



Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 -

- **Community Planning Guidance**
- **Community Planning Advice Notes**

Scottish Executive

Submission by the Scottish Museums Council

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Introduction

The Scottish Museums Council [SMC] is the membership organisation for non national museums and galleries in Scotland, fulfilling many of the functions of a national agency. Our overall purpose is to improve the quality of museum and gallery provision in Scotland for the public benefit and we are recognised by the Scottish Executive as the main source of advice to the Executive and the main channel for Executive funding to Scotland's non national museums. This includes all 32 local authorities (who collectively operate 140 museums), universities, regimental and independent museums. SMC combines strategic leadership with the sector with the provision of professional information, advisory and support services to members.

The current Museums Association definition of a museum is:

Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artifacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.

The term museum is used generically to refer to galleries as well as museums.

Learning and Access at SMC

The Learning and Access Team at the SMC promotes lifelong learning and access to both museums and external organisations. Our work includes providing advice on project and policy development in relation to audiences, social inclusion, lifelong learning and access. We conduct training and project work, assess grant applications, and undertake research and policy development. Additionally, we represent the work of museums to local authorities, government and other interested parties.

Museums and social justice

“The creativity of our citizens is a key national resource, vital to the individual's quality of life and to society's well being”.¹

Although disadvantage is clearly about material and economic circumstance, it is also about poverty of aspiration and opportunity, as the Scottish Executive's *Power to Advance Well-being Guidance* (2003) acknowledges.² From face-to-face interaction with real objects to online access to digital images, and outreach work within local communities, museums and galleries provide stimulating opportunities for learning about our shared heritage. Individual projects such as the SMC funded collaboration between the Scottish Railways Preservation Trust and Scotland Against Drugs – which involved a number of drug users learning about and restoring a disused railway carriage – illustrate the ways in which heritage can benefit local communities. SMC's *Museums and Social Justice* document (attached) clearly highlights the links between museums and social justice.³ We welcome the guidance document as a further opportunity to acknowledge the connection between cultural

¹ *Creating Our Future... Minding Our Past...: Scotland's National Cultural Strategy*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 2000: 7.

² *The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003: Power to Advance Well-being Guidance* (consultation draft), Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 2003.

³ *Museums and Social Justice: How museums and galleries can work for their whole communities*, Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2000.

heritage and social inclusion, citizenship, and learning, and to embed these principles in the management of local services.⁴

The following response is structured into two sections in accordance with the *Community Planning Guidance* and *Community Planning Advice Notes* issued by the Scottish Executive.

Section 1 Community Planning Guidance

Identifying Partners and Ensuring their Participation

“The success of the Community Planning process will depend on the commitment to, and participation of, a wide range of public, voluntary, community and private sector bodies”.⁵

As the above quote suggests, partnership lies at the heart of the Community Planning process. SMC fully endorses the principles of public involvement, transparency and partnership that underpin Community Planning as a form of practice. This inclusive vision could be frustrated, however, if the guidance does not exercise a broad and inclusive a definition of potential partner sectors and agencies

Recommendation a) Explicitly highlight (i.e. p. 8, 12) the role of sectors such as heritage and the arts alongside more widely acknowledged contributors such as health and social services – the Advice Notes achieve effectively.⁶

The emphasis given (p. 8) to the equal status and importance of partners who do not have a statutory duty to participate is welcome. Equality of access to Scotland's cultural heritage is significantly dependent upon the involvement of these agencies and organisations within the Community Planning process. All too often, however, their potential contribution is neglected. For example, it is important that Scotland's 160 independent museums, many supported by local authorities to deliver local services, are given adequate weight and consideration.

Through the use of information technologies, project and outreach work, organisations are becoming increasingly mobile, reaching into communities from which they are 'physically' distant. This ability to work with local communities should be recognised if all relevant partners are to be involved – this point is made clearer through the example of thematic groups in the Advice Notes.⁷

Recommendation b) Guidance (p. 7) should emphasise that partnerships should not simply be based upon geographical proximity but also upon the

⁴ *Creating Our Future... Minding Our Past...: Scotland's National Cultural Strategy*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 2000.

