

Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway Engagement Report

March 2020

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Background

Dumfries and Galloway Council and its partners, including DG Unlimited (Dumfries and Galloway Chamber of the Arts), are creating a Cultural Strategy for our region. We want the Cultural Strategy to help unlock the potential of culture - by which we mean arts and heritage of all types - to make a positive difference to people's lives in Dumfries and Galloway. We will publish the Strategy once it has been considered by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Communities Committee in early Summer 2020.

The Strategy is being developed by a Cultural Strategy Project Team, which is made up of officers from services across Dumfries and Galloway Council whose role is to support the strategic development of culture in Dumfries and Galloway. It also includes the Arts Development Director of DG Unlimited.

The Project Team worked with two Reference Groups to develop the draft strategy vision and themes, and to inform an engagement programme. One Reference Group with specialist knowledge of the cultural sector was recruited through an open call; and the Dumfries and Galloway Community Learning and Development Partnership became the second Reference Group, on the basis that its membership could contribute an understanding of how culture impacts on priorities such as Community Learning and Development, Health and Social Care, Youth Work; Education and Economic Development.

In line with the Scottish Government's draft Culture Strategy for Scotland the definition of 'culture' to be used for the Strategy was agreed with the Reference Groups as 'arts and heritage of all types' and in order to unlock the potential of culture to contribute to other Council priority areas, six emerging themes were identified: Sense of Place; Access and Inclusion; Economic Impact; Young People; Health and Wellbeing; and Developing and Empowering Communities. These, along with a draft vision for the Cultural Strategy formed the basis of the stakeholder engagement programme.

Why did we engage?

The primary purpose of the engagement, which took place between June 2019 and mid-September 2019 was to gather feedback on the emerging Cultural Strategy vision and themes; to find out what barriers might be holding the cultural sector back from delivering more in relation to the themes; and to identify solutions that would help overcome those barriers.

We were interested in the views of artists, creative producers, the heritage sector and other cultural and creative professionals who make a living through creating, producing, maintaining and supporting culture in Dumfries and Galloway, as well as those who take part in culture in their free time. We also wanted to gather the views of people involved in other areas and sectors where culture might be able to support their work such as Health and Wellbeing, Education, Economic Development, Anti-Poverty and Inclusion.

How did we engage and who took part?

434 people took part in the engagement programme, which included an online survey, Focus Groups, roadshows, discussion sessions and interviews.

255 people completed the online questionnaire, which was aimed primarily at people working or volunteering in arts and/or heritage in Dumfries and Galloway and was available via the Council and DG Unlimited websites with paper copies at Customer Service Centres across the region. Responses were received from across Dumfries and Galloway and the survey findings are detailed in **Part 1** of this report (page 8).

87 people attended 20 thematic and general Focus Group sessions held in Stranraer, Wigtown, Newton Stewart, Kirkcudbright, Castle Douglas, Dumfries, Annan and Langholm. The sessions were bookable in advance using Eventbrite and advertised through the DG Unlimited networks and membership and the Dumfries and Galloway Museums Network, and through other partner and stakeholder networks including the Council's Gov.Delivery mailing lists.

17 people took part in discussions with Cultural Strategy Project Team members at Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway (TSDG) roadshows across the region. Team members attended roadshows in Langholm, Lockerbie, Annan, Sanquhar, Moniaive, Dumfries, Dalbeattie, Creetown, Haugh of Urr and Carsphairn. These sessions were promoted through the TSDG network and via DG Unlimited.

54 people took part in discussion groups, which included the Tackling Poverty Reference Group, the Youth Council, the Year of Young People Legacy Group and the Equalities Partnership.

21 people representing organisations/services working in health and wellbeing, business and economy, youth work, inclusion, community development and education took part in non-cultural sector stakeholder interviews with Project Team members.

The most frequently raised points from the discussions are detailed in **Part 2** of this report (page 17).

High Level Summary of Engagement Programme Findings

Questionnaire Results

Feedback from the 255 participants who completed the questionnaire included the following key points:-

- 86.45% agreed with the draft Strategy vision.
- Of the 100 comments received about the vision, 30% made suggestions on how the wording could be improved.
- Participants were asked to rank the draft themes in order of importance. The ranking was evenly spread, indicating that all six themes were considered equally important.
- Participants were asked what level of impact they thought the cultural sector is currently having on the draft themes. Results indicate that there is room for improvement across all themes.
- Asked for examples of good practice that deliver on any of the themes, participants offered over 70 examples from within the region, indicating that culture is already making a significant contribution
- Asked 'if you were asked to make improvements in the cultural sector to deliver any of the themes, what would they be?', there were 134 comments, of which the most frequently suggested improvements can be summarised as follows:
 - Making the most of the region's cultural assets
 - More funding and investment
 - Better marketing/publicity/signposting; and
 - More cultural activity in/for schools

The results of the survey are available in Part 1 of this report.

Feedback from Focus Groups, Roadshows, Group Discussions and Interviews

Participants in Focus Groups, discussion groups and interviews were asked what barriers were holding back culture in Dumfries and Galloway from having more of a positive impact on the draft themes, and what could be done to overcome these. High level analysis of the feedback to barriers and solutions indicates that the most significant areas for improvement could be presented as follows:-

- **Connectivity** (people and organisations are better connected and collaborate to achieve shared goals)
- **Communication** (information is shared to improve planning and awareness of what's available)
- **Capacity** (resources are increased to respond to community/individual needs)

Key messages from the barriers and solutions mentioned most frequently during the Cultural Strategy Engagement focus groups, roadshows, group discussions and interviews are summarised on the following page. They are listed in order of the number of comments recorded against each theme, starting with the theme that received most comments.

Young People

- Closer working between cultural organisations and schools would give young people more access to arts and heritage learning resources in their local area
- More use of cultural activity in schools would contribute to the wider school curriculum
- Promoting the cultural sector as a viable career option for school leavers would widen the range of pathways available to young people

Economic Impact

- Increased access to funding from public and private sources would help make cultural organisations and businesses more financially sustainable
- Improved marketing and increased cross-sector collaboration would help promote the region's cultural assets and events to visitors
- More opportunities for young people to work in the cultural sector locally would give them reasons to stay in the region to live and work

Sense of Place

- Building on examples of good practice such as the Spring Fling Open Studios trail would help promote arts and heritage activity across the region
- Supporting communities to work together to develop and share best practice would help overcome the challenges of rural isolation
- Improving the marketing and promotion of the region's rich and diverse cultural offer is preferable to creating a regional cultural 'brand'

Health and Wellbeing

- Cultural activities that are more accessible in local communities and care settings would help overcome issues of geographic and rural isolation
- Increased awareness of the health benefits of taking part in cultural activity, closer working between the cultural and health sectors, and better promotion of what's available would increase participation in cultural activities and contribute to wellbeing
- More capacity within the cultural sector would enable arts and heritage providers to work more closely with the health/care sector, for example to deliver social prescribing.

Access and Inclusion

- New technology could help overcome the challenges of travel and transport across the region, e.g. by improving online access, support and information sharing
- More people acting as 'connectors', or 'cultural ambassadors', would encourage more people to get involved in arts and heritage activities
- Improved marketing, communications and joined-up programme planning across the cultural sector would raise awareness of what's available and encourage participation

Developing and Empowering Communities Through Culture

- Increased resources, including community 'connectors' would help develop and sustain cultural activity in communities
- Communities should be empowered to take more of a lead in creating and co-creating cultural activity
- Regular programmes of cultural activity in communities that build on local interests and 'stories' would help overcome perceptions that culture is 'not for me'

Other issues

There were a number of other issues mentioned during group discussions and although they were not raised as frequently as the ones highlighted above, they were clearly of interest and importance to the cultural sector. For example:

- **Leaders and training** – more business support, networking opportunities and training to grow the region's own cultural leaders
- **Impact** – need for more, and better use of evidence and research on the social and economic benefits of the cultural sector
- **Affordability** – while some people felt the cost of accessing cultural activities was prohibitive, others felt that free activities contributed to low income levels for those working in the sector
- **Hospitality industry** – hospitality infrastructure needs to be bolstered if it is to support an increase in cultural tourism e.g. more beds and extended opening hours for shops and places to eat.

Many group discussion participants also told us that the wording of the vision and the themes should be changed to make them easier to understand, and some suggested that some of the themes were similar and could be combined.

The feedback is summarised in Part 2 of this report.

Next Steps

The Cultural Strategy Project Team will use the feedback from the Engagement Process to create a draft Cultural Strategy, which will be tested with the Cultural Strategy Reference Groups prior to the preparation of a final draft. The draft Strategy will be considered by the Council's Communities Committee in summer 2020.

