



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

Scottish Government: A Culture Strategy for Scotland draft for consultation

Icon Response

19 September 2018

The Institute of Conservation, Icon, welcomes the Culture Strategy for Scotland and is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the government's [consultation](#).

Icon is a UK-wide membership organisation and charity, which brings together those with a passion for the care of cultural heritage. Icon raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation. We represent nearly 3,000 individuals and organisations and many others who share a commitment to improving understanding of and access to our cultural heritage.

Icon is delighted by the draft Culture Strategy's acknowledgement of culture's empowering and transformative potential and supports its many commendable ambitions. However, Icon urges government to explicitly recognise the significant contribution that conservation and heritage science make to society and for the Strategy to show greater parity of support between the creative and heritage subsectors of culture.

A vision for culture in Scotland

The strategy is bold and ambitious. It is centred on the fundamental value of culture and its empowering and transformative potential. It is committed to long term change through greater collaboration and integration across culture, communities and policy development.

- *Culture in Scotland is innovative, inclusive and open to the wider world.*
- *Cultural excellence – past, present and emerging – is celebrated and is fundamental to future prosperity and wellbeing.*
- *Culture's empowering and transformative power is experienced by everyone.*

1. What is your view of the Vision as set out above?

Support the vision Don't support the vision Don't know

2. If you have any further comments on the Vision, please provide them below. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

Icon welcomes the draft Culture Strategy and supports its aim to realise the full potential of culture. We are delighted by the Strategy's acknowledgement of the important contribution that culture makes to society and the objective of ensuring that culture is inclusive and open to everyone.

Icon commends the Strategy's commitment to **broadening the definition of culture**. However, the Strategy's language and visual design does not at present reflect the intended broad outlook. The Strategy's success will rely on its relevance to the full breadth of the cultural landscape. Icon urges the government to acknowledge conservation, heritage science and moveable heritage more fully in the final Strategy:

1. Conservation and Heritage Science

Conservation and heritage science are not mentioned in the definitions for the cultural sector or anywhere else in the document. This needs to be addressed to reflect the importance of the conservation subsector in enabling the arts, creative industries and cultural heritage and to recognise conservation as a cultural practice itself.

Conserving the old is integral to inspiring the new. Cultural professionals of all specialisms – in graphics, fashion, fine arts, architecture etc. – can draw on heritage made accessible by conservators and heritage scientists who ensure that our existing and emerging cultural heritage will be preserved for the education and enjoyment of all generations. Advances made through heritage science can inspire the creative application of new tools.

Conservation is a distinct profession that has a positive impact on society and the economy and its activities have an origin in individual creativity, skill and talent. Research questions relating to the interpretation, management and preservation of heritage drive innovation in science and technology that generate value across and beyond the cultural sector.

Historic Environment Scotland is a member of the National Heritage Science Forum, which aims to promote the public benefit of heritage science and increase collaboration within the sector. Icon is delighted by this explicit support for heritage science and hopes that it will be mirrored in the Culture Strategy.

2. Moveable Cultural Heritage

The Strategy's definition of cultural heritage should be more inclusive. The definition in section 1.3 should include moveable heritage, i.e. collections and objects. The current definition of galleries, libraries, archives and museums, does not sufficiently cover moveable heritage, which is housed also in, for example, historic houses.

As the built and natural heritage are included in the definition, failure to mention moveable heritage risks creating bias. This bias is already evident in the document, which discusses natural and built heritage extensively compared to moveable heritage, which is only mentioned in the context of galleries, libraries, archives and museums.

The section's definition for intangible heritage is missing an essential reference to traditional skills. Traditional skills in crafts and conservation are an important living cultural tradition and an integral part of Scotland's heritage.

3. Images

The current draft contains no images of conservation, heritage science or moveable cultural heritage. This does not support the Strategy's intended broad

view of culture, especially as there is insufficient reference to conservation and moveable cultural heritage in the text.

Icon welcomes the vision for past, present and emerging **cultural excellence** to be celebrated. However, greater detail on how the Strategy intends to celebrate and support excellence is necessary. Icon recommends including a vision for the culture workforce to be sustainably resourced and encouraged to be innovative, creative and interdisciplinary in its work. Without a sustainable and well-resourced workforce, the Strategy's Ambitions of "transforming and "empowering" through culture will not be possible. In this light, Icon recommends reversing the order, and implied prioritisation, of the Ambitions. Sustaining Culture – and resourcing its workforce – should appear first due to its vital and enabling position.

