board for the purpose of delivering best value in support of the cultural sector of the Highlands through ongoing collaboration between the members of the Board. It was agreed that the Strategic Board would oversee the work of an officer led Project Team tasked with implementing the actions required to achieve the improvement objectives for the shared cultural priorities of Strategic Board members. The proposed remit and membership of the Strategic Board and Project Team are outlined in Appendix 2.
- 1.6 The Highland Culture Strategic Board will meet quarterly to steer this process and to ensure the progress of the Project Team in delivering the Action Plan contained in Appendix 3. One of the immediate tasks required of the team will be to develop frameworks for action to deliver the outcomes specified for the themes of theatre, dance, visual arts, literature, music, and crafts. This reflects the allocation of £300K to the Highlands from the Creative Scotland 09 (CS09) Innovation Programme. This allocation is one of the first to be proposed by CS09 in respect of this programme and is a direct consequence of the presence of the ongoing strategic partnership initiated and sustained in support of Highland 2007.

2. Highland Culture Programme

- 2.1 Round 3 of the Highland Culture Programme closed on 7 August. A total of 39 applications were received requesting financial support to the value of £336K. The proposals have been assessed by Members within each Ward and are currently being reviewed by the central panel, with the decisions expected at the end of September.
- 2.2 Through the Council's partnership with Rok, the Highland Culture Programme has been able to extend the scope and number of projects that can be supported. The following events and projects have been or are expected to be supported through this partnership and more joint ventures may arise from the proposals received in round 3.
 - i) Broadford Village Hall refurbishment
 - ii) Mill Theatre extension
 - iii) Clachnaharry Monument restoration
 - iv) Beauly Shinty Club pitch renovation
 - v) Inverness Highland Games caber preparation

3. Highland Homecoming

- 3.1 Within the overall aims of the events and festivals strategy to enhance the cultural infrastructure and programme of events and activity of the region, one of the key current objectives for the Council has been to maximise the Highlands' contribution to the national Homecoming Scotland celebrations. To this effect The Highland Council has led a multi agency partnership in designing and producing the flagship event for Homecoming Scotland in the Highlands in 2009. This partnership includes UHI, University of Aberdeen, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Eden Court Theatre.
- 3.2 The flagship event, 'Highland Homecoming – ur beatha dhan dùthaich', will take place from 19 to 31 October 2009. The festival programme has at its heart an international conference entitled 'Scotland's Global Impact – how one small nation changed the world', in addition to a programme of over 100 cultural events across the Highlands and Islands.
- 3.3 To support the development and delivery of Highland Homecoming, cash funding has been secured from the following public sector partners:
- £60K The Highland Council
 - £60K Homecoming Scotland
 - £60K Scottish Government
 - £60K Bòrd na Gàidhlig
 - £60K HIE
 - £20K Scottish Arts Council
 - £17K LEADER
 - £5K EventScotland
- 3.4 Further in kind support has been secured from the following public and private sector partners:
- Conference media partner The Scotsman
 - Highland Homecoming media partner The Inverness Courier
 - Ashers' Bakeries
 - Conference partner UHI
 - Conference partner University of Aberdeen
 - Conference partner University of Edinburgh
 - Conference partner Centre for Battlefield Archaeology, Glasgow University
 - Fringe programme partner Eden Court Theatre
- 3.5 The programme for Highland Homecoming was launched on Wednesday 19 August and the promotion of the festival programme is underway via the website www.highlandeventsandfestivals.com and the distribution of brochures containing the full programme listings and its associated Highlights leaflet. The brochure will be distributed to every household within the Highlands by the Royal Mail during the month of September and through a network of national and international channels in partnership with Homecoming Scotland and Visit Scotland. Members will be provided with a copy of the Highlights leaflet and programme brochure on the day of the meeting.