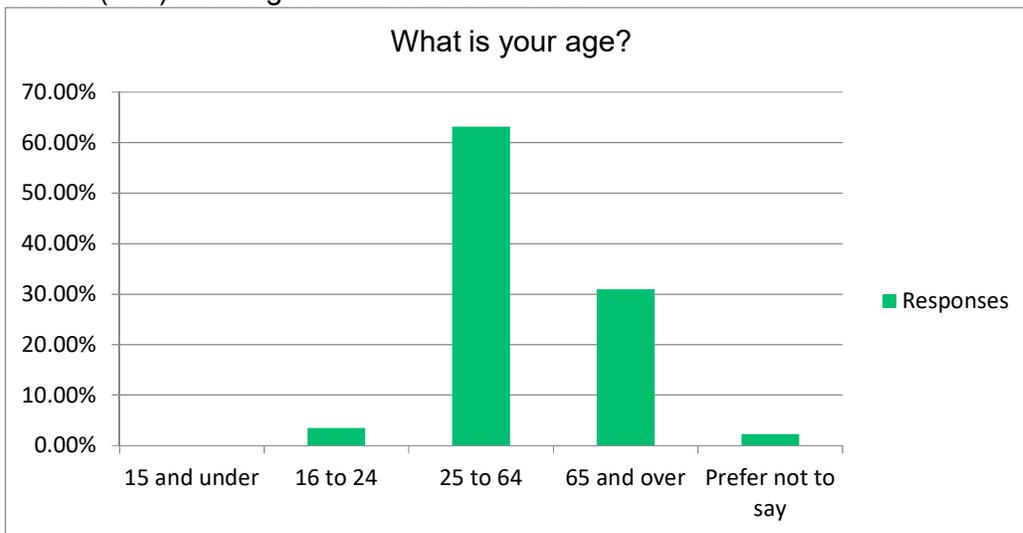
Engagement Report – Part 1

Part 1: Questionnaire Results

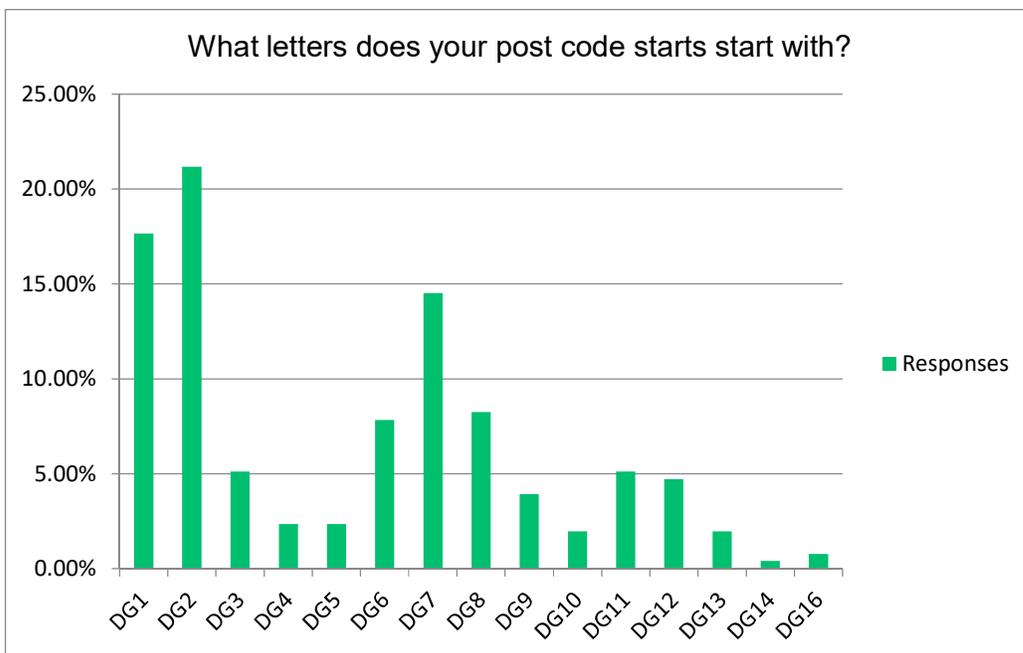
Section 1 of the questionnaire focussed on respondents and how they were involved in the cultural sector. Section 2 focussed on the draft strategy vision and themes and asked for examples of best practice and suggestions for improvements.

Questionnaire Section 1 Results: ABOUT RESPONDENTS

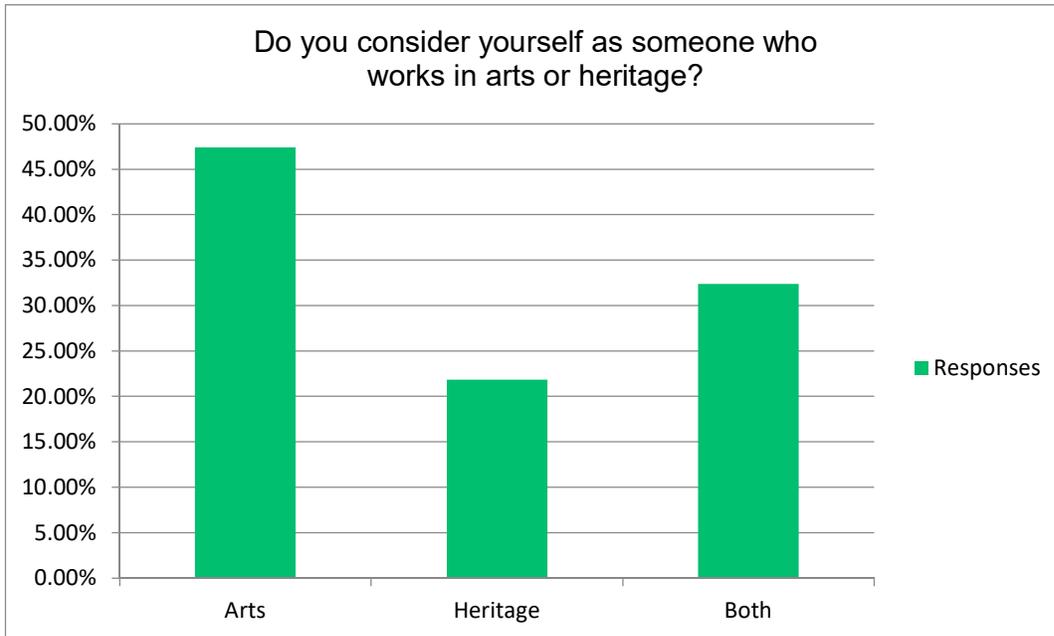
1.1 255 people completed the questionnaire, of which 60.75% were female. The majority, 63.1% (161) were aged between 25 and 64.



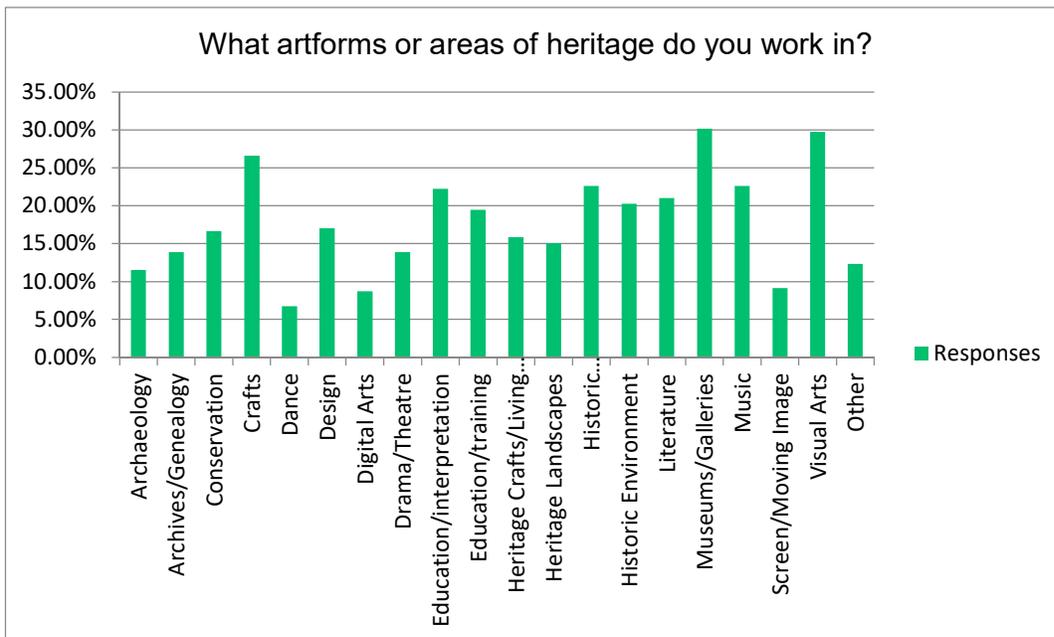
1.2 Most respondents were from the DG1 and DG2 postcodes, but there was representation from across Dumfries and Galloway



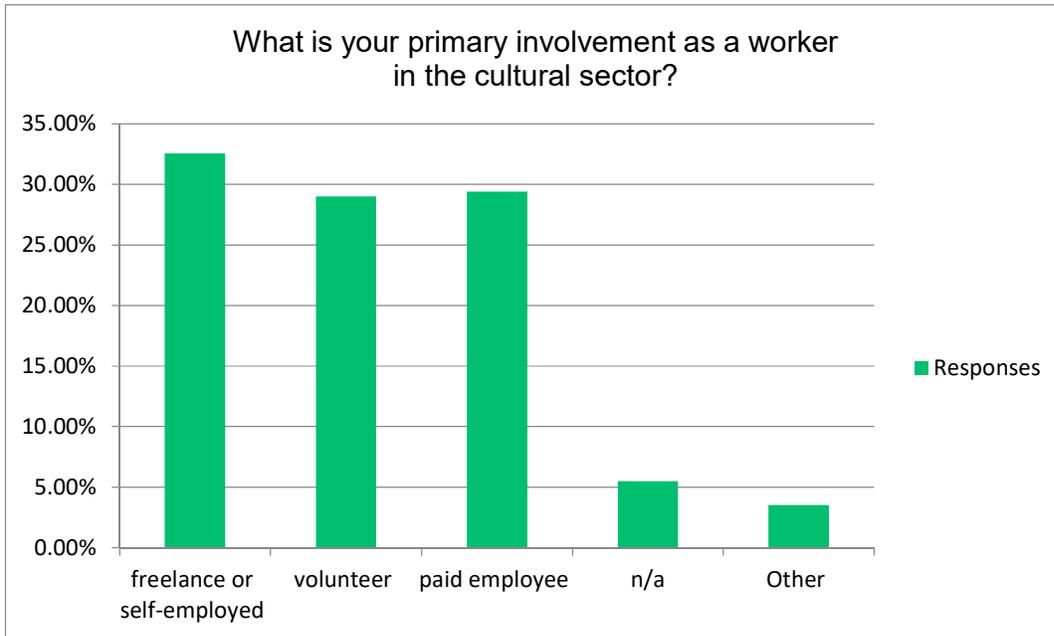
1.3 Most respondents (47.37%) identified themselves as working in the arts, but just under a third are involved in both arts and heritage.



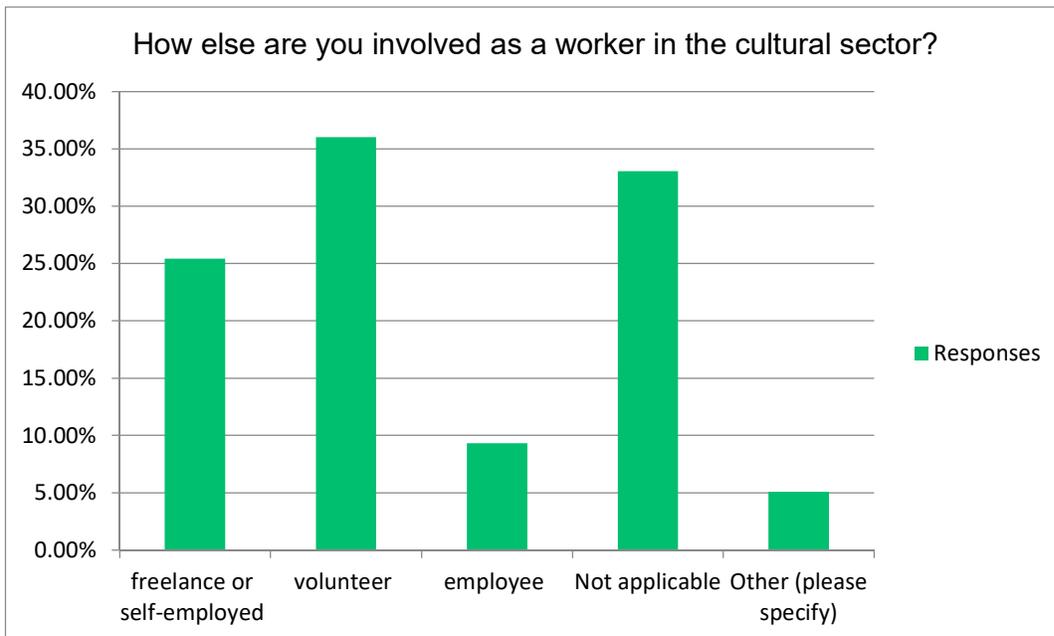
1.4 We asked what artforms or areas of heritage respondents worked in. There was a range of responses, with the highest number of respondents from museums/galleries, followed by visual arts and craft.



