

SUBMISSION FROM THE FEDERATION OF SCOTTISH THEATRE

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

1. The Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST) is a membership body with over 120 professional theatre and dance organisations from all regions of Scotland, including main house producers, presenting venues, touring companies, companies working in schools and communities, companies producing and presenting work for children, dance companies, local authority venues and education establishments.

2. In addition to representing the views of members on a range of issues, FST is very active as a major training provider to the sector (covering a range of skills including, creative support / bursaries, producing skills, actor training, mentoring and leadership, health and safety and equalities), an active promoter of Scottish theatre and dance at home and abroad with major audience development initiatives and international promotion projects including the biennial Scotland Live and as a partner in Made in Scotland and the IETM International Networking Project.

FST consultation on Creative Scotland and the future of theatre and dance in Scotland

3. We have facilitated wide ranging debate through a range of members' meetings and in a joint 'Open Space' event with the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) on 10-11 June 2009, which explored "What is our dream for theatre dance in the new decade?" This event involved over 150 people from across Scotland including experienced practitioners and administrators, individual / freelance artists, emerging artists, students, lecturers/academics, rural touring networks, unions, local authorities, SAC and, indeed, members of the Joint Board and Creative Scotland 09 Board. The full record of the event can be found on the FST's website at:

<http://www.scottishtheatres.com/openspacereport.pdf>

Federation of Scottish Theatre response to the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Bill - Part 3 – Creative Scotland

4. This consultation informs FST's response to the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Bill set out below.

5. FST in general welcomes most of the overall functions for Creative Scotland as set out in Section 27 Subsection (1) of the Bill. However, we have some concerns about the following elements:

- Section 27, subsection (1b): FST would like to see the principle of supporting 'art for art's sake' (as outlined in Explanatory Note paragraph 57) explicitly enshrined within the Bill itself.

- Section 27, subsection (1d): FST would like a more explicit expression in the Bill itself of the broad range of benefits and impacts of the arts and culture. FST believes Creative Scotland's role should be to support the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of aesthetic quality and cultural participation, the development of creative potential and the individual and community benefits in terms of well-being and inclusion which the arts promote. (Explanatory Note paragraph 59 and Policy Memorandum paragraphs 145 and 162).
- Section 27, subsection (1d): In addition to an 'export' focused international policy for Creative Scotland (Policy Memorandum paragraph 146) FST would like to see a balanced approach, including collaborative working, international exchange and programming international work in Scotland.
- Section 27, subsection (1e) would appear to impose a restrictive, 'instrumental' purpose to the support of artistic endeavour by Scottish-based practitioners, as well as a narrow definition of 'national culture', which is in conflict with the 'arms length principle' expressed elsewhere in the Explanatory Notes to the Bill (Paragraph 30, Section 2) and in the Policy Memorandum (paragraphs 140 and 151).
- FST would like to see further explanation and clarification of Section 27, subsection (1f). FST feels it is critical that the Bill explicitly excludes *financial* support to the broader commercial creative industries in the functions and purpose of Creative Scotland, which will be supported through other bodies and other mechanisms as outlined in the Policy Memorandum (paragraph 148).

6. We understand that Creative Scotland will have a co-ordinating and support role in relation to the broader commercial creative industries which is additional to the current remits of Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen. We also understand that funding to the new body will 'comprise the combined future grant-in-aid figures of the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen' (Financial Memorandum paragraph 470). We also understand that local authorities and the enterprise agencies will continue to support commercial creative industries through their own resources and funding schemes.

7. FST welcomes Creative Scotland's role in 'increasing the diversity of people who access and participate in the arts and culture' (Section 27, subsection 2).

8. FST welcomes the enshrinement of the 'arms length' principle in Section 30, subsection (2), but would recommend that this is expressed more explicitly within the Bill itself as an underlying principle of the relationship between Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government.

9. FST welcomes the goal of developing 'new skills, knowledge, expertise and working practices' (Policy Memorandum paragraph 133 and 135) in the new body as we believe it is possible and necessary to examine and evolve

ways in which artists are supported and nurtured. We also welcome the focus on efficiency, ensuring that 'public funding is targeted as directly as possible at artists, creative practitioners and enterprises' (Policy Memorandum paragraphs 137). However, we are concerned that the 'wider functions' of Creative Scotland outlined in paragraph 133 may be difficult to fulfill if this is based on existing resource levels (Financial Memorandum paragraph 470), particularly in the short term.