Further clarity is needed on the **context** of the Strategy and how it will correspond and compliment **other strategies** such as Going Further, Creative Scotland 10-Year Plan 2014-2024 and Unlocking Potential Embracing Ambition. It is essential for the relationship between strategies to be clear especially where earlier strategies are linked to funding priorities. An overview of the outcomes of past culture strategies would also be useful to set the context in a more concrete and measurable way. It could also drive support for the new Strategy by demonstrating value.

The Culture Strategy's wider context should also reference the increasing recognition of culture as a resource of soft power and describe its relation to the UK government's upcoming Soft Power Strategy.

Transforming through culture

Transforming through culture: *Recognising that culture and creativity are central to Scotland's cultural, social and economic prosperity.*

3. What is your view of the ambition, 'Transforming through culture'?

Support ambition Don't support ambition Don't know

4. If you have further comments on the ambition, 'Transforming through culture', please provide them below. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

Icon agrees with the Ambition of recognising the impact of culture to Scotland's cultural, social and economic prosperity. **Conservation and heritage science enable and facilitate access to culture** by ensuring the survival of cultural heritage for the enjoyment and education of current and future generations. Without conservation and heritage science, the impact of heritage could not be maintained in the long term. Conservation, as a distinct profession and cultural practice itself, also has a positive impact on society and the economy.

Aim 1, "Placing culture as a central consideration across all policy areas" is important. Greater cohesion within government could have a real and positive impact on heritage as policies from across government departments create both opportunities and challenges for the heritage sector. Greater cohesion could also drive greater support and enhanced funding for cultural heritage.

Icon is excited by the proposed cultural leadership post, identified in **Action 1**. We hope the post will be supported by strategic thinkers from across the full breadth of the culture sector. The DCMS-led Heritage Council is a welcome initiative in England to encourage government and sector collaboration. However, its sector membership is partial to the historic environment, failing to reflect the diversity of the country's heritage organisations.

Action 2 of “working with academic partners to...better articulate the benefits of culture” is commendable. Measuring the impact of conservation and heritage in a quantifiable manner remains a challenge for the culture sector. Hard evidence on the positive benefits of the sector can increase resilience by raising awareness of the sector's impact and by attracting financial support. Further information on the “national partnership” and who this would include would be useful.

Icon welcomes **Aim 3** of positioning culture as central to progress in “health and wellbeing, economy, education, reducing inequality and realising a greener and more innovative future.” Increasing the sector's involvement in social innovation can build resilience by attracting greater public support and awareness of the importance of culture. However, in times of austerity with limited budgets, an element of prioritisation may be necessary. While the ambition is commendable, Icon questions whether it is achievable within the current funding environment. Organisations and individuals working within conservation already struggle to fulfil their essential services.

The reference to “a greener future” in **Aim 3** and the section on “**Culture and climate change**” is integral yet insufficient. The short section gets lost within the extensive document when environmental sustainability should be embedded throughout the Strategy. Heritage and culture cannot be removed from the environmental context in which they exist and are created. The future of heritage and people depends on environmental sustainability. Any culture strategy should place environmental sustainability at its core.

Cultural heritage can play a positive role in informing responses to climate change. Collections data can provide a benchmark for monitoring change, help make informed predictions and analyse the consequences of climate change. For example, natural history collections help scientists to draft future scenarios by forecasting whether and how organisms will be vulnerable to environmental change.

Heritage is also an accessible resource for communicating the impact of climate change to a broad audience. Records and archives describing and illustrating past landscapes can effectively engage the public in understanding changes in the environment. Conservators naturally promote the sustainable use of resources, reinforcing the need to care for, rather than replace, assets.

Icon recommends including an aim to recognise the potential of heritage, conservation and heritage science to act as vectors for climate change research and communication. We also suggest adding an action for government and funders to offer guidance and signposting on best practice in environmental sustainability and to encourage compliance to guidelines.

5. Please provide comments on the aims and actions under this ambition. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

See answer 4.