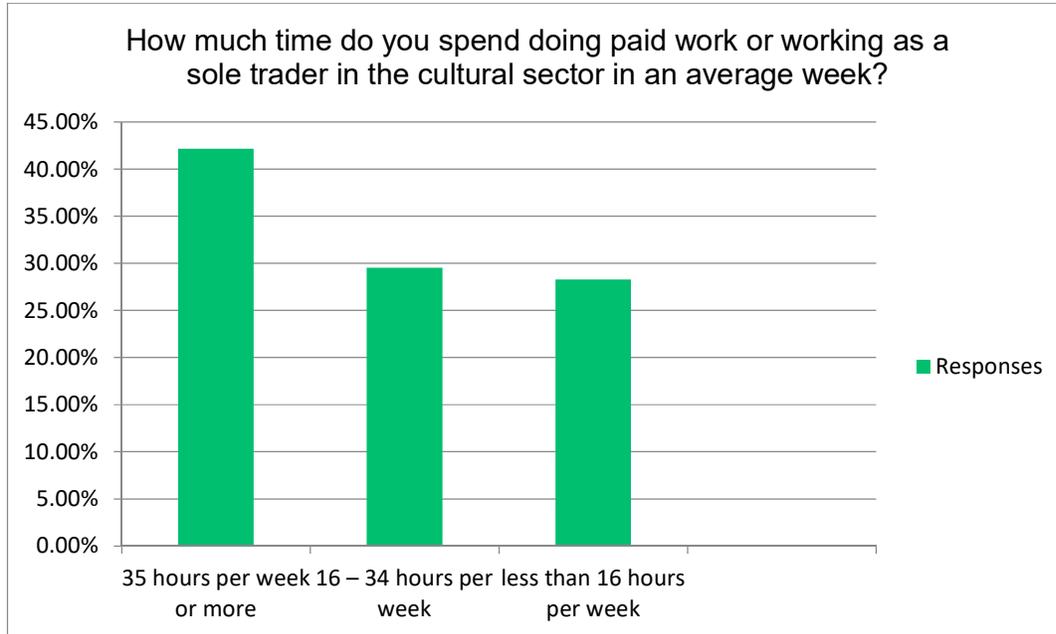
1.5 Asked about their primary involvement as a worker in the cultural sector, there was a relatively even split between freelance/self-employed workers @ 32.55%, paid employees @ 29.41% and volunteers @ 29.02%.



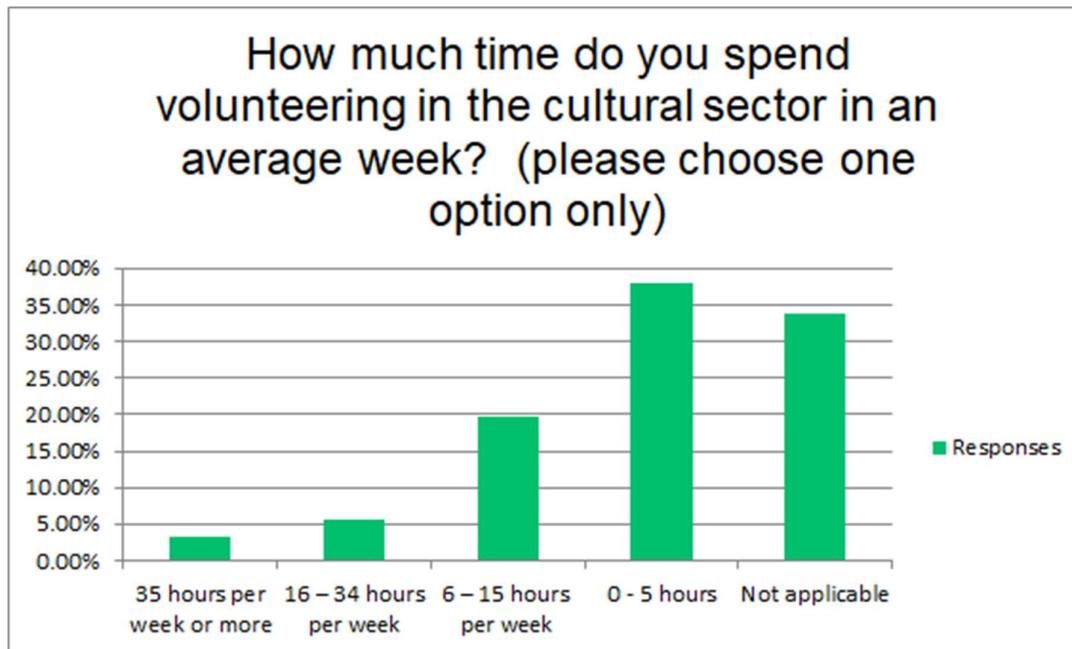
1.6 Many respondents (36.02%) are volunteering alongside their primary involvement as a worker in the cultural sector.



1.7 65.61% of respondents told us they were doing paid work or working as a sole trader in the cultural sector in an average week. Of these 42.17% are working 35 hours a week or more, 29.52% are working between 16 and 34 hours per week and 28.31% are working less than 16 hours a week.



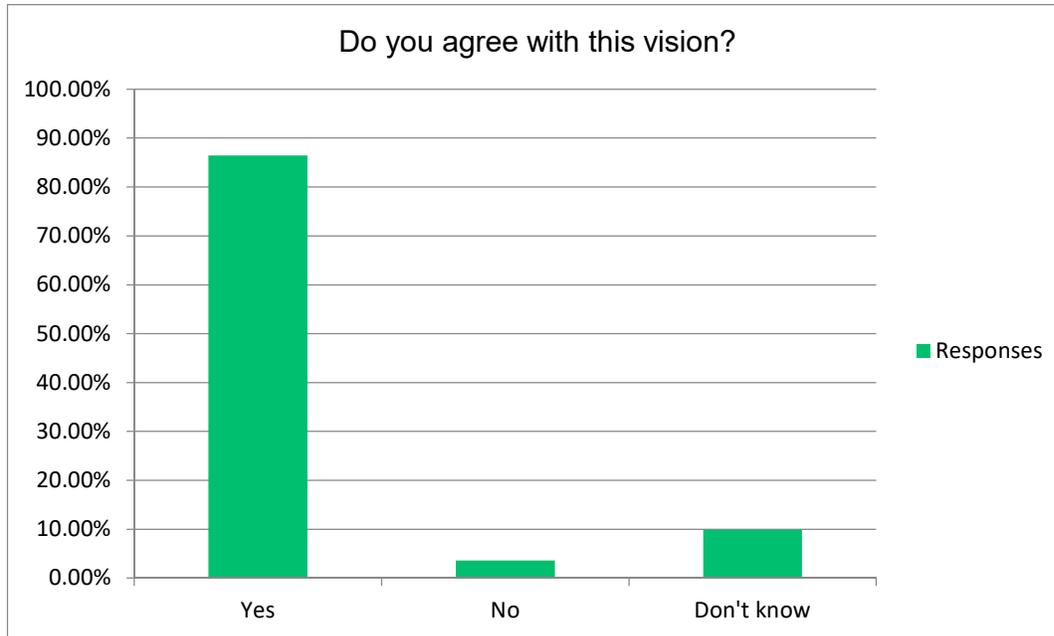
1.8 We asked how much time respondents spent volunteering in the cultural sector in an average week. Most respondents for whom this was applicable volunteer for 5 hours or less per week.



Questionnaire Section 2 Results: ABOUT THE DRAFT STRATEGY

2.1 Draft Vision

The majority (86.45%) of respondents agreed with the draft Strategy vision



2.2 There were 100 comments about the draft vision. The top two most common themes were:

- agreement with the vision in principle (30 comments), and
- suggestions for how the wording of the vision could be improved (29 comments).

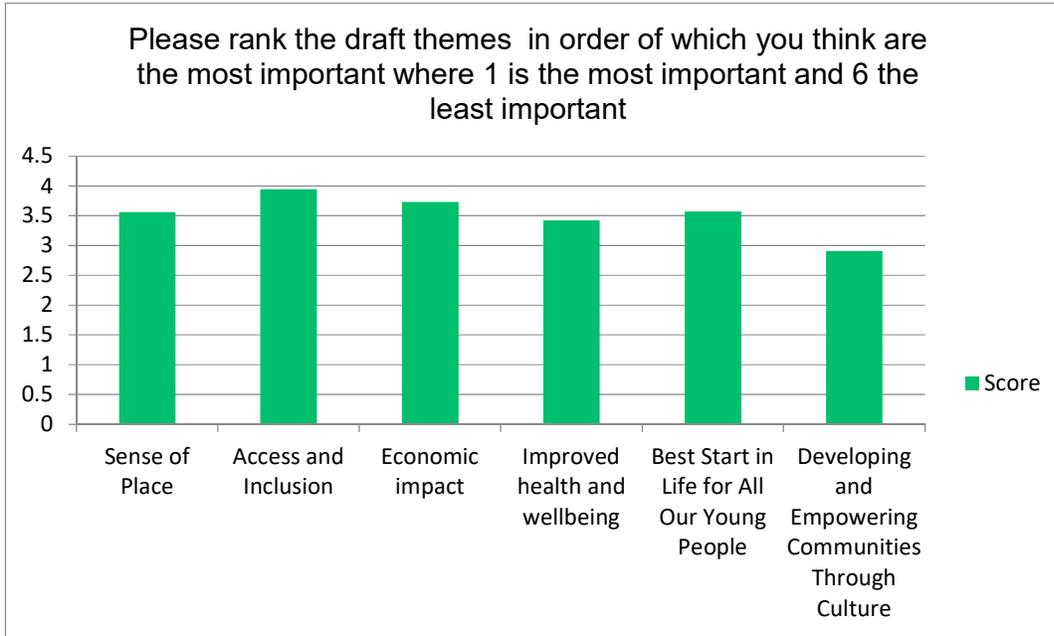
There were some comments about the need for the Council and other decision makers to 'follow through' in order to make the vision a reality (10 comments) and there were also some comments seeking more emphasis on heritage within the vision (9 comments).

There were a few comments disagreeing with the vision (7 comments), a few about the need for more funding (5 comments), a wider geographical spread of cultural resources (4 comments), more recognition of diversity (3 comments), and more cultural content within the curriculum in schools (3 comments).

All comments from the questionnaire have been included in the analysis of responses to the themes from all participants in the cultural strategy engagement

2.3 Draft Themes

We asked respondents to rank the draft strategy themes in order of importance. While the ranking was relatively evenly spread, the theme that was most important to respondents was Access and Inclusion.

