

## Culture Investment Framework - Public Consultation Analysis – Interim

At the meeting of The Council on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024, instruction was given to revise Council cultural funding processes to ensure the priorities and objectives of funding was more clear and the decision making process more transparent. Around the same time the refreshed Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) was published setting out the collective vision for all Aberdonians to thrive, regardless of background and circumstances.

As part of the process the Council commissioned an independent facilitator to lead on a series of consultation workshops with stakeholders, the purpose of these sessions were to-

- Define what the Cultural Investment priorities will be and how they will benefit Aberdeen.
- Bring the whole cultural sector together to build trust in process and understand the purpose of the Cultural Investment Framework.
- Ensure that the process engages sector wide, not just current funding recipients.
- Provide clarity on the Council's priorities and provide opportunities for innovative thinking on how culture could deliver the right outcomes.

In total 46 organisation representatives engaged in the stakeholder sessions and report has been provided by Charlotte Wilson Research Services on the feedback and recommendations which will be incorporated into the final framework as appropriate.

Alongside the stakeholder engagement, an online public consultation exercise was undertaken to seek feedback and endorsement of Culture Investment Framework's aims, priorities and principles. In total there was 409 responses to the survey.

### Consultation Analysis Format

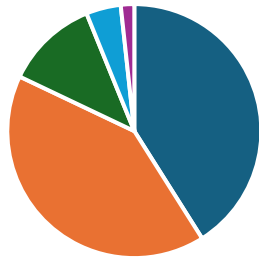
General comments which **support** the content of the draft Framework; - **Issues /clarifications** in the draft Framework which respondents felt needed further expansion in the final document; - **Problems or gaps** identified by respondents which they felt could hinder the delivery of the Framework; - Suggested **actions and best practice** which could be considered to support the delivery of the Framework;

### Draft Aims

#### Our Aims

- *We will continue to offer a range of support including grants to support one-off projects as well as for longer programmes and core running costs;*
- *we propose that all our future investment will share a common set of priorities and principles for the next three years from April 2025– March 2028.*
- *We aim to use this investment to strategically leverage in more national funding to the city to support cultural delivery and diversification.*

Aims



■ Strongly Agree   
 ■ Agree   
 ■ Neither  
■ Disagree   
 ■ Strongly disagree

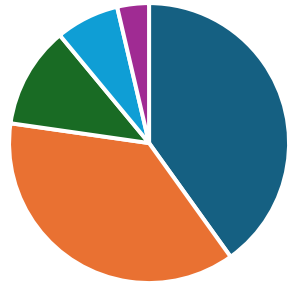
Category	Commentary Themes	Response/ Follow up Action
<b>Support</b>	Proposal sounds inclusive and achievable. It is important to individuals' well-being/mental health to have access to cultural facilities It makes sense if the funding available to use can bring in additional funding nationally as this will benefit the city and its residents The benefits of a vibrant cultural environment are far reaching in the community and the monetary value in wellbeing and growth can far exceed the investments made 3 year plan with common priorities ensures continuity and predictability for organisations.	
<b>Issues/clarifications</b>	Could be slightly more specific. Too vague. Not sure clear what the actual aims are	The aim's are set out in the context of the priorities and ambitions rather than stand alone.
<b>Problems or gaps</b>	Sharing a common set of priorities and principles could block some worthy projects common priorities is surely going to lead to a lack of diversity? Some organisation/groups get preference. Some area given more support than others You don't really offer much at present not the council's job to define artistic priorities or principles It's a small group deciding what these priorities and principles are	Priorities and Principles have been worded to avoid specifying artforms or type of activities to avoid ending up with a prescriptive cultural offer.  Comments demonstrate some longstanding negative perceptions remain and there is a need for transparency and

		<p>better communication to highlight current levels of investment.</p> <p>Cultural Investment Framework has been drawn through active sector engagement beginning with the 2023 Culture Review.</p>
<b>Actions and best practice</b>	<p>I agree with the aims - but would like to see some flexibility included in the investment strategy to allow for good opportunities that might be more unexpected rather than fit with a pre-determined set of priorities which might stifle opportunities</p> <p>Private funding support should also be a priority rather than just seeking national funding.</p>	<p>These points will be reflected in the subsequent strategy/ framework development.</p>

### Draft Priorities

- *Economy: Diversify Aberdeen's economy and developing our workforce through skills support and employment opportunities.*
- *People (Children and Young People): improve our children and young people's physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Improving education experience and post-school opportunities.*
- *People (Adults): increasing healthy life expectancy, reducing adult convictions, substance abuse and homelessness.*
- *Place: Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions, protecting our natural and built environment.*
- *Community Empowerment: building strong personal and community resilience, enabling people to participate in decisions that help change things for the better.*