⁵ *The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003: Community Planning Guidance*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 2003: 2.

⁶ *The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003: Community Planning Advice Notes*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 2003: 23-24.

⁷ *The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003: Community Planning Advice Notes*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh: 2003, 22-23.

degree to which organisations are actively involved with a particular community.

We welcome the intention to ensure local people are fully aware of what Community Planning means to them and how they can engage with it. Correspondingly, however, we would also argue that it would be helpful to give specific attention to developing ways of informing and engaging other potential partners, such as the museums and gallery sector. The skills to engage with Community Planning have to be developed within all potential partner sectors, as does the ability to evaluate the process. While participants are rightly required to assist local authorities in their facilitation role (p. 8, 9 & 13), we are also pleased to see that local authorities are similarly obliged to develop the means to do this with and for other partner bodies (p. 12).

Recommendation c) Provide targeted support, information and networking opportunities to enable heritage and cultural agencies to fully engage in the Community Planning process.

Recommendation d) Encourage Community Planning Partnerships to work with national heritage agencies such as SMC and Historic Scotland to develop the above support mechanisms.

Recommendation e) Emphasise the responsibility national organisations like SMC have to engage with Community Planning, for example by providing leadership on appropriate themes (p. 13).

Recommendation f) Produce evaluation guidelines relevant to all partner organisations and clarify expectations with respect to public accountability.

Information Management

More thought could be given throughout to the target audience for the working guidance. The danger is that advice is focused on assisting those already engaged with Community Planning, particularly local authorities, rather than on providing guidance to those interested in becoming involved.

Recommendation g) Either accommodate the information needs of other partner sectors and agencies within the guidance or produce a subsidiary guidance document detailing how they can be involved.

Defining Terms and Relationships between Planning Structures/Documents

The introduction (p. 4-5) is clear, concise and comprehensive. The diagram (p. 4) is useful, as is the structural diagram on page 15 -- although this diagram could appear earlier on in the document. It would also be helpful to clarify the relationships between the Community Planning structure and the Social Inclusion Partnership [SIP] structure. Similarly, it would be valuable if the guidance also took into account the national, regional and local infrastructures particular to partner sectors such as museums. SMC's support for the establishment of a regional development

infrastructure for museums and galleries in Scotland is a case in point.⁸

Recommendation h) Produce a diagram showing how Community Planning Partnerships and documents relate to, for instance, SIPs, and Community Learning and Development plans and strategies.

Recommendation l) Highlight how it is necessary for the above structures to take into account parallel infrastructures within partner sectors.

Recommendation j) Clarify how SIPs will eventually be subsumed within Community Planning, the timeline for this and how it will be approached.

The document talks about public 'services' throughout but does not define what the term refers to.

Recommendation k) Define the parameters of what constitutes a public service, particularly as the guidance calls for involvement of a broad variety of agencies in the Community Planning process – heritage agencies provide a public service, for example.

Developing Social Capital

There is an opportunity in the section on 'Supporting the Process' (p. 11-12) to emphasise the contribution heritage and the arts make to building social capital and therefore to encouraging individuals, particularly young people, to engage with their communities. For example, SMC's National Audit of museums and galleries in Scotland revealed that over 53% of those working in the sector (10,885 staff) are volunteers.⁹ The *Community Plan for Highlands 2000*, has integrated cultural heritage as one of five key themes.¹⁰ The potential for such sectors to develop 'Themed' Partnerships (p. 12 & 15) could be more fully recognised within the guidance document, however. Museum forums could provide an accessible basis for themed heritage museum partnerships, for instance.

Recommendation l) Highlight how heritage and the arts make a specific contribution to developing social capital at a local level – similar to the emphasis given to community learning and development [CL&D] (p. 12).

Recommendation m) Indicate how partner agencies can form 'Themed' Partnerships.

Recommendation n) Promote the development of cultural and heritage partnerships as a complement to the planned CL&D partnerships.