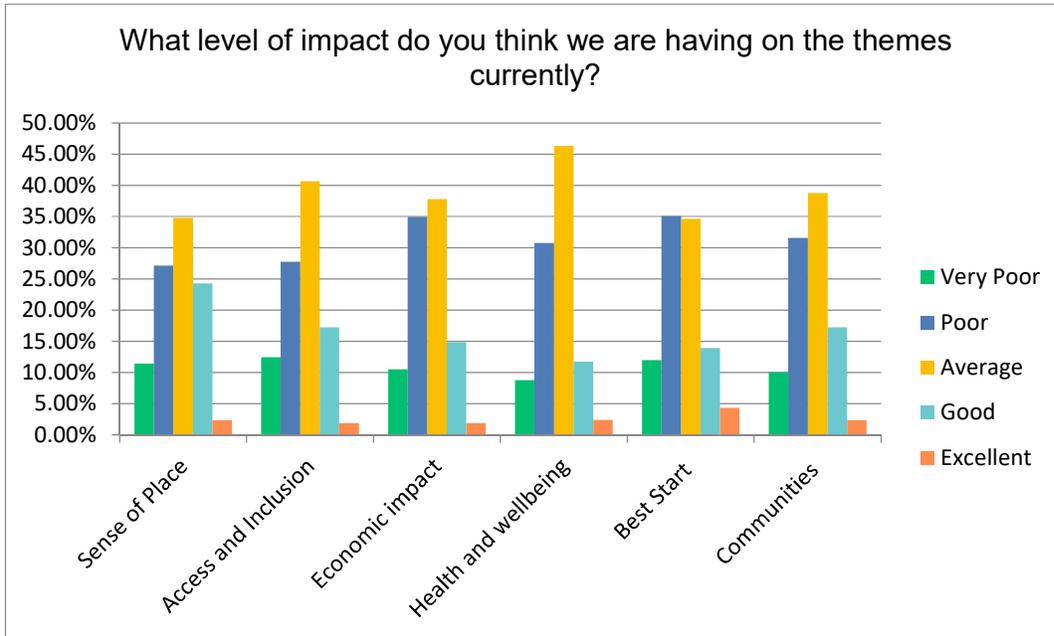


2.4 There were 88 comments about the draft themes.

Most comments were about how respondents had found it difficult to prioritise between themes because they felt they were equally important (24 comments), and/or interlinked (18 comments). Some comments were about the wording of the themes, and how this could be improved (21 comments). A few comments expressed agreement with the themes (8 comments), advocated more cultural education in schools (5 comments), and more emphasis on diversity (3 comments).

All comments from the questionnaire have been included in the analysis of responses to the themes from all participants in the cultural strategy engagement

2.5 Respondents were asked to think about cultural activity across the region and rank the level of impact they thought the cultural sector is currently having on the themes. 210 people answered the question. Results indicate that there is room for improvement across all themes, and in Economic Impact and Best Start in Life in particular.



2.6 Examples of Good Practice

Respondents were asked to share examples of good practice that deliver on any of the draft themes. Examples could be local, national or international. There were 114 responses.

76 best practice examples from Dumfries and Galloway were mentioned and 24 from outside the region. Of the local examples, those referred to most often were Spring Fling (17 mentions); The Stove Network (11 mentions), Wigtown Book Festival (9 mentions) and Kirkcudbright Galleries (9 mentions). Gracefield Arts Centre and the Theatre Royal Dumfries were each mentioned five times.

All comments from the questionnaire have been included in the analysis of responses to the themes from all participants in the cultural strategy engagement

2.7 Suggested Improvements

Respondents were asked 'if you were asked to make improvements in the cultural sector to deliver any of the themes, what would they be?'. There were 134 responses.

Most comments were about the following:

- Making the most of the region's cultural assets (25 comments);
- More funding and investment (24 comments);
- Better marketing/publicity/signposting (24 comments); and
- More cultural activity in/for schools (19 comments).

Some comments were about:

- More practical advice and support (12 comments)
- Improved communication and coordination (11 comments)
- Involving young people (10 comments)
- Developing the cultural workforce (10 comments)

All comments from the questionnaire have been included in the analysis of responses to the themes from all participants in the cultural strategy engagement

2.8 Other Comments

Respondents were asked for any other comments that we should be aware of as we develop the cultural strategy. There were 97 responses.

Most comments were about the following:

- Caring and making the most of our arts and heritage assets (16 comments)
- Funding and financial sustainability (15 comments)
- Making culture more inclusive (8 comments)

Some comments were about the following

- Supporting community involvement in culture (7 comments)
- Marketing and promotion (7 comments)
- Transport (6 comments)
- Geographic inequality (6 comments)

In addition, there was one comment about environmental issues relating to the cultural sector.

Engagement Report – Part 2

Part 2: Focus Groups, Roadshows, Group Discussions and Interviews

Summary of Comments Recorded

Participants were asked to consider a range of questions depending on whether they were taking part in the online questionnaire, focus groups, Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway roadshows, discussion groups or stakeholder interviews (see Appendix 2).

Questions common to all these discussions can be paraphrased as ‘What is holding culture back from doing more in relation to the themes’ (barriers) and ‘What could be done to overcome those barriers?’ (solutions) and discussions in the Focus Groups considered these two questions in relation to each of the six draft strategy themes, i.e. in relation to Sense of Place, Access and Inclusion, Economic Impact, Young People, Health and Wellbeing and Developing and Empowering Communities.

Discussion groups, Third Sector Roadshows and interview participants were asked for their views on the draft strategy vision and themes, what they thought works and doesn’t work about the current cultural offer in Dumfries and Galloway, and what would make things better.

The Project Team considered all comments recorded through the engagement, including feedback from the reference groups, and carried out an analysis to identify the most frequently raised points in relation to the vision, the themes in general, and each draft strategy theme. The following sections summarise those findings.

Comments on the Draft Strategy Vision

Comments on the vision from the group discussions and interviews were considered alongside the questionnaire feedback on the draft strategy vision (see 2.1 and 2.2 above) in order to identify key common messages. In summary, while there were many comments agreeing with the vision and endorsing the need to have a bold and ambitious vision statement, most comments recorded were about the language and meaning of the words used in the draft statement and how these should be improved to make the statement more easily understood and accessible to everyone. There were also a few comments about the word ‘culture’ itself and the need for the strategy to be clear about how this was defined for the purposes of the Strategy. For example:

- *‘Excellent if it could be realised’*
- *‘I like the vision, but you have to read it a few times for it to make sense’*
- *‘Too much “Council Wording” say what you mean – make it easy to understand’.*
- *‘Mystified as to what cultural assets means’*
- *‘What’s missing is that in no place are you saying what is meant by culture...it’s potentially an enormous catch all of so many areas that probably aren’t even connected with each other at the moment, or aware that each other exists’*

Comments on the Draft Strategy Themes

Overall the comments recorded through the discussions and the questionnaire demonstrated broad agreement that the themes were correct, and the ones required to drive forward the cultural sector. Some consultees believed that some of the themes could be combined, reducing the total number of themes without losing the strategy's reach and remit. This was compounded by a recognition that the themes are inter-linked. Many people commented that the wording and phrasing of the themes could be made simpler, easier to read, and rewritten to sound less like 'Council' themes. For example:

- *'They're great themes'*
- *'Good scope of themes for people to hang their hat on, they should be able to identify at least one but probably more ...on which they can align their work to'*
- *'Themes one and six could be integrated, there is no need for six themes'*
- *'The draft themes are similar to the Council's Community Themes already in place'*
- *'Sadly the usual bureaucratic 'speak' - keep it simple for the majority of folk'*

Cultural Strategy Themes - Barriers and Solutions

Comments recorded in relation to the six draft strategy themes reflected wide ranging discussions in each engagement session, which covered a wide range of topics. Many comments recorded were applicable to more than one theme and this suggests that while all six themes generated discussion individually, they are also closely inter-linked.

The table on the next page summarises the barriers and solutions mentioned most frequently during the Cultural Strategy Engagement focus groups, roadshows, group discussions and interviews. They are listed in order of the number of comments recorded against each theme, starting with the theme that received most comments.

Strategy Themes – Most Frequently Mentioned Barriers and Solutions

Best Start in Life for All Our Young People	
Barriers	Solutions
Cultural organisations can find it difficult to work with schools	Support and resource closer working between cultural organisations and schools
Culture is perceived as having a low priority within the school curriculum compared to other subjects	Give cultural activity more prominence in the school curriculum
Working in the cultural sector isn't promoted enough in schools as a viable career path	Promote and support the cultural sector as a viable career option for school leavers
Economic Impact	
Barriers	Solutions
Competition for funding/financial resources threatens the viability of cultural organisations and businesses	Provide a mix of funding from public and private sources and develop the cultural sector's fundraising skills
Lack of awareness of what's on offer among residents and visitors to the region	Improve marketing and increase cross-sector collaborations in the promotion of cultural assets and events
Low income levels for those working in the cultural sector	Create more opportunities for young people to work in the cultural sector
Sense of Place	
Barriers	Solutions
Geographic/rural isolation and inequalities of cultural provision across the region	Build on examples of best practice such as Spring Fling
Distinct identities across the region work against a regional cultural 'brand'	Support communities to work together
	Better quality marketing and promotion of what's on offer
Improved Health and Wellbeing	
Barriers	Solutions
Lack of accessible cultural provision and cost of participation, including travel	Digital streaming of live events and more cultural activities in local communities and care settings
Lack of awareness of culture and health activities and poor 'connectivity' between groups and sectors	Better coordination and raised awareness of what's available and the benefits of taking part
Lack of capacity to do more in the area of culture and health	Build the capacity of the cultural sector to work with health/care providers to deliver on this theme, for example social prescribing initiatives
Access and Inclusion	
Barriers	Solutions
Poor transport links and cost of travel	Invest in/use new technology to improve online access, support and information sharing
Lack of opportunities to engage with culture in schools	Invest in staffing around culture and access, i.e. 'cultural ambassadors'

Lack of good quality marketing allied with access programmes	Increased marketing, improved communications and joined-up programme planning
Developing and Empowering Communities Through Culture	
Barriers	Solutions
Lack of resources including people to act as 'connectors', funding and access to affordable venues	Increased resources to support cultural activity and community 'connectors'
Difficult relationships within communities can hold back cultural activity	Empower communities to take more of a lead in creating and co-creating cultural activity
Perceptions that culture is 'not for me'	Make sure programmes of cultural activity in communities build on local interests and 'stories' and are available on more than a 'one-off' basis

The following sections provide a summary of the responses recorded most frequently in relation to each draft Strategy theme. We have included some representative quotes from the comments recorded in order to illustrate the points made.