4. St Andrew's Day Celebrations

- 4.1 The Highland Council, in partnership with Fèisean nan Gàidheal applied for funding from the Scottish Government and Homecoming Scotland to create and host a special event in the Highlands as part of the national finale to the Homecoming Scotland celebrations. The proposal to commission and stage Ceòl nam Fèis was approved and £13K was awarded to the project.
- 4.2 Ceòl nam Fèis 2009 will feature former Fèis participants who have made a career out of music and song, 'coming home' to work alongside groups of young people from across Scotland currently involved with the highly successful Fèis movement. This will culminate in a large-scale performance featuring around 100 of the cream of young traditional music talent performing traditional Gaelic songs; new and traditional music; step-dance and Gaelic drama sketches. The concert will be presented bilingually, artists will use Gaelic on-stage and all publicity will feature Gaelic language.
- 4.3 Ceòl nam Fèis 2009 will be performed in Eden Court Theatre on Friday 27 November and will be one of the highlights within the Inverness Winter Festival programme.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members:
- i) Comment upon the remit and membership of the Highland Culture Strategic Board and Project Team.
 - ii) Note the remainder of the report.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education Culture and Sport

Date: 21 August 2009

Author: Fiona Hampton

Appendix 1 – Cultural Themes and Key Improvement Objectives

i) Cultural Themes

Theatre	Generally sound, with a good base in place but with room for some improvement. Weakest area is the lack of Highland - generated productions. There are more companies and audiences than available resources.
Dance	There is growing participation in dance but the lack of infrastructure in terms of qualified teachers and venues capable of and willing to promote professional productions outwith Inverness and a lack of opportunities to participate, particularly for those who traditionally do not, is a weakness.
Music	Generally very healthy and indeed very strong in the traditional sector. This is probably the strongest arts sector in Highland and has the potential to be developed as a key feature of the Highland brand.
Visual Arts	Basically sound and strong in term of number of professionals in Highland and relatively high numbers of exhibition spaces although only Inverness Museum and Art Gallery has the facility to show art from the national collection and this is limited to certain times of year due to the lack of environmental controls. Key weaknesses are the need for audience development and improvement to the infrastructure of existing galleries to allow for more high profile exhibitions.
Crafts	Paradoxically, given the richness of the sector in terms of the number of makers in the area and the activity and networks they generate, the infrastructure and public event and showcase opportunities are weak. There is great work going on but it is somewhat invisible.
Literature	Relatively sound and benefits from the number of writers resident in the Highland and the high level of general public interest in literature. There is, however, a need to develop more coherent programming.
Adventure Sport	Generally sound and indeed very good in a number of areas – doing well and has the potential to be developed as a key feature of the Highland brand.
Business Support	Fragmented and under resourced. Good individual initiatives and examples of success but no coherent framework or strategy.

ii) Key Improvement Objectives

For each theme, the following strategic priority has been developed as the key action which would generate success or improvement.

Theatre	Three productions of national quality, including one of international quality, originating from the Highlands.
Dance	Increased levels and quality of participation through increasing the numbers of practitioners, seeking a target of ten dance residencies over three years, with contact time with the public of minimum 55%.
Music	Consolidate and build the national / international brand of the traditional music sector.
Visual Arts	To increase the audiences for contemporary visual arts by increasing the number and quality of national and regional touring exhibitions by 30%. Develop opportunities for exhibitions in non-gallery spaces (eg Big Willow, Virtual Galleries). Develop public art programme / strategy.
Crafts	Raise the brand of Highland crafts by doubling the number of Highland makers selected for national showcases for example, 'Origin' or 'Collect'. Develop the quality of product through mentoring, master classes and exhibitions
Literature	Build synergies between literature strands and better coordinate programming of events.
Adventure Sport	Build the national / international brand by embedding Adventure Sport into the promotional framework of Event Scotland and Visit Scotland.
Business Support	<p>Develop a coordinated and resourced business plan that promotes each cultural theme. This will specifically include reviewing public subsidy to ensure no duplication in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites promoting cultural activity in the Highlands • Sources of printed material promoting cultural activity • Co-ordination of ticketing for cultural events • Branding that promotes the Highlands and Scotland at cultural events • A co-ordinated PR plan with the local and national media for the promotion of cultural activity in the Highlands

Appendix 2 - Membership and Remit of Highland Culture Strategic Board and Project Team

Highland Culture Strategic Board

1. Remit

The remit of the Strategic Board will be to maximise on the opportunities to enhance the cultural sector of The Highland Council area through effective ongoing collaboration between The Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, EventScotland and the cultural sector of the Highlands.