Conclusion

SMC fully supports the principles and intentions behind the Community Planning

⁸ *From National Audit to National Framework: SMC's response to the Scottish Executive Action Plan Consultation*, Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2002.

⁹ *A Collective Focus: Scotland's National Audit Summary Report – The main findings and conclusions from the national audit of Scotland's museums and galleries*, Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2001: 8.

¹⁰ *Community Plan for Highlands 2000*, Highland Council, Inverness, 2000: 3.

process and we welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of associated guidelines. In their current form the guidelines provide a useful practical tool for local authorities in particular. Our main concern is to emphasise the importance of clearly articulating -- through specific mentions and examples -- the role of Scottish heritage organisations within the document and therefore the process itself. The inclusion of museum related examples on the website (www.communityplanning.org.uk) would also be helpful. There is a tendency for official documents to use the term culture (or even art directly) as a by-word for art, and subsequently to neglect heritage as a distinct concern. In addition to highlighting responsibility for working with the heritage sector we are also concerned to ensure adequate support, information exchange and networking mechanisms are developed to make this involvement real. Specific attention could be given to including such recommendations within the guidelines, and also to developing related recommendations subsequent to the publication of the document. SMC would be pleased to assist with this process.

Section 2 Advice Notes

Advice Note 1 – National Framework/National Priorities

The outline of key Scottish Executive priorities and related strategic actions is comprehensive and useful. In addition to providing ongoing links to further sources of information and developments at a national level (p. 2), it would also be useful, however, to append a list of national agencies.

Recommendation o) Provide a list of relevant national agencies with a brief summary and contact details as an appendix to the document.

The challenge involved with integrating national ‘thematic-based’ national policy initiatives/guidance with local policy and delivery levels is rightly noted. Although the Executive’s national cultural strategy provides an overarching strategic framework for the cultural sector, it is also necessary for individual sectors such as museums to develop national strategies/action plans to appropriately link national, regional and local priorities. The responsibility for achieving confluence between national and local scales should not, therefore, reside solely with local authorities but should be shared across all participating partner agencies. National agencies such as SMC are well placed to advocate the role of heritage in Community Planning to their own constituencies, for example. In such a manner Community Planning can be advocated and integrated through a number of different means and scales.

Recommendation d) (As above)

Recommendation g)(As above) produce guidance/advice notes for specific partner agencies/sectors to inform them about how to engage with Community Planning and ensure their work complements these processes.

The discussions on social justice and regeneration are particularly resonant with much of the learning and access work undertaken within the heritage sector. SMC would be pleased to contribute examples for the website addresses provided. The expectation that Community Planning Partnerships will “be able to influence any

choice of local indicators, measures and targets within the school improvement framework" (p. 10) is very interesting as it opens up the potential for schools to become more democratic and integrated environments. It should be possible, for example, for individual schools to work with agencies such as SMC to establish schemes like the minimum cultural entitlement mentioned above. Again examples in the advice notes or on the websites would be useful.

The section on lifelong learning is a little odd as it concentrates on HE/FE and does not provide details about community learning and development. The Executive has undertaken significant work in this area, such as the production of community learning and development guidance, and it would be consistent to mention this at this stage.¹¹

The section on 'Culture and Sport' could usefully be extended. The culture aspect does not define the full range of resources implied by the term 'culture', for instance. These include museums and galleries, ancient and historical monuments, archives, natural heritage, historic buildings, as well as the arts. Failure to communicate the wealth of resources available could jeopardise the involvement of diverse partners within the Community Planning process. As the Advice Notes point out the full impact of culture, heritage and sport has not yet been fully realised. Examples of effective initiatives such as the SIP/Community Planning seminars being organised by SMC and the Heritage Lottery Fund would help to illustrate how the sector is beginning to engage with Community Planning. SMC's submission to the Scottish Executive's consultation for a national action plan for museums and galleries also recommends action relating to Community Planning.¹² The inclusion of cultural heritage as one of five main themes in the Highland Wellbeing Alliance Community Plan is a further case in point.¹³ Without greater recognition and advocacy, however, culture and sport are likely to remain at a disadvantage in relation to other partner sectors. The benefits of involvement could be expanded upon with advice from national agencies, for example.