Draft theme: Best Start in Life for All Our Young People

We want culture to contribute positively to learning, skills and personal development

Barriers

Most comments recorded on barriers under this theme related to culture and schools and there were three main issues raised:

1. Cultural organisations can find it difficult to work with schools

Many comments were about cultural organisations finding it difficult to engage with schools. Reasons for this include a lack of in-house educational resources/expertise, difficulties in communicating an 'offer' to teachers, competition from learning experiences outside the region, and challenges facing schools such as transport, timetabling and health and safety. For example:

- *'We don't have the resources to deliver the whole 'medieval' or Roman experience...Schools are going to Tullie House for experiences we can't provide'*
- *'Schools want to know the links with the curriculum, and they want structured activities. It's very difficult to do this with short-term exhibitions'*
- *'We can't take our building to schools, so we rely on their willingness to travel and access to transport'*

2. Culture is perceived as having a low priority within the school curriculum compared to other subjects

Many comments were about cultural education within schools being given a lower priority than other subject areas, for example:

- *'Art is seen as extra-curricular and this needs to change'*
- *'It's down to luck whether there is an enthusiastic teacher willing to deliver more'*
- *'Some young people are being left out because cultural opportunities are not being provided in schools'*

3. Working in the cultural sector isn't promoted enough in schools as a viable career path

Many respondents commented that not enough is being done in schools to promote culture-related career paths for young people and more support is needed for school leavers to develop their careers within the region, for example:

- *'Career paths in the cultural sector are not fully understood and teachers are not equipped to advise young people on this area'*
- *'There's a lack of an economic driver - we have the lowest uptake ever for children choosing art in school because they are not shown how it could be a career path'*
- *'There's a massive issue for our sector in terms of supporting young people in their ambitions within culture. There are issues around apprenticeships, internships, the ability to get paid work. We need to have a continuity, a pathway into and through the cultural sector'*

Solutions

Most comments recorded under the theme of Young People were about solutions rather than barriers. The three most popular topics were as follows:

1. Give cultural activity more prominence in the school curriculum

Recommendations included a change of emphasis within the curriculum, training and awareness raising for teachers, and using artists and other cultural professionals in schools. For example:

- *'I would start with a commitment to the provision of cultural programmes throughout schools, to ensure that all the children of D&G were exposed to cultural themes in the widest possible sense – which would stay with them for life'*
- *'Build stronger artistic curriculums for school, encouraging young people to understand arts and culture in the context of sustainable futures'*
- *'Have regular cultural workshops at all primary and secondary schools, whether it be trips to museums or artists and crafters visiting schools'*

2. Promote and support the cultural sector as a viable career option for school leavers

Recommendations included creating opportunities for apprenticeships, placements, and mentoring for young people in the cultural sector; accredited out-of-school learning schemes; and raising awareness in general of culture as a potential career path. For example:

- *'Work with schools and SDS [Skills Development Scotland] to promote pathways into Creative Industries and Heritage so our young people choose these paths and see opportunities for them to live and work here'. '*
- *'Young people need to feel 'we can do this'. Placements with innovative groups and organisations in D&G would instil an idea of what is possible and what culture 'is'.*
- *Accredited learning opportunities like the Youth Awards schemes help overcome 'I want to do that, but where's it heading?'*

3. Support and resource closer working between cultural organisations and schools

Most recommendations on this topic were about organisations and schools working together to jointly plan activities; increasing capacity/staffing to reach out to schools, and the need to access decision makers within schools. For example:

- *'Plan with schools as a project is developed and make opportunities 'worth it' for schools'*
- *'You need education specialists to link a project to the curriculum'*
- *'We need to make clear to gatekeepers the importance of culture to our young people'*

Other Issues Raised - Young People

Some other barriers mentioned less frequently were difficulties associated with geographical isolation/access to transport within the region, and perceptions that might stop young people getting involved in cultural activity. There were a few comments about the red tape associated with working with young people and how some cultural organisations need more capacity to take on young people as volunteers.

In terms of solutions there were a few recommendations about taking a strategic approach to advocacy in schools using new technology to overcome geographical barriers; and involving young people in planning and programming events.

There were also some comments about the wording of the theme and how this could be improved to make it more easily understood.

Draft theme: Economic Impact

We want the cultural sector and its associated industries to thrive, and we want the region's cultural offer to attract more people to live and work here

Barriers

The most frequently mentioned barriers in relation to this theme were as follows:

1. Competition for funding/financial resources threatens the viability of cultural organisations and businesses

There was a great deal of discussion around funding for the arts and heritage and almost universal concern about reductions in funding from funders including Dumfries and Galloway Council. For example:

- *'Funders won't fund staff (core costs) but you need these to keep events running'*
- *'When reducing public sector funding culture is an easy cut, for example John Paul Jones and Wanlockhead museums'*
- *'Uncertainty over future economic climate and funding opportunities post EU'*

2. Lack of awareness of what's on offer among residents and visitors to the region

Marketing emerged as an area that many consultees had a lot to talk about particularly an improved online presence, firstly to share the region's cultural offer to people who live in Dumfries and Galloway and secondly, to help increase the number of people visiting the region to experience our cultural assets. For example:

- *'Regional presence – we need a bigger online presence'*
- *'There is a lack of awareness'*
- *'More investment in people to do marketing...market how nice the region is to come and work in'*

3. Low income levels for those working in the cultural sector

There was a lot of discussion amongst consultees about the perception that sole traders and those working in the cultural sector are not recognised in the same way as workers from other sectors. Some felt that it was not an equal playing field and a number of cases were cited about the expectation of artists working for little or no financial reward, comparatively low levels of income and an over reliance on volunteers. Concerns were also raised about the perceived lack of opportunity for young people to get involved in the cultural sector as a possible career option and this is leading to young people who want to work in the sector moving away from the region to gain work experience, further training and/or to take up job opportunities. For example:

- *'Some may be put off from moving to the region because of lower wages or less job progression'*
- *'The sector is based on volunteers and not people earning a living'*
- *'Sole traders – contribute but are not recognised'*

Solutions

The most frequently mentioned solutions in relation to the Economic Impact theme were as follows:

1. Provide a mix of funding from public and private sources and develop the cultural sector's fundraising skills

Many consultees commented that the cultural sector requires a mix of funding from the public purse as well as from private investment. There was a shared view and acknowledgment that for many parts of the sector there would always be a partial reliance on public funding in order to make cultural provision and its benefits available to the public. There was also an understanding that some parts of the sector operate commercially without a reliance on the public purse. A number of consultees felt that workshops to help the sector develop fundraising skills would be very beneficial. For example:

- *Three to five-year funding to give people time to plan'*
- *'Workshops to help write funding applications would be really great, or a resource for someone to check over an application before it's submitted would be great'*
- *'We need people with expertise in sponsorship raising and marketing, also legacies and giving'*

2. Improve marketing and increase cross-sector collaborations in the promotion of cultural assets and events

Some consultees felt that the sector is already good at cultural tourism and many more felt that this was something that could be further developed and exploited particularly through the use of cross marketing and collaborating with other sectors. A number of consultees felt that there's a need for a central listing platform magazine of cultural events and assets. It was also felt that improved marketing, including an improved online presence would also make it more viable for young talent to stay in the region and attract others to move here. For example:

- *'There is also the impact on the economy via tourism – we should make more of this'*
- *'Central push out to the world about what's on offer – need a central listing platform/magazine'*
- *'Cross/joint marketing of events/festivals and with other sectors 'Every sector working together to thrive'.*
- *'Good marketing is essential for all this, from events to the regional offer in general, if we are to attract incomers to work here'*

3. Create more opportunities for young people to work in the cultural sector

More opportunities for paid work in the cultural sector would encourage people to stay in the region to live and work. For example:

- *'We need jobs of all types in the region to stop our young people leaving the region'*
- *'Investment is important to encourage economic growth and returns. The state will invest heavily through subsidies etc for establishing new industries in an area...but they would never think of doing this for culture. It feels like there's an expectation that cultural stuff just happens and there will always be an army of volunteers to help make it happen'*

Other issues raised - Economic Impact

Other barriers less frequently mentioned related to poor infrastructure and public transport; a lack of training opportunities and suitably qualified and experienced professionals leading to a lack of locally based cultural sector leaders and specialist contractors, and a lack of tourism infrastructure such as 'beds' and the Monday/evening closing of shops and restaurants.

A few people had comments about the wording of the theme and others were optimistic about the interim South of Scotland Economic Partnership and their understanding of the importance of the cultural sector. There were also a few comments about the need for empirical data and research to support claims about the cultural sector's contribution to the economy, and the urgent need for investment in broadband access.

Opportunities for sharing resources and equipment were also raised, as was the potential for the transfer of premises through the Community Empowerment Act that could become creative spaces for making and sharing.

There were also a few comments about the challenges faced by sole traders and small cultural organisations in terms of developing their practice/businesses and more could be done to make business support more visible and accessible.

Draft theme: Sense of Place

We want culture to create a sense of place for each community in Dumfries and Galloway and to contribute to how Dumfries and Galloway as a region or 'brand' is seen from outside the region

Barriers

This theme was subject to multiple interpretations and generated a wide range of comments. The notion behind the theme and its wording were interrogated by many respondents, some of whom suggested it could be integrated with the Empowering Communities theme. The most frequently mentioned barriers among the comments recorded were as follows:

1. Geographic/rural isolation and inequalities of cultural provision across the region

The most commented upon barrier to realising this theme was the physical geography of our region and how this generates both actual and perceived rural isolation, which is exacerbated by very poor transport links. Closely related to these observations was the frequently made comment that communities have separate identities and do not connect together regarding cultural provision. Participants in focus groups frequently mentioned their geography, with some comments from groups in the East and West of the region stating that they were missing out on resources compared to Dumfries, and that their perception was that they were in a part of the region that is 'overlooked'. For example:

- *'Even internally Dumfries and Galloway splits as East versus West'*
- *'Transport is always an issue'*
- *'Populations are sparse – it can be hard to get the audiences we need'*

2. Distinct identities across the region work against a regional cultural 'brand'

Many comments suggested that developing a sense of place and identity through culture in Dumfries and Galloway should not lead to a new 'brand' for the region. Many felt that the notion of brand was closely allied with tourism and economic development and did not fit well with the wide range of community identities and cultural assets across the region. For example:

- *'I don't like the term 'brand' – sounds like a package and D&G is messier than that'*
- *'Over half of our community live in villages of less than 500 people. This means that these places build their own sense of identity and it's about how culture can support that'*
- *'What makes the region distinctive is its individual senses of place'*

Solutions

The most frequently mentioned solutions in relation to the Sense of Place theme were as follows:

1. Build on examples of best practice such as Spring Fling to support and promote the region's cultural assets

Most frequently mentioned solutions were about making the most of the cultural distinctiveness of communities across Dumfries and Galloway and the cultural assets that the region has to offer, including the region's portfolio of events. There were also many suggestions in relation to the development and promotion of specific towns and locations. For example:

- *'Things like Spring Fling make a name for the region'*
- *'Growing our own festivals and events from within the region e.g. the new Doonhame festival'*
- *'We need to really understand what we have here [and] how to share, build and support that'*
- *'Stranraer needs a 'food town' or 'artists' town''*

2. Better quality marketing and promotion of what's on offer

There were also many comments about marketing in a general non-specified sense as a solution to increasing the scope and quality and awareness of cultural provision in our region. For example:

- *'We need to pull together under one banner and advertise everything in one place so that people can realise just how much is here'*
- *'We should seek opportunities to work together to highlight and market the region as a whole'*
- *'Make more of opportunities to signpost visitors between attractions'*

3. Support communities to work together

The next most frequently mentioned topic was more networking, partnership working, and skills and information sharing within the sector in Dumfries and Galloway. There were suggestions about online training approaches to promote cultural development, and recommendations for the design and dissemination of 'cultural toolkits'. For example:

- *'Build more interlocking networks across sectors'*
- *'Connect groups across the region'*
- *'Support cultural toolkits to animate cultural activity and help train people on social media'*

Other issues raised - Sense of Place

Other barriers less frequently mentioned were the lack of a distinctive 'Dumfries and Galloway' cultural heritage compared to other parts of Scotland, which may make it more difficult to develop and promote; lack of funding and capacity in the cultural sector, and the cost of taking part in cultural activity given our low wage economy.

Other solutions less frequently mentioned included the importance of making available new spaces for cultural activity. There were also a few comments about the importance of reporting economic and social impacts to build the case for funding for cultural provision and the Strategy as a whole, and a few comments about the importance of creating opportunities for young people and one recommendation about the need for older people needing 'more gentle pursuits'.