Empowering through culture

Empowering through culture: *Opening up and extending culture so that it is of and for every community and everyone.*

6. What is your view of the ambition, ‘Empowering through culture’?

Support ambition Don't support ambition Don't know

7. If you have further comments on the ambition, ‘Empowering through culture’ please provide them below. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

Icon suggests changing the Ambition from: “Opening up and extending culture so that is of and for every community and everyone” to “Opening up and extending culture so that is of and for every community and *individual*” to improve precision.

Extending the view of culture in **Aim and Action 1** has the potential to be very positive. Our response to Question 2 has argued how this view needs to include conservation, heritage science and moveable cultural heritage.

The extension of the definition for culture needs to be carefully managed so that diversification does not affect the sustainability of Scotland’s cultural heritage offer, for example, through fragmented funding opportunities, a weakened cultural output or reductions in audience numbers per site. The Strategy should also address whether there is a plan to enable the documentation, archiving, collecting and future celebrating of the extended view of culture. For its importance to be recognised fully, future generations need to be able to understand, research, and appreciate its (collective and individual) place as part of Scotland’s cultural landscape.

We support **Aim 2** of developing “opportunities for people to take part in culture throughout their lives.” Exposure to culture at an early age is key to inspiring the next generation of culture professionals, which is vital to maintaining the sustainability of the workforce.

Cultural heritage contributes to health and wellbeing and the conservation and heritage science professions increasingly encourage community engagement and participation. Heritage sites and collections serve as focal points for the interaction of people and communities. The strong volunteering element of projects conserving and caring for heritage offers an opportunity for enhanced social engagement.

The desire to address the “needs of all of the distinctive and diverse communities across Scotland” on page 28 is laudable. However, further clarity is needed on how training, funds and resources will be prioritised in order to support *all* communities. Icon questions whether this will be possible without new funding and investment.

8. Please provide comments on the aims and actions under this ambition. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

See answer 7.

Sustaining culture

Sustaining culture: *Sustaining and nurturing culture to flourish and to evolve as a diverse, positive force in society, across all of Scotland.*

9. What is your view of the ambition, ‘Sustaining culture’?

Support ambition Don't support ambition Don't know

10. If you have further comments on the ambition, ‘Sustaining culture’ please provide them below. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

Icon strongly supports this Ambition. The Ambition is integral to how culture exists within Scotland and should consequently be the first Ambition within the strategy, not the last. Without a sustainable workforce, culture can neither empower nor transform.

Aim 1, to “develop the conditions and skills for culture to thrive, so it is cared for, protected and produced for the enjoyment of all present and future generations” is vital. Without a sustainable workforce equipped with the appropriate skills to investigate, manage and conserve Scotland’s cultural heritage, the contribution that culture makes to the economy and society would be greatly reduced.

In this light, **Action 2**, “to support skills development,” is very welcome. However, Icon urges the government to include support for traditional and practitioner skills in the Strategy. A challenging funding environment for culture has broadened roles and responsibilities within the workforce, calling for new generalist competencies in business and fundraising. Coupled with the uncertainties of Brexit and an aging workforce, the loss of traditional and practitioner skills in conservation is imminent. Without these unique skills, the empowering and transformative potential of culture cannot be maintained in the long term. Actions could include programmes to support entrepreneurship, and the potential for working with academic partners to undertake research and develop skills.

Aim 2 should be amended to “value, trust and support *people working in culture* – for their unique and vital contribution to society and the economy” to reflect the contribution that all those working within the sector make, not just “creative people.”

Action 3, “to support the freelance cultural workforce,” should similarly take a broader view of cultural professionals. The Strategy’s section on Cultural Workforce and developing excellence focuses on the challenges faced by freelancers without regard to the challenges of those employed within the sector. While the Strategy recognises that “many in the culture sector often feel vulnerable, undervalued and unable to reach their potential,” it offers no action to support the full range of the workforce.

The support for the freelance workforce is appreciated but it is too narrow in its focus on creatives. Culture includes modern and traditional crafts skills and both making and conservation-restoration. Freelancers in the heritage sector also include researchers and consultants, who are not necessarily considered creatives.

The Ambition's support for the workforce should reflect the inclusive view of culture that the Strategy promotes and give equal weighting and prominence to all areas of the sector. It should acknowledge that the sector is badly paid, and that prevailing project culture results in short-term contracts with little job security across the sector.