Recommendation p) Expand the 'culture and sport' section (p. 15-17) as detailed above.

Advice Note 2 – Partnership Models and Structures

The structuring of partnership involvement into the three groups – Partnership, Implementation and Thematic – is very helpful. This structure of engagement could be further illustrated using a diagram with accompanying summary. The rest of the section does not, however, conform to the structure laid out in the beginning and consequently it develops forms of partnership which confuse rather than fit into the 3 tiered structure. Specific information is not provided on Implementation or Thematic groups, for example. It would also be helpful to explain how local or neighbourhood planning relate to the overall structure.

As with the rest of the document, this section gives heavy emphasis to the Scottish Arts Council, although mention of Scottish Natural Heritage is welcome. SMC for example, currently provides grants, support and advice to a range of museums

¹¹ *Working and learning together to build stronger communities: Community learning and development working draft guidance*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 2003.

¹² *From National Audit to National Framework: SMC's response to the Scottish Executive Action Plan Consultation*, Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2002, Appendix 1: 11.

¹³ *Community Plan for Highland 2000*, Highland Wellbeing Alliance, Inverness, 2003.

undertaking learning and access work with local communities. We are also undertaking initiatives relating to cultural diversity, Cultural Coordinators, e-learning and interrupted learners, for example. Assistance can be given to Community Planning Partnerships interested in engaging with this kind of work in their areas.

The note on providing initial induction and training for new partners is particularly welcome and reflects concerns SMC has expressed in relation to the guidance notes above (p. 3-4). There are few examples, if any, of Community Partnerships approaching independent museums to invite participation in partnerships and/or to offer related training. A recommendation to produce targeted training opportunities would be useful.

As stated, national agencies (p. 23-24) balance national responsibilities alongside regional and local obligations and this can prove problematic in terms of workload. As a result of this position, however, it is also evident that agencies such as SMC are well placed to mediate between the interests of individual members as well as the museum constituency as a whole. By providing advice and guidance on Community Planning to members we will be able to animate museum organisations on a local level. As mentioned above, however, more encouragement needs to be given to national agencies to take up this responsibility. In addition to providing this strategic role national agencies can also help to bridge different scales of operation by establishing new development infrastructures. SMC has recommended that the Scottish Executive support the establishment of 9 regional development posts for museums and galleries in Scotland, for example.¹⁴ This infrastructure would greatly enhance the capacity of museums and galleries to respond to the Community Planning agenda through the formation of partnerships, training, collaborative working and information exchange on a local and regional scale. Regional development of this kind does require continued national strategic input, however.

Recommendation q) Adapt Advice Note 2 in accordance with the recommendations above.

Recommendation r) Broaden the references to include national heritage agencies.¹⁵

Recommendation s) Encourage partnerships to develop targeted training opportunities for potential Community Planning Partners such as the heritage sector

Advice Note 4 – Effective Partnership Working

SMC fully supports the emphasis given to mainstreaming Community Planning within partner organisations. Not only will this help to create operational continuity across organisations, it will also ensure that the principles of public involvement and accountability, and integrated service delivery become standard practice. As stated above, however, partner organisations need to be given more encouragement and support to meet this challenge. Partners also need to be more aware that they are expected to embed Community Planning into their mainstream operations.

¹⁴ *From National Audit to National Framework: SMC's response to the Scottish Executive Action Plan Consultation*, Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2002 and *Ten Priorities For a New Parliament: The Future of the Past*, Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2003.

¹⁵ To include, for example, SMC, National Museums of Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland, Historic Scotland, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, National Archives of Scotland, National Trust of Scotland or Scottish National Heritage.

Recommendation t) Provide specific guidance for partner sector/organisations on how to mainstream Community Planning principles within their own operations – this should be distinct from guidance on working in and with Community Planning Partnerships.