Draft theme: Improved Health and Wellbeing

We want people engaging with culture to experience benefits ranging from enjoyment to significant health improvement

Barriers

The most frequently mentioned barriers were as follows:

1. Lack of accessible cultural provision and cost of participation, including travel

Many people had something to say about access to cultural activities from the perspective of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Concerns were raised about the disparity and cost of provision, the availability and cost of access equipment, for example hearing loops. There was also some commentary on when projects reach the end of their funding and how this can feel abrupt despite project organiser's efforts in managing an exit strategy for participants. For example:

- *'Disproportionate – every area pays the same tax but does not always receive the same resources'*
- *'No good having things on if you can't physically get to them'*
- *'Cost of taking part in things'*

2. Lack of awareness of culture and health activities and poor 'connectivity' between groups and sectors

There was some commentary on the perceived lack of awareness by those whose health and wellbeing would most benefit about current cultural activities. Many people thought that more could be done to let people know about what was available and on offer to the public.

Some consultees referenced the perception of poor digital infrastructure in some parts of the region such as Wi-Fi and radio reception, which they felt stymied people's ability to find out about cultural activities taking place in their area. For example:

- *'How we market events – should be for everyone'*
- *'Lack of information'*
- *'Lack of connection with groups providing activities'*

3. Lack of capacity to do more in the area of culture and health

A common concern raised was the lack of capacity within cultural organisations which was stopping them doing more in the area of culture and health. There was some discussion around the lack of capacity within other sectors too, resulting in them not taking advantage of an offer of cultural activities even when there was no cost. For example:

- *'Lack of capacity in cultural sector to meet potential demands, including support for volunteers'*
- *'Pressure of work and time [for those working in] primary care'*
- *'Care home staff - [we need an] understanding of day to day staff - [cultural activity is] side lined as there is not enough time'*

Solutions

The most frequently mentioned solutions in relation to the Health and Wellbeing theme were as follows:

1. More cultural activities in local communities and care settings, including digital streaming of live events

Streaming of live events and performances often came up as a very positive alternative way for assisting people to engage in cultural activities as did the delivery of more cultural activities in local communities and care homes. It was also acknowledged that to facilitate proper access for the most vulnerable in our communities there is at times a need for intensive one-to-one attention. In addition, buddy schemes were considered a helpful way to assist people who may feel socially isolated to re-engage with activities in their communities. For example:

- *'Streaming things in local areas – this is already happening, but we could be streaming local productions'*
- *'Make it easier for people to have activity programmes at village halls'*
- *'We should look at establishing cooperative car share schemes in our communities'*
- *'Older people engagement – take activities into care homes'*

2. Better coordination and raised awareness of what's available and the benefits of taking part

Many people felt more needed to be done to make the case in terms of the benefits of arts and heritage activities on health and wellbeing and also in relation to promotion and awareness raising of opportunities available such as through an online database. It was felt that more needed to be done in terms of improving the coordination making it easier for people to find out about what's going on including suggestions of an online database, better coordination and connections with and between groups. For example:

- *'Co-ordination – [we need a] database – [what's available should be] publicised and known about'*
- *'Connections to other groups'*
- *'Make Health and Wellbeing information more available'*

3. Build the capacity of the cultural sector to work with health/care providers

The role of volunteers was also a topic of active discussion. Many people acknowledged the vital role they play in planning and delivering cultural activities across Dumfries and Galloway. Whilst some felt there was an over reliance on volunteers it was also recognised that the cultural sector's capacity could be increased with additional resources, skills and training so they could support them better. For example:

- *'The aging population of D&G can become volunteers – sometimes it's more of a challenge to get younger people'.*
- *'Volunteers are a key opportunity in this but not the solution – they need to be assisted & supported to be able to enjoy what they are doing'*
- *'The cultural sector needs resources, skills and capacity if it is to deliver on this theme across the whole region'*

Other Issues Raised - Health and Wellbeing

Other frequently mentioned barriers included the need to challenge perceptions that arts and heritage are just a 'nice fluffy extra', the important role that 'arts on prescription' does and could play further through the social prescribing model, and the role training could play in addressing the needs of cultural, health and social care sectors.

Some less frequently mentioned things mentioned included the following:

Dumfries and Galloway's ageing demographic and the impact this growth will have on the healthcare system and the potential role that arts and heritage initiatives could play in alleviating the pressure on resources.

More could be done to link-up with other health initiatives as a way to target the people whose health and wellbeing would most benefit. Walking initiatives and walking groups was an example that was raised a number of times with consultees believing that linking walks to Heritage sites could be easily achieved.

The important role that artists can play in creating well-designed therapeutic spaces in new healthcare buildings, to help reduce stress and anxiety and contribute to the healthcare pathway.

Draft theme: Access and Inclusion

We want everyone to feel able to enjoy and create cultural activity

Barriers

The most frequently mentioned barriers were as follows:

1. Poor transport links and cost of travel

There were many comments about how access and inclusion is hampered by the rural nature of our region and the cost associated with travelling around it. The large widespread rural geographical nature of Dumfries and Galloway and the levels of public transport available were frequently cited as barriers to individuals accessing culture both as participants and consumers. The problems are exacerbated for people with support needs. Travel and transport were also seen as a barrier to closer working between cultural organisations and communities, and to collaborative approaches to cultural production and audience development. For example:

- *'Money! to get there - to participate'*
- *'Dumfries and Galloway has poor transport which make traveling for those with additional support needs extremely difficult'*
- *'travelling around the region and taking projects to communities is a huge challenge'*
- *'[Travel] is always a large part of budgets for any project'*

2. Lack of opportunities to engage with culture in schools

Many comments identified the negative effects of austerity on school budgets, and how this is impacting on the curriculum as it relates to culture. There were suggestions that we are in danger of having a generation of young people who do not have access to music tuition, live theatre and other aspects of culture if the case is not made for young people to experience culture as part of their holistic education. There were also comments about access to music and other cultural provision in schools. For example:

- *'Culture not being taught enough in schools creates a barrier for our young people to get involved'*
- *'No provision to train practitioners to then teach our young people'*
- *'Music service under strain – children not coming forward to be trained'*
- *'For music not having an instrument is a barrier – nothing to learn/practice with'*

3. Lack of good quality marketing allied with access programmes

Many comments identified a lack of marketing, promotion and awareness as a barrier to more people participating in cultural activity. Comments on this issue were often co-joined with comments about a need for more 'people' resources such as cultural ambassadors and more proactive work on outreach programmes from venues and festivals. For example:

- *'Attracting people to do it (take part in culture)'*
- *'Marketing – letting people know what is going on'*
- *'We can't access anything if we don't know it exists'*
- *'Lack of outreach capacity to take heritage activity to schools and communities'*

Solutions

The most frequently mentioned solutions in relation to the Access and Inclusion theme were as follows:

1. Invest in/use new technology to improve online access, support and information sharing

Many suggestions linked to the issue of travel/transport barriers and need for better promotion centred around the development of online resources and maximising technology. Suggestions included developing online approaches to cultural provision, training such as online toolkits, and digital news/information provision. For example:

- *'Investment in new technology is vital'*
- *'Make short films about what is going on for YouTube and other digital platforms – this would be a great way to engage with young people'*
- *'Can young people be encouraged to form news groups that can make news using digital technologies, that could be screened at local cinemas?'*
- *'could an arts trust have a look at the strategy and deliver videos and multi-media training to promote and deliver it?'*

2. Invest in staffing around culture and access, i.e. 'cultural ambassadors'

Frequently raised suggestions included proposals for more capacity in cultural organisations to undertake outreach activities, and the recruitment of people to act as 'cultural ambassadors' or 'buddies' to encourage more people to get involved in cultural activities. There were several mentions of the Big Burns Supper festival and Wigtown Book Festival as best practice examples of how to make culture accessible across different communities and social 'classes' There were also references to the role of care staff/carers in helping vulnerable people to access culture.

- *'A personal connection can be a very important way to get people involved'*
- *We need more staffing around culture and access, and to seek to establish more Cultural Ambassadors*
- *'[We need] someone whose sole job is an interface for culture – Culture Officer – might not need to be the Council – unlock what is already there'*
- *'there is a need for intermediaries such as carers or cultural connectors'*
- *We aren't targeting people in greatest need – we need more resources to do that, especially staff'*

3. Increased marketing, improved communications and joined-up programme planning

As mentioned in point 3 above under, many comments focussed on how marketing, communication and collaboration could be improved to raise awareness of what's available and encourage people to take part. For example:

- *'We need more signposting to enable people to know where and how to get information'*
- *'Communication – through every avenue so that everyone can access the information'*
- *'It would be great to have some sort of platform for all these groups to be able to access and connect with each other so that we can get a sense of what's going on'*

Other Issues Raised - Access and Inclusion

Other less frequently mentioned barriers included the cost of attending cultural venues, festivals and events, both in terms of the money/time spent on transport and ticket prices. Several consultees wondered if there could be community transport solutions to the need to link transport and cultural venues and events more effectively.

There were also some comments about the need to change perceptions that 'culture is not for me', that taking part requires specialist knowledge and experience, and that groups can be seen as 'cliquey'.

There were a few comments about older people missing out on cultural opportunities due to access issues, and about funding streams prioritising young people over other age groups.

There was also a desire expressed for more cultural venues that can act as open, affordable and welcoming spaces for both artists and the public.

There were also a few suggestions about how the wording of the theme could be improved to make it more inclusive and easier to understand.

Draft theme: Developing and Empowering Communities Through Culture

We want to help people strengthen their communities by working together to create and participate in cultural activities

Barriers

The most frequently mentioned barriers were as follows:

1. Lack of resources including people to act as ‘connectors’, funding and access to affordable venues

Most comments made about this theme identified a lack of resources of various kinds as barriers to achieving in relation to this theme. Several comments were about the need for people to act as ‘connectors’ or supporters of community based activity, there were also comments about funding and capacity for cultural organisations to enable them to work with communities, and a few comments identified a need for affordable venues that could be used for community activity. For example:

- *‘A lot of great initiatives are reliant on community activists but how do you get more folk involved?’*
- *‘Volunteer fatigue – often people are giving up their time unpaid, especially on boards. The process of moving to charity status is difficult and support is needed’*
- *‘it is very hard to be proactive, we need staff resources and a planned approach’*
- *‘We can’t afford to rent places to bring everyone together’*

2. Difficult relationships within communities can hold back cultural activity

Relationships within communities was the next most frequently raised issue, suggesting that it is not always easy to unite a whole community behind a cultural project. For example:

- *‘Sometimes cultural/other groups in communities are isolated within their own communities’.*
- *‘Sometimes personal agendas can cause problems and in small communities this really matters’.*
- *‘Not all groups want to work with others in their communities’*

3. Perceptions that culture is ‘not for me’

The next most frequently raised issue was the idea that people in communities might not be willing to engage with culture because of the language use to promote it and the idea that culture ‘is not for me’. There were suggestions that people who might otherwise take part may think that events, classes and workshops are only for people who are knowledgeable about or skilled in arts and heritage, or who belong to a different social ‘class’. For example:

- *‘Sometimes art and culture is thought of as highbrow and not for me, but for “that posh lot”’*
- *‘Language and perception – why would I go to a museum?’*
- *‘reverse the impression that art and culture ‘is not for me’*

Solutions

The most frequently mentioned solutions in relation to the Empowering Communities theme were as follows:

1. Increased resources to support cultural activity and community ‘connectors’

Most comments about solutions related to the lack of resources identified as a barrier. Suggestions included more support for networking; sharing best practice; volunteering; and sharing resources, spaces and equipment. There were also recommendations for more people/connectors to support community activity and learning opportunities; and the recruitment of ambassadors and buddies to get more people involved. Skills training and funding were also mentioned. For example:

- *‘How about if the Council made a commitment to support the ‘movers and shakers’, the ‘doers’ in communities to work together’*
- *‘Guidance on how local communities can create events and run them more often’*
- *‘People are critical – ambassadors or buddies’*

2. Empower communities to take more of a lead in creating and co-creating cultural activity

There were many comments either about how communities should be empowered to take more of a lead in creating cultural activity and/or about how cultural organisations should work more closely with communities to co-produce cultural activity. For example:

- *‘We need to ensure that the word ‘empowering’ is directly related to the Community’ Empowerment Act. It’s not about just supporting communities to put on a couple of events but it’s about helping communities leading and making the decisions about what happens in their communities’*
- *‘Our communities are/build our culture, culture should be defined fluidly and constantly by people – true co-creation to develop the activity in our communities’*
- *‘Make sure heritage sites connect to their local communities as well as tourists’*

3. Make sure programmes of cultural activity in communities build on local interests and ‘stories’ and are available on more than a ‘one-off’ basis

There were many suggestions for and reports of programmes of successful cultural activity in communities. The common success factors were a good fit with what a community is interested in, making the most of local heritage ‘stories’ and taking place on a regular basis to build up interest rather than as ‘one off’ events. For example:

- *‘Our festival is now involved in a competition that is helping to build local participation. Young people are joining in for the first time. They know its high quality but also run by local people. It also celebrates Scottish culture, so strengthens community pride and heritage’*
- *‘Build on our heroes – famous artists from D&G’*
- *‘Making the most of our heritage to empower communities’*

Other Issues Raised – Empowering Communities

There were also some comments about improving communication more broadly, including using online resources to create a regional 'What's On' and make local heritage collections more accessible to a wider audience. There were also suggestions about sharing knowledge and new ideas.

Some suggestions were also made about the need to involve young people in community cultural activity, catching them at a young age through school and family activity and about the opportunities that community cultural activity can provide for young people in terms of attainment and potential careers.

Some other suggestions about fostering partnerships between communities centred around the opportunity for smaller communities to work together, supporting each other, sharing resources and collaborating on joint projects. This included a suggestion for cross border collaborations between communities on either side of the Solway.

Other barriers mentioned in a few comments were the potential mutual exclusion between visitor and local audience expectations and programming, the cost of hiring venues and artists and red tape, e.g. requirements for licensing etc. Other solutions mentioned in a few comments were about changing perceptions and making culture more accessible and inclusive.

There were also some comments were about the theme wording, a few about it being difficult to understand and others requesting more emphasis on empowering communities and building on strengths that already exist. There were also a few comments suggesting that this theme could be merged with other themes, three suggested 'Sense of Place' and one 'Economic Impact'.

Other comments

A range of 'other comments' were recorded during the engagement process. The most frequently mentioned points not included in the analysis above are as follows:

Comments about the Strategy itself

Many consultees commented that they felt it was very positive that the Council was undertaking the development of a Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway and, believed this was significantly important for the Cultural Sector given the current economic challenges that local authorities are experiencing.

A number of people expressed a concern regarding *who* and *how* the strategy will be implemented including the monitoring of its associated action plan and some shared the view that the Council should assume the leadership role but in partnership with the Cultural Sector. Several comments were about the need for the strategy to have a clear lifespan with a timescale for points of review. In addition, many people commented that the language of the strategy should communicate to as wide an audience as possible, be jargon-free, have a clear definition of culture and the strategy's scope.

It was also acknowledged that the strategy should not sit in isolation and needs to be aligned with relevant strategies from other sectors to reflect the contribution of the cultural sector to the economic, social and community life of the region. For example:

- *this strategy's action plan must provide a timescale, who is responsible for the action and how we know we have been successful*
- *What is the plan to make this strategy sustainable – make it something that has impact and drives our support and growth in cultural activity?*
- *I absolutely agree it's not just the Council's job to own the strategy, but we do need the Council to take a leadership role*
- *We need to ensure its grassroots up and not just Council rhetoric*
- *Need to fit in with other strategies and get buy in from members and economic development etc.*
- *The tone of the strategy can help people come together and work towards its implementation*

Environmental Issues

There were one or two comments recorded about the environment or the carbon footprint contribution made by the cultural sector. For example:

- *The omission of green and environmental issues is of concern and needs to feature strongly feature strongly within the final strategy*

Examples of Good Practice

Participants were asked to identify examples of good practice, i.e. where they thought that culture was making a positive impact on one or more of the draft themes. Analysis of the feedback identified over 200 examples mentioned in either direct responses to this question or more general discussions, of which 83% were from Dumfries and Galloway and the rest from outside the region.

The most frequently mentioned examples were [Spring Fling Open Studios](#), [Big Burns Supper](#), [Wigtown Book Festival](#), [The Stove Network](#), [Kirkcudbright Galleries](#) and [Youth Beatz](#). There were also several mentions of the [Theatre Royal](#) in Dumfries and a number of references to [Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival](#), the [CatStrand](#), [Gracefield Arts Centre](#), [Kirkcudbright Art and Crafts Trail](#) and the [Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership](#).

Among a wide range of arts and heritage venues and projects across the region and beyond there were also several mentions of activities led by schools and of local common ridings. Kirkcudbright, Moniaive and Langholm were mentioned more than once as places associated with cultural activity.

Non-Cultural Sector Stakeholder Feedback

The Cultural Strategy engagement process set out to gather the views of artists, creative producers, the heritage sector and other cultural and creative professionals who make a living through creating, producing, maintaining and supporting culture in Dumfries and Galloway, as well as those who take part in culture in their free time.

We also wanted to hear the views of people involved in other areas and sectors and to help with this we held Discussion Groups with established groups and conducted in-depth telephone or face-to-face interviews with representatives from a wide-range of non-cultural sector bodies and groups such as Health and Wellbeing, Education and Young People, Economic Development, Anti-Poverty and Inclusion.

Feedback from the non-cultural sector has been included in the analysis above but we have drawn out a few areas of interest to highlight the areas that were important specifically to the non-cultural sector.

Discussion Group Feedback

54 people took part in the four discussion groups that we held with: Tackling Poverty Reference Group, the Youth Council, the Year of Young People Legacy Group and the Equalities Partnership.

Feedback provided through these discussion groups broadly concurred with feedback from the cultural sector itself. Areas most frequently raised included:

- Transport – poor infrastructure, cost of travel, better planning of activities so they are aligned with transport timetabling
- Perceptions – some people may think that culture isn't for them
- Access – cost of participating, isolation and mobility challenges
- Cross-generational – incidences of young people not being made to feel welcome in creative groups where adults also participated
- Promotion – needs to be improved and ideally a one-stop shop solution so people can easily find what cultural activities are on
- Schools – their important role in creating access and placing a value on cultural participation and enjoyment
- Leaving/moving to the region – importance of creating incentives to keep young people in the region and encouraging others to move to the region

Some non-cultural sector partners were keen to highlight the importance of the cultural strategy being aligned to other strategies from other sectors. In addition, concerns were raised as whether the strategy was too ambitious and in respect to this, how the strategy will be resourced, delivered, monitored and measured.

It was also felt that care should be taken to ensure that the final strategy is easy to read, widely accessible and jargon-free. It was felt that this would help people have a sense of affiliation, if not ownership, with it.

Interview feedback

21 people representing organisations/services working in health and wellbeing, business and economy, youth work, inclusion, community development and education took part in non-cultural sector stakeholder interviews with Project Team members.

Vision and themes

Interviewees who commented on the vision all expressed agreement with it in principle and several commented on the ambition expressed, which they saw as positive. However, there were also several suggestions as to how the wording could be improved to make it more easily understood.

Interviewees all expressed their support for the six draft themes and several commented on the links they could see between them and the priorities that informed their own work, such as Scotland's Public Health Priorities and Dumfries and Galloway Council's priorities and there were a number of suggestions about including terminology that would link even closer with partner priorities.

While the intention of the health and well-being and young people themes was understood and supported, some interviewees from those sectors felt that the ambition expressed in their wording was too high level and too broad to enable clear outcomes to be achieved. There were also concerns about including the concept of a Dumfries and Galloway 'brand' within the Sense of Place theme. One interviewee felt that the idea of 'culture for culture's sake' this was missing, and that not every piece of cultural activity should be expected to contribute to the themes.

Evidence and Best Practice

Interviewees were asked what evidence from their area of work suggests that cultural activity (arts/heritage) does already or could play a role in delivering the themes. Most interviewees referred to best practice examples, but there were also references to research, studies and reports.

Key messages

While many interviewees mentioned issues common to the wider engagement such as geography and the cost of taking part in activities and transport, the following points were also raised.

Best Start in Life (Young People)

Interviewees working in the Education and Youth Work sectors identified a number of challenges and opportunities in relation to this theme, which can be summarised as follows.

- Individual schools now have greater autonomy and control over their own curriculum development than in the past. This means that they are dealing with high volumes of activity and focussed offers are needed to help them engage with cultural organisations and opportunities for cultural activity.

- Tackling inequalities and inclusion are key priority for schools, education and youth work services, and several interviewees mentioned the need to change perceptions of 'culture' and its relevance for disadvantaged young people.
- In line with current policy areas promoting individual and community empowerment, such as the Scottish Government's policy 'Getting It Right for Every Child', several interviewees stressed the need to put young people at the centre of decision making.
- Financial constraints are impacting on Education and Youth Work services. Schools have fully devolved budgets and while they have access to Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), this is for interventions aimed at delivering demonstrable improvements in a child's attainment, focusing on literacy and numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Similarly core youth work budgets are focussed on young people's needs and while keen to involve local arts practitioners in their work, some interviewees reported that specialist arts practitioner fee levels can mean that they can only afford to work with artists when there is additional funding available to do so.

In spite of these constraints, interviewees were positive about the potential for culture to deliver benefits for young people and there were a number of suggestions for making this happen:

- Pupil Equity Funding could be used by schools to contribute to whole-school family learning, for example to make sure that all children have access to opportunities for school trips based on culture and heritage
- Cultural organisations and individual local schools could work together to create learning resources that other schools could use with their local cultural partners (based for example on common heritage themes)
- A forthcoming Music Strategy for Schools is looking to bring together resources currently going into music teaching through curricular teaching in schools, the Instrumental Music Service and the Youth Music Initiative. It also hopes to link with music making organisations in the wider community
- A key priority area for the senior phase in secondary schools is to support vocational qualifications for young people who are not inclined to pursue an academic pathway. Cultural organisations could host apprenticeships, placements and volunteering opportunities linked to SQA qualifications (such as theatre production or sound engineering) and/or more informal accredited learning.
- The Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme could support young people to work with cultural businesses to develop the entrepreneurial and business skills they will need to work in the cultural sector as a self-employed artist, freelancer or sole trader.
- A directory of local cultural professionals and the skills they can offer would be useful for youth work services looking to develop projects.