### Priorities



■ Strongly Agree 
 ■ Agree 
 ■ Neither 
 ■ Disagree 
 ■ Strongly Disagree

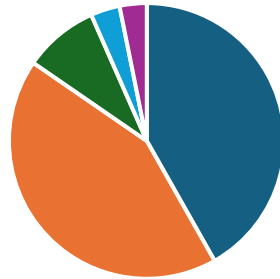
Category	Commentary Themes	Actions
Support	<p>All the above points are important to enjoying life</p> <p>All of these sound like excellent aims. I personally would like to see brave and bold actions towards their achievement.</p> <p>Culture growing from the grassroots in Aberdeen indeed ought to be a golden thread. It is necessary to ensure that opportunities are nurtured within the city so that locally-based artists and locally-organised and -managed projects can grow and expand within the area.</p> <p>Culture as a golden thread that everyone can follow, benefit from, and contribute to resonates strongly with me.</p>	
Issues/Clarifications	<p>Priorities don't really focus on the value of cultural experience, core benefits and impacts are missing.</p> <p>The LOIP ends in 2026 and this survey is about culture 2025 - 2028 so why tie it to an expired plan?</p> <p>It deals mainly with consequences rather than prevention.</p> <p>agree in principle that these are sensible high-level outcomes towards which we should work, but knowing the specific targets that lie underneath them in the LOIP, it feels like very little room has been made for cultural orgs to act. The targets have been set by non-cultural/arts/heritage bodies like the police, housing charities etc. Without meaningful participation in the Community Planning process, and the setting of culture-specific targets within the higher-level outcomes, I worry that the sector will never be seen by the LOIP/Council as effectively delivering on what has been agreed through the CP process. This risks further entrenching the idea that our activities are</p>	<p>Culture Review highlighted the lack of overarching cultural priorities or connection with the Council's other plan's and principles. The alignment with the LOIP is a starting point and one that was valued by the culture sector who have been engaged in the process. The framework of</p> <p>The additional priority themes of 'experience' and 'celebrate' have</p>

	luxury, never tackling the 'real' issues at hand. In a sense, we're running the risk of getting into a game where the rules have been set by others - often actors with very different agendas.	been developed to reflect the intrinsic value
<b>Problems or gaps</b>	There is an aging population with many people living alone and for longer feeling isolated and lonely, above does not specifically address this group in society which I feel I are often ignored.	This is captured in the Framework metrics around participation and engagement in respect to tackling feelings of loneliness as well as improved self-confidence.
<b>Actions and best practice</b>	How this is measured against the LOIP is key as sometimes positive cultural impact cannot be easily translated into these impacts. It's the endeavour to achieve these aims that matters Frankly the above list feels like a minimum - a base starting point for what we should be aiming for and achieving. We should be looking to the unique opportunities Aberdeen has to maximise these further - location, experience, history, etc. It is crucial there is joined-up thinking (and working) between different disciplines. Nothing can or should exist in isolation, oblivious to everything else going on.	These points are being captured in the Framework approach to impact monitoring.

## Draft Principles

- *Ambition - Encourage creative ambition and excellence in delivery.*
- *Public benefits - Ensure Council investment is used for public benefit, demonstrating impacts to evidence investment is delivering on our priorities.*
- *Local Impact - to support the local cultural economy to develop capacity and capability to be more sustainable and successful.*
- *Diversity - Reflect the growing diversity of the city and foster creativity in every community.*
- *Collaboration- Encourage organisations to work mutually and in collaboration and to support grass roots organisations and individual practitioners, ensuring fair pay and opportunities to develop their activities and careers in Aberdeen.*
- *Grow investment – To foster the conditions for the culture sector to maximise opportunities and grow inward investment for culture and creativity in Aberdeen.*
- *Inclusive - Make funding guidance clear, easy to understand, accessible and inclusive. To make monitoring consistent and proportionate to the levels of investment.*
- *Open - Make decisions based on open applications, share data on decisions openly and use monitoring data collected to inform future investment choices.*

## Principles



■ Strongly Agree 
 ■ Agree 
 ■ Neither 
 ■ Disagree 
 ■ Strongly Disagree

Category	Commentary Themes	Actions
Support	<p>Investment in the local and further arts is vital to nurture a multi-cultural approach to the arts. Inclusion and diversity are key components in developing and growing cultural opportunities in Aberdeen, and the principles outline have the potential to bring about investment from the national level and to encourage investment at the local level from community members. This reflects well on your commitment to the arts.</p> <p>People need to understand that the population of Aberdeen is changing and supporting arts in this way will help.</p> <p>These are all very important principles. Why are they in draft? They should be in place right now!</p> <p>It is so important to support the Arts and Culture in a city. I have lived in another city with a similar sized population where there was little investment in the Arts and the city definitely suffered from lack of this important offering.</p>	
Issues/Clarifications	<p>While we agree with the sentiment of the draft principles, we believe that they could be more succinct without losing their essence.</p> <p>Open category could be stronger re full public transparency.</p> <p>In 'Public Benefit' I would like to see 'lasting public benefit' a requirement for council investment to cement long-term strategic funding.</p>	<p>Respondent put forward good suggestions but they did generalise/weaken 'open' and 'grow investment' – agree point of being more succinct.</p> <p>With transparency there is limits on what the Council will be able to publish without risking breaching the personal</p>