Action 4 is important as diversity remains a challenge for the cultural heritage sector. We need diversity to bring new skills, energy and ideas to the sector and to be more representative of contemporary Scottish society. Within conservation, the lack of awareness of the profession as a career, employers' continued emphasis on traditional HE qualifications, the expectation of volunteering experience as a route to employment and low salaries continue to contribute to the problem. It is vital for actions to increase diversity in the workforce to address socio-economic barriers. The Strategy should support the sector's efforts to diversify entry routes, for example through work-based training such as apprenticeships.

While the positive impact of **volunteers** is rightly highlighted within the strategy, current statistics suggest that volunteering is on the decline. ONS shows a 15% decline from 2005-2016 and the Scottish Household Survey demonstrates a 4% decline from 2010-2016. The cultural heritage sector is reliant on a vast number of skilled and knowledgeable volunteers. The potential consequences of this decrease may need to be considered in terms of enabling a sustainable sector which does not rely as heavily on its volunteers.

Icon welcomes the "strategic approach to supporting international ambitions" in **Action 5**. Support for projects and organisations to promote themselves internationally can increase the sector's sustainability through new income from global audiences and sharing of skills, ideas and expertise. International strands in organisations' work would also demonstrate the ability of heritage to contribute to the soft power and cultural diplomacy agenda.

It is reassuring to see the loss of EU funding and the gap **Brexit** may create for cultural heritage organisations acknowledged within the Ambition for sustainable culture. However, this should be recognised in the Ambition's Actions. The following other concerns related to Brexit should be discussed by the Strategy:

- Freedom of movement of the broad range of conservation professionals and heritage scientists, which impacts the capacity of domestic infrastructure projects, and knowledge and skills exchange.
- Assessment of Tier 2 visas according to income levels. Low remuneration within the conservation sector does not reflect the skills and education of the workforce. The lack of cultural heritage occupations (due to the small scale of the sector) within the shortage occupations list may also prove problematic in the longer term.
- Future tariff imposition on necessary materials and equipment.
- Potential loss of current European conventions which safeguard natural heritage.
- Potential loss of visitor numbers for Scotland from the potential perception that it is more difficult or less welcoming to visit the UK rather than other EU countries.

11. Please provide comments on the aims and actions under this ambition. What do you like, or dislike, or what would you change?

See answer 10.

Delivering A Culture Strategy for Scotland

The final culture strategy will highlight where individuals, communities, and organisations are already working towards the vision, ambition and aims of the strategy.

12. Please provide details of any examples of good work and best practice, from Scotland or internationally, that you think could be included in the final strategy? We are interested in a range of different approaches.

The aims of Icon's [Strategy 2017-2021](#) align closely with the government's draft Culture Strategy. Icon's mission is to support:

Advocacy – through extending our influence as a strong voice for conservation of cultural heritage; promoting the value of high quality conservation with our partners and with the public; and by becoming the authoritative source of information on conservation in practice, policy and the profession.

Excellence – through championing excellence and high professional standards in the practice of conservation; inspiring quality through support for skills development, education and training; encouraging information exchange and the sharing of knowledge; and nurturing those involved in conservation from entry to later career and beyond.

Engagement – through expanding those involved and interested in conservation and our cultural heritage; inspiring people from all backgrounds to value and engage with heritage, conservation and conservators; diversifying those participating in conservation practice and the conservation profession; and realising the potential of conservation to promote wellbeing, develop a sense of place and encourage active citizens.

Icon's current work strands include:

- Supporting skills development, education and training through our internship programme and professional development opportunities.
- Promoting sustainable career paths into conservation and encouraging diversity by developing standards for apprenticeships and extending opportunities for engagement at entry level.
- Carrying out research on the conservation workforce to support capacity-building.
- Working in partnership with the Restoration Trust to develop a project that engages people with mental health issues in the practice of conservation.

Icon's Scotland Group represents conservators, heritage scientists and preservation specialists working in Scotland. Icon Scotland Group already supports the delivery of [Our Place in Time](#).

13. What can you or your organisation do to support the vision, aims, ambitions and actions of the strategy?

- Icon will continue to work towards the aims of its own Strategy, which strongly support the government's Culture Strategy for Scotland.
- Icon will continue to develop relationships with government and stakeholders in Scotland to ensure the successful delivery of the Culture Strategy.