- Neither the Bill nor the Financial Memorandum outlines what will happen to the existing Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen functions of disbursing Lottery Funding which have become an important part of the arts infrastructure in Scotland and FST would like to see clarification on this question.
- The Financial Memorandum (paragraph 472) explains that Creative Scotland will inherit cash efficiency savings targets totalling £5,880,360 across 2008-2011 as part of the Efficient Government Programme. FST would like clarification as to whether those savings are *in addition* to the estimated efficiency savings of the new body of between £800,000 - £1,200,000 (Financial Memorandum paragraph 494). Based on its current staffing establishment SAC has already indicated that it will have to pass some of these Efficient Government Programme efficiency savings onto reductions in grants to funded bodies: "As the bulk of our funds under our management are distributed to third parties, a major operational challenge is to share the efficiencies requirement with funded bodies" (SAC Business Plan 2009/10 Section 8). FST is concerned that the impact of these Efficient Government Programme savings will, at best negate any savings made in a new streamlined Creative Scotland such that it will not result in additional resources allocated to the support of artists, and at worst lead to further direct reductions in support to artists and arts organisations.
- FST welcomes the decision to cover all future transition costs from 2009/10 by the Scottish Government (Financial Memorandum paragraph 475).
- FST welcomes the recognition expressed in the Policy Memorandum (paragraph 163) that Creative Scotland will need to work with and draw upon the expertise held within the arts and culture sector and believes this will be critical if a more efficient Creative Scotland is to access the relevant skills and expertise in its decision-making and programme delivery.
- FST would like the Bill to state a clear intention to establish a more formal relationship between the new body and local and national government and other relevant agencies (including enterprise agencies, British Council etc) in relation to discussing and agreeing co-ordinated arts and culture strategies. As the new body does not have statutory powers in relation to other agencies, FST would welcome the

establishment of a standing forum or committee bringing these agencies together on a regular basis to ensure a coordinated approach and balanced provision across Scotland. (Policy Memorandum paragraphs 164 and 169).

- There is no specific commitment in the Bill or in any of the supporting documents to Creative Scotland honouring grant commitments made by the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen up to and during the current financial year which subsist beyond March 2010. Whilst a number of verbal assurances have been made in relation to this, FST would welcome a statement to this effect within the Bill as we feel it is important to maintain stability and allow future planning by key arts organisations during the transition period.

10. In response to the specific questions posed by the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee:

- 1) The Policy and Financial Memorandums are very helpful in further explaining the Scottish Government's objectives and the financial implications of establishing Creative Scotland.
- 2) FST is not aware that the Scottish Government undertook any specific consultation prior to the introduction of the Bill.

Conclusion

11. FST is broadly supportive of the establishment of Creative Scotland with the caveats outlined above. We believe that it is vital to harness this opportunity to review and evolve new and innovative ways of supporting arts and culture in Scotland. In particular, we believe that there is an opportunity to create a truly collaborative relationship between Creative Scotland and the arts and culture sector, drawing upon expertise from within the sector and working in partnership to deliver shared objectives.

12. Additionally, FST feels that the creation of a new body is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to solve not just the problems of the wider creative industries, but also the historic lack of coordination in relation to supporting the arts and, importantly, the potential role of the arts across society. We are concerned that the lack of clearly articulated structures in relation to this will be a missed opportunity to create a really exciting, new 'fit for purpose' organization which may not come round again for many decades.

13. Within the theatre and dance sectors, which FST represents and on behalf of which it works, we will be looking to Creative Scotland to recognise and invest in the wider theatre and dance sector to complement the welcome additional investment going into the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) through the Scottish Government. The rationale behind the formation of the NTS is that it draws upon a healthy and diverse Scottish theatre culture and infrastructure. Ongoing and enhanced funding to the wider theatre and dance sectors will be critical to nurturing and sustaining a wide pool of talented and inspiring practitioners upon which NTS relies.

14. Finally, FST welcomes the opportunity to comment on 'Part 3 – Creative Scotland' of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Bill. We recognise that the Bill is essentially an 'enabling instrument' and as such we welcome the commitment by the Scottish Government and the Creative Scotland 09 Board to ongoing consultation with the sector on the structure and strategy of the new body and look forward to playing a full and active role in that process.