		<p>data or commercial sensitivity of applications, Framework proposes to be transparent on process and decisions without going into sensitive information.</p> <p>Public benefits legacy expectation will be proportionate to level of funding/nature of activity.</p>
<b>Problems or gaps</b>	<p>this doesn't actually mean anything. It would be good if we start paying Aberdeen artists. There is an extremely high proportion of 'cultural' activities bought in. We aren't showcasing anything Creative opportunities and industries are continuously struggling in Aberdeen. I don't see much evidence that council investment is being used for public benefit, especially when it comes to the arts.</p> <p>ACC needs to have a wider, more ambitious plan for culture.</p> <p>I can't disagree with any of that, but I'd like to see something more about Aberdeen as a cultural/arts destination to draw in outside benefits</p> <p>Probably needs something about environmental sustainability. I'd also strongly suggest creating a principle around everyday culture and creativity. We have the 'professional' world covered with principles around 'excellence', 'economy', 'investment', but there isn't much explicit space for the more everyday cultural/creative expressions of 'non-professionals'.</p>	<p>Review and Framework recognises this sense that the public and sector feel the cultural offer is 'bought in' rather than developed locally, this is being addressed in the priorities and principles.</p> <p>Culture plan and Creative Industries plans as part of the Regional Economic Strategy are also being developed to address some of the points.</p> <p>'everyday participation' is captured in the new 'experience' theme.</p>
<b>Actions and best practice</b>	<p>Aberdeen has had some fantastic trailblazing cultural initiatives in the past, but has failed to exploit this to the full or value these programs. I would love to see cultural activities given a higher prominence and be more valued in the city.</p> <p>In principle I find it very difficult to disagree with any of the aims and principles here outlined.</p> <p>What I feel is missing from this survey is the road map of how they will be achieved; and I do not know without the road map if I would agree with the methods, I would like to see them and I would like to find that I am in agreement with them.</p>	<p>This will be picked up in the impact metrics and the range of funding programmes.</p> <p>Culture Investment Framework logic model</p>

## Key Lessons

- Majority of the respondents agreed with the draft aims, priorities and principles, although the priorities did get slightly lower approval at 75%.
- There was some critical feedback from both the public survey and stakeholder engagement around the priorities adopting the themes of the current LOIP which is due to end in 2026 and currently has minimal reference to culture. Stakeholders were more supportive of this as many are already measuring their activity against the LOIP and saw the value of being more alignment. The alignment to the LOIP should be viewed as a starting point and opportunity to come together with the next LOIP post 2026.

- Another criticism was the value of culture engagement as an audience member and/or participants was not being recognised or valued in its own right. To address this the 'Experience' and 'Celebrate' themes have been developed to ensure the intrinsic values of culture engagement are at the heart of the Framework.
- Many commented on the need for a 'road map' or action plan to ensure delivery of the culture ambitions, these will be addressed through the Creative Industries Action Plan.
- Growing inward investment scored higher with the public than the stakeholder groups, with additional comments on the need to ensure value and to expand this into attracting private investment.
- Overall the public feedback on Culture Investment Framework aligned to those of the stakeholder group.

### **Respondents Information**

- Bulk of respondents identified as white Scottish/British (64%), 29% did not or preferred not to respond and only 6.58% from an ethnic minority background which is lower than the 15% population demographic.
- Around 33% stated they had a disability lasting 12 months or more which impacted their life
- 99% respondents had attended some form of cultural event in the past 12 months, with 38% attending an event once a month and further 53% attend 3 to 4 events a year.
- 47% reported an improved sense of wellbeing and mental health as an outcome of attendance, a further 71% as an opportunity to spend time with friend and family, highlighting the communal benefits of culture.
- Participation in cultural activities in the last 12 months amongst the respondents was higher than the national average of 75%, with 93% reporting they have participated in cultural activities,
- 19% of respondents live within The most deprived 20% data zones in Aberdeen City according to submitted postcode data. 29% of respondents resided out with the city, (mainly Stonehaven and Banchory).
- For those that had not attended events or stated they are less interested in culture the majority cited a lack of awareness and promotion of what was on as being the primary factor.