Economic Impact

Interviewees with remits linked to economic development identified a number of strands to the economic impact of the culture, which included the creative industries sector itself, tourism and culture as a contributor to a 'lifestyle' that could attract people to live and work in the region.

Asked for evidence of how culture contributed to this theme, interviewees identified a range of good practice, including the region's major events and festivals but the consensus seemed to be that the region is not fulfilling its full potential in relation to this theme. Areas for improvement included developing the cultural assets and experiences that are available across the region and promoting them more effectively.

Several interviewees made references to the Borderlands and South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) economic initiatives and the opportunities represented by the latter to support the cultural sector to deliver 'inclusive growth' across the region's economy and a number of interviewees talked about the importance of gathering research and evidence that would help target investment.

Other practical suggestions included closer working between the cultural sector, the Chamber of Commerce, SOSEA, Visit Scotland, and other sectors within the economy, with training to make the most of potential links, for example between cultural tourism and the hospitality industry. A cultural 'calendar' for the region with long lead times would help Visit Scotland to take advantage of culture-related marketing opportunities. One interviewee also identified genealogy as an area with growth potential.

Sense of Place

There was consensus among those interviewed that this theme is important and links to current thinking across a range of policy areas. In line with the responses from the wider engagement, interviewees emphasised the range of place identities that exist across the region and there was little appetite for a homogenous cultural 'brand' for the region.

Health and Wellbeing

Interviewees working in the health and wellbeing sector supported the idea that engaging in cultural activity can have a positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals and were able to cite examples of relevant research as well as many examples of best practice.

From the comments recorded in the interviews there appear to be some key areas where cultural activity has the potential to make a positive difference:

- Caring for the region's increasing population of vulnerable elderly, including those suffering from debilitating conditions such as dementia
- Social/rural isolation and loneliness
- Mental health, including confidence, resilience and self-expression
- Physical activity

There is also an increasing emphasis on a person centred approach to care, based on understanding what matters to people in their lives, and also on promoting health and wellbeing with a view to preventing or delaying the need for more costly services at a later date. For example early intervention through 'social prescribing' to provide opportunities for social interaction could prevent loneliness and isolation leading to more serious problems of ill health, and if people in the older demographic have more opportunities to build their physical strength, it is more likely that they will be able to live independently for longer.

Interviewees identified a range of possible interventions involving culture, including following the example of the 'Let's Motivate' programme that promotes physical activity in

care homes and using art in the fitting out of health care buildings. There were suggestions for outdoor walking tours of heritage sites, and for programmes of arts and heritage-based activity involving vulnerable people in communities. Music based activities such as community singing and dancing, and reminiscence work with care home residents were also put forward as good practice examples.

However, in order to realise these opportunities interviewees identified a need for more staff time and resources, for information about what's available and who they should ask to make the best of opportunities, as well as greater capacity and skills development within the cultural sector.

In order to overcome these issues, one interviewee's suggestion was to create a post of 'Arts and Health Officer' with a remit to create partnerships, coordinate training, raise awareness, and deliver projects. Others stressed that interventions need to be long-term in order to properly measure their success.

Access and Inclusion

All interviewees were in agreement on the importance of this theme, and comments referred to the importance of this theme in delivering successful economic development, education, health and well-being and community development. Interviewees referred to various examples of good practice, with Youth Beatz and Big Burns Supper highlighted as being particularly successful.

There were also references to the role of access and inclusion in tackling poverty and reducing inequalities and there were suggestions that if the Cultural Strategy is to work, it needs to reach out to a broader constituency across geography, age, 'class' and income demographics.

As reflected in the wider engagement, there were many comments and suggestions about overcoming barriers of cost, making programming more inclusive and accessible, and above all changing perceptions that culture is 'not for me'.

Empowering Communities

A number of interviewees made comments that were relevant to this theme and also to the themes of 'Sense of Place' and 'Access and Inclusion'. These comments referred to the distinctiveness of individual communities across the region and the need to make sure that communities are included in cultural activity.

However, there were a number of comments from interviewees about the professional practice of community development and how community empowerment should be seen as a long-term commitment rather something to be achieved through short-term, one-off projects.

One interviewee gave examples of arts organisations elsewhere in Scotland, such as PEEK and Impact Arts, which are taking a professional community development approach to upskilling people in communities and helping them to 'take ownership' and a number of comments were made suggesting that resources, capacity and training would be needed for the cultural sector to successfully deliver on this theme.

Next Steps

The Cultural Strategy Project Team will use the feedback from the Engagement Process to create a draft Cultural Strategy, which will be tested with the Cultural Strategy Reference Groups prior to the preparation of a final draft. The draft Strategy will be considered by the Council's Communities Committee in summer 2020.

Engagement Report – Appendix 1

A Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway – Summer 2019 Engagement

Draft Cultural Strategy and Themes

The draft vision and themes were developed by the Project Team in discussion with representatives from the region's cultural sector and Dumfries and Galloway's Community Learning and Development Partnership during the first part of 2019 and were as follows:

Draft Cultural Strategy Vision

Our ambition is for Dumfries and Galloway to be renowned nationally and internationally for its cultural assets and its creative dynamism, and Dumfries and Galloway's culture to be celebrated as central to the well-being and prosperity of the region's communities and our people.

Draft Cultural Strategy Themes

We want the strategy to help unlock the potential of culture - by which we mean arts and heritage of all types - to achieve the strategy's vision through a series of actions linked to six themes:

- **Sense of Place**
We want culture to create a sense of place for each community in Dumfries and Galloway and to contribute to how Dumfries and Galloway as a region or 'brand' is seen from outside the region
- **Access and Inclusion**
We want everyone to feel able to enjoy and create cultural activity
- **Economic Impact**
We want the cultural sector and its associated industries to thrive, and we want the region's cultural offer to attract more people to live and work here
- **Improved Health and Wellbeing**
We want people engaging with culture to experience benefits ranging from enjoyment to significant health improvement
- **Best Start in Life for All Our Young People**
We want culture to contribute positively to learning, skills and personal development
- **Developing and Empowering Communities Through Culture**
We want to help people strengthen their communities by working together to create and participate in cultural activities

Engagement Report – Appendix 2

A Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway – Summer 2019 Engagement

Key questions asked in cultural sector focus groups, discussion groups, Third Sector roadshow open public focus groups and one-to-one interviews.

The questions asked are shown in the table below, but in practice responses were often wide-ranging.

Survey Monkey Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any comments about the draft vision? • Do you have any comments about the draft themes? • If you were asked to make improvements in the cultural sector to deliver any of the themes, what would they be? • Do you have any other comments that you think we should be aware of as we develop the cultural strategy? • Please share any examples of good practice that deliver on any of the draft themes.
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What barriers are holding us back from doing more in relation to each draft strategy theme? • What solutions would help to overcome these barriers?
Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway Roadshows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about the Strategy Vision? • What do you think about the themes? • In terms of arts and heritage past and present in Dumfries and Galloway what are you most proud of? • From your perspective, what works and what doesn't work about the current cultural offer in Dumfries and Galloway? • From a cultural perspective imagine your ideal Dumfries and Galloway in 10-years' time – how would you describe it?
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think of the draft vision and themes? • Can you think of any examples where things are working well already? • What do you think might be stopping the people you know from getting more involved with arts and heritage? • What changes would help make things better?
Stakeholder Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think of the draft Strategy Vision and Themes? • What strengths and examples of best practice can you identify? • What are the weaknesses and gaps, i.e. what could be done better? • What would help the culture in Dumfries and Galloway to have a more positive impact? • What would make culture more accessible for your area of work?

Engagement Report – Appendix 3

A Cultural Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway – Summer 2019 Engagement

Dates, locations and attendances for cultural sector focus groups, discussion groups, Third Sector roadshow open public focus groups and one-to-one interviews.

CULTURAL SECTOR FOCUS GROUPS			
Date	Location	Area of Interest	Attendance
19-Jun	Kirkcudbright	Festivals / Events	4
08-Jul	Newton Stewart	Music	Cancelled - no bookings
09-Jul	Stranraer	Visual Arts	Cancelled - no bookings
09-Jul	Wigtown	Literature	3
10-Jul	Dumfries	Heritage	5
17-Jul	Dumfries	Music	3
18-Jul	Dumfries	Festivals / Events	5
24-Jul	Dumfries	Performing Arts	3
25-Jul	Dumfries	Art in Public Spaces	16
25-Jul	Annan	Literature	3
26-Jul	Dumfries	Visual Arts	4
01-Aug	Stranraer	Performing Arts	3
06-Aug	Dumfries	Community Cinema	5
07-Aug	Stranraer	Heritage	2
12-Aug	Stranraer	Visual Arts	3
21-Aug	Newton Stewart	Music	1
22-Aug	Dumfries	Festivals / Events	9
30-Aug	Kirkcudbright	Heritage (Council Officers)	6
02-Sep	Dumfries	General	3
03-Sep	Newton Stewart	General	3
05-Sep	Castle Douglas	General	6
09-Sep	Langholm	General	0
Total attendance			87

DISCUSSION GROUPS		
Date	Group	Attendance
26-Jun	Equalities Partnership	4
29-Aug	Tacking Poverty Coordination Group	18
31-Aug	Youth Council	17
24-Oct	Year of Young People Legacy Group	15
Total attendance		54

THIRD SECTOR ROADSHOW OPEN PUBLIC FOCUS GROUPS		
Date	Location	Attendance
18-Jun	Sanquhar	3
20-Jun	Langholm	2
27-Jun	Dalbeattie	3
11-Jul	Lockerbie	2
23-Jul	Creetown	4
24-Jul	Dumfries	2
30-Jul	Haugh of Urr	0
22-Aug	Moniaive	1
28-Aug	Carsphairn	0
29-Aug	Annan	0
Total attendance		17

INTERVIEWS			
Date	Name	Sector	Attendance
02-Jun	Lesley Sloan	Education	1
05-Jul	Steve Rogers	Economic Development	1
09-Aug	Nicola Hill	Cross-sector (Leader)	1
20-Aug	Claire Thirlwall and Chris Topping	Health and Wellbeing	2
20-Aug	Leona Waugh	Education	1
22-Aug	Lee Medd	Economic Development	1
27-Aug	Stephen Howie	Health and Wellbeing	1
28-Aug	Regan Jackson	Young People	1
05-Sep	Wendy Jesson	Inclusion	1
10-Sep	Claire Renton	Education	1
12-Sep	Gillian Brydson	Education	1
13-Sep	Sleeping Giants	Inclusion	3
16-Sep	Vicky Freeman	Health and Wellbeing	1
17-Sep	Mark Molloy	Young People	1
18-Sep	Rob Dickson	Economic Development	1
20-Sep	Paula Ward	Tourism	1
23-Sep	Sheila Campbell	Health and Wellbeing	1
03-Oct	Bòrd na Gàidhlig	Gaelic	1
Total attendance			21