- Icon's Scotland Group supports conservators and restorers in Scotland in their work to care for the tangible cultural heritage in Scotland and the rest of the UK. It encourages best practice and the undertaking and sharing of new research relating to collections conservation.
- Icon's Scotland Group works as a member of BEFS - the strategic intermediary body, respected within the built environment sector and representing a wide range of national organisations both large and small. BEFS is well placed to advise across the sector at a strategic level. BEFS also advises and informs the sector widely in relation to new policy approaches and thinking, cascading accurate information throughout the sector via members and a widely read bulletin.
- Icon's Scotland Group continues to work actively as a part of Museums Galleries Scotland's Stakeholders Group.
- Icon Scotland Group's committee has representatives from all the major heritage organisation in Scotland where conservators work.

14. What do you think success for the strategy will look like?

- A coherent, deliverable and accessible government approach to culture across Scotland that is embedded throughout agencies and organisations connected to the production and delivery of cultural heritage.
- The public and private sectors, third sector organisations and local authorities are empowered and sustainably resourced to support the delivery of the Culture Strategy.
- The people of Scotland are fully supported to participate in all aspects of culture and heritage.
- Cultural heritage is celebrated in government policy as a positive agent for change that delivers benefit to the economy and society.

Monitoring the Impact of the Strategy

15. What is your view of the proposed approach to monitoring and evaluating the strategy set out in section 5?

Support approach Don't support approach Don't know

16. If you have further comments on the proposed monitoring and evaluation approach, please provide them below.

The Strategy contains potentially confusing messages in relation to monitoring and evaluation. Page 23 promotes the new National Outcome in relation to culture and describes how it will "continue to foster an outcomes-focused approach across the sectors." However, page 42 stresses that the Strategy's evaluation approach will avoid reducing impact evaluation to "simplistic target and output indicators." Outcomes and outputs are well understood to be different and the Strategy should recognise that intangible outcomes will prove more problematic to evidence than outputs.

Icon supports the Measuring Change Group and hopes its membership will reflect the diversity of the culture sector. We urge the Group to carefully consider how outcomes in the heritage sector, which are often intangible, will be measured and

with what level of accuracy and accountability. Icon agrees with the proposal for the Group to map out outcomes which support longer-term change, particularly where they are designed to be realistic and achievable.

A potential change of data requirements should not be allowed to result in a loss of status for current measurables. The consequence of new measures would be particularly concerning in relation to funders and how new measures are expressed by those who help to sustain the sector.

Aligning the indicators for the Culture Strategy to the national outcome for culture is welcome. Icon suggests further aligning them to the UN Sustainable Development goals to add further weight.

Other comments

17. Please use this section to provide any other comments that you wish to share about the strategy.

Further clarity on how the Strategy will be resourced, implemented, monitored and evaluated within the context of austerity is needed. More information on who is tasked with the Strategy's delivery would also be beneficial. The Culture Strategy's context describes the agencies who are tasked with the delivery of other comparable strategies. These agencies, should be provided with enough information and resource to understand, align and implement the Cultural Strategy as necessary.

Impact assessments

Impact assessments are developed as part of the process of developing any government strategy to identify what impacts the strategy may have on specific groups in society.

Partial impact assessments have been developed for the culture strategy.

18. Do you think the partial Equality Impact Assessment has identified where the strategy might impact on people differently depending on characteristics such as age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity?

Yes No Don't know

19. If you have further comments on the Equality Impact Assessment, please provide them below. For example, what would you add or change?

NA

20. Do you think the partial Children's Rights and Welfare Impact Assessment sets out how the proposals presented in the strategy might impact on the rights and welfare of children?

Yes No Don't know

21. If you have further comments on the Children's Rights and Welfare Impact Assessment, please provide them below. For example, what would you add or change?

NA

22. How do you think this strategy might impact upon people on low incomes, people living in deprived areas, people in material deprivation, people with no / or low wealth and people from different socio-economic backgrounds? Please provide comments below.

NA

23. Do you think the partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment identifies how the proposals presented in the Strategy might impact on businesses, the third (voluntary) sector or have any regulatory impact?

Yes No Don't know

24. If you have further comments on the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment, please provide them below. For example, what would you add or change?

NA

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