Advice Note 5 – Effective Community Engagement

The museums sector conducts a great deal of work with adult and community learners, and consequently recent developments in relation to community learning and development are of particular concern. SMC submitted a detailed response to the Community Learning and Development Working Draft Guidance which included recommendations relating to training professional workers.¹⁶ SMC has subsequently, (through the Strategic Change Fund provided by the Scottish Executive) funded Edinburgh City Council and partner agencies to develop initial and continuous professional development modules on working with museums and libraries as learning resources. A Community Planning dimension could be incorporated in these modules and SMC would welcome interest from partnerships and community educators interested in finding out more about the scheme.

Advice Note 6 – Building Operational Capacity

As stated above, we applaud the intention to mainstream Community Planning practices across the range of partner organisations. However, the uneven ability across different organisations to accommodate these new demands must be recognised. Although it is stated that local authorities have a responsibility for ensuring that partners' capacity for involvement is built up (p. 47), the two recommendations for doing this do not address potential lack of staff time and funds within partner organisations.

Undertaking this work could have quite radical implications for the way organisations are structured and run. Museums and galleries have a strong tradition of working with volunteers – 53% of the 10,885 staff working in the sector are volunteers¹⁷ -- youth panels and friends organisations as ways of engaging the public. Mainstreaming Community Planning would necessitate far more demanding levels of public involvement and partnership working. It would be helpful to clarify the responsibility for supporting this process, both financially and practically. Local authorities cannot undertake such work on their own and could be encouraged to seek guidance from the relevant national agencies. SMC would welcome any additional resources and support to progress the mainstreaming process. Drawing on the skills developed through administering the Strategic Change Fund, we are also happy to provide advice and guidance to local authorities and partnerships on undertaking this work with museums and galleries.

Recommendation u) Clarify the relative responsibility local authorities and national agencies have to encourage organisations to mainstream Community Planning.

¹⁶ Community Learning and Development Draft Guidance – Submission by the Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2003: 8-9.

¹⁷ *A Collective Focus: Scotland's National Audit Summary Report – The main findings and conclusions from the National Audit of Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2003: 8.

Recommendation v) Provide additional resources and assistance to support the mainstreaming process.

Recommendation w) Encourage local authorities to consult with national agencies in order to appropriately plan and structure this work.

Advice Note 8 – Information Sharing

SMC recognises the place given to information sharing in the Advice Notes as long as “those collecting and using such data know and abide by the Data Protection Act 1998 and other legislation to ensure individuals rights are protected” (p. 56). The development of the Heritage Education Forum consisting of the national agencies detailed in footnote 15, could be included as an example of an information-sharing model. As a partnership of related agencies the forum operates at both a director and an officer led level. The Heritage Education Officer Group [HEOG] provides an opportunity for agencies to meet and exchange information and to pursue joint initiatives in the learning field. The first collaboration has involved input into the development of an SMC led publication for Cultural Coordinators and teachers in Scotland. The publication will provide practical advice on engaging with heritage resources through learning. The launch in September will be consolidated through the delivery of four regional training events, again led by SMC but supported through the HEOG.

Conclusion

The advice notes are an extremely useful means of enabling individuals to understand how Community Planning can be practically implemented. Perhaps necessarily so, they are however, detailed and long. The document is also primarily focused on local authorities and we have argued throughout that it would be helpful to give specific attention to providing guidance, support and training to partner sectors. We have also urged the Executive to give special attention to involving sectors such as heritage which are not as readily included in these processes.

Given the length and the generic tone of the document, there is a fair chance it may not be read in detail by partner agencies. This, of course, is of real concern. Again it reinforces the need to produce alternative guidance and to diversify channels of communication and support according to different partner needs. It would also be useful to look at ways of integrating different support and development infrastructures and strategies across partner sectors. This is a challenge that will be best met with the assistance of relevant national agencies. While welcoming the intention to mainstream Community Planning within partner organisations, we have made recommendations relating to the resource implications this will entail.

Given the above recommendations, SMC fully supports the advice notes and appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of Community Planning across Scotland.