In particular the Board will monitor the progress of the Project Team responsible for implementing an agreed Project Plan and for assessing the options and resources required to develop the long term partnership arrangements that will deliver best value in supporting the development of the cultural sector of the Highlands.

2. Membership

The Highland Council:

- Sandy Park
- Michael Foxley
- Jean Urquhart
- Alistair Dodds
- Hugh Fraser

HIE:

- Sandy Cumming
- Charlotte Wright

SAC / Creative Scotland:

- Jim Tough

EventScotland:

- Paul Bush

Scottish Government:

- Angela Saunders

Eden Court

- Colin Marr

Highland Culture Project Team

1. Remit

The remit of the Project Team will be to review current public sector support for the cultural sector of the Highlands and to develop a detailed Project Plan for consideration and approval by the Highland Culture Strategic Board. The Project Plan will address the specific actions required to make progress in developing and implementing the improvement objectives for the shared cultural priorities of the Board members. The review will also seek to find savings through collaborative work to be undertaken by the strategic partners.

In addition, the Project Plan will explore options for funding the review process as part of a wider package of investment including the Creative Scotland Innovation Programme. The Plan will also propose options to establish the long term strategic partnership that will underpin public sector support for the development of the cultural sector of the Highlands.

2. Membership

The Highland Council:

- Ian Murray
- Fiona Hampton

HIE:

- Chris Higgins
- Iain Hamilton

SAC / Creative Scotland:

- Jim Tough to advise

EventScotland:

- Stuart Turner

Scottish Government:

- Bob King

Eden Court Theatre

- Colin Marr

Appendix 3 – Project Team Interim Action Plan

* These themes will be considered by the Project Team working on a programme of development activities which will be submitted to the Strategic Board for consideration. This programme will be supported by investment from the CS09 Innovation Programme through the Scottish Arts Council and other partners as appropriate.

Theme	Action
*Theatre	See introductory paragraph above
*Dance	See introductory paragraph above
*Music	See introductory paragraph above
*Visual Arts	<p>Actions may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve marketing to support audience development • Source/develop opportunities for high quality touring exhibitions • Seek to improve infrastructure of existing facilities to accommodate national and international exhibitions • Develop innovative non-gallery-based visual arts projects • Support quality emerging, mid-career and non-commercial artists through exhibitions and public art programme.
*Crafts	<p>Actions may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop mentoring programme both for quality of product and for business skills • Develop high profile showcase opportunities • Source/develop high quality craft exhibitions
*Literature	See introductory paragraph above
Adventure Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate contracts for major adventure sport events in the Highlands • Support local promoters of adventure sport events • Develop an agreed calendar of local and international adventure sports events in the Highlands • Liaise with Sport Scotland and schools to maximise on the opportunities for young people to participate in adventure sports in the Highlands

Business Support	<p>Develop a coordinated and resourced business plan that promotes each cultural theme. This will specifically include reviewing public subsidy to ensure no duplication in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites promoting cultural activity in the Highlands • Sources of printed material promoting cultural activity • Co-ordination of ticketing for cultural events • Branding that promotes the Highlands and Scotland at cultural events • A co-ordinated PR plan with the local and national media for the promotion of cultural activity in the Highlands
Organisational Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the options for long term partnership working in light of ongoing developments and the funding landscape within Creative Scotland, HIE and the Council's cultural budgets • Explore options for funding any review process, as part of the wider package of investment including the CS09 Innovation Programme contribution. • Present the options for partnership working and resource implications to the Strategic Board in March 2010.