
ADOPTION OF THE 'CULTURE, HERITAGE AND ARTS STRATEGY'

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the remit and scope of the commissioned Culture, Heritage and Arts Strategy. It goes on to précis the main findings and recommendations on the development and sustainability of the culture, heritage and arts sectors within Argyll and Bute.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. It is recommended that:
- (a) The Community Services Committee note the contents of this report and approve and adopt the strategy
 - (b) Refer the appointment of an elected representative onto the Cultural Assembly to the full council.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Culture, Heritage and Arts sector in Argyll and Bute is pivotal to the area's identity, character and appeal. The sector is diffuse and uncoordinated, yet many pockets of brilliance demonstrate the potential to build the strengths of the sector and the cultural distinctiveness and competitiveness of the area
- 3.2 Argyll and Bute Council want to find ways to build on the cultural, heritage, arts and Gaelic assets to improve their contribution to the social and economic life of the area. Crucially, the challenge is to identify what the intrinsic needs of the sector are, how it can grow its audiences and markets and how it can contribute more to the visitor economy.
- 3.3 BTS was appointed through a competitive tender process and with financial support from HIE to develop the strategic action plan for Culture, Heritage and the Arts in Argyll and Bute. BTS is an Edinburgh based specialist tourism and marketing practice with extensive experience of working with the culture and heritage sectors. Their brief was to look at the breadth and depth of the sector in Argyll and Bute, and
- Identify how to generate stronger collaborative working with stakeholders in Argyll and partners at a national level;
 - Develop an action plan translating the strategy into priorities and investment needs;

- Articulate the economic contribution of culture, heritage, arts and creative industries in Argyll including the potential increase in cultural tourism;
 - Suggest a model of governance for a sustainable umbrella organisation for the sector and establish how it will work with other partners including the Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative and Partnership.
- 3.4 The research was undertaken through conducting face-to-face and telephone interviews with national and local institutions, organisations and key players; inviting contributions and expression of views in an electronic survey; conducting desk research and holding a series of interactive, facilitated workshops.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The estimate of those working in the sector is 1% of the Scottish total, or 844 people – this is very likely an underestimate, with many people in the sector “hidden”. Even so, this is almost 2% of the estimated 43,000 economically active people in Argyll. The electronic survey, sampling 140 relevant people and organisations in the arts and creative industries in Argyll and Bute, identified 924 people employed by them and 2,741 volunteers, which even accounting for many people with multiple volunteering roles, is a highly significant “unrecorded” resource. From published data an estimate is made of an annual turnover of between £63m and £120m p.a.
- 4.2 The sector creates opportunities for self-expression, cooperation and collaboration in rural and remote areas, while also helping to create new and sustain existing facilities for residents. It contributes to the well being and vibrancy of our communities and can be a key driver in stemming population loss.
- 4.3 The sector has to organise itself, in order to promote its virtues, its contribution to Argyll’s self-belief and market profile and to address shortfalls and barriers - market failures – that inhibit success, growth and satisfaction.
- 4.4 The Council initiated a Cultural Assembly gathering in 2013; BTS’s remit included testing whether and how this might play a delivery role. The view of the Strategy is that it serves as the foundation for building local and Argyll and Bute-wide delivery structures. This will take time to develop and needs energy and commitment.

A membership organisation is favoured with a “hub and spokes” model of local groupings in 8 areas (mirroring the Tourism Partnership’s areas), interwoven with an art form/thematic representation on the (current) steering group. Developing a company or co-operative structure will allow the cultural assembly to develop projects and attract or bid for funds, with the steering group transforming into the board. The Council would participate in, but not chair, the assembly

5. IMPLICATIONS

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| 5.1 | Policy: | Contributes to the Single Outcome Agreement and the Economic Development Action Plan |
| 5.2 | Financial: | None |
| 5.3 | Legal: | None. |
| 5.4 | Personnel: | None. |
| 5.5 | Equal Opportunities: | None. |
| 5.6 | Customer Services | Implementation of the Strategy will enhance customer service through partnership with those working in the culture and heritage sectors |

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