



SURF 2021 MANIFESTO PROCESS: CULTURE & HERITAGE

ABOUT THIS PAPER

SURF is **consulting** with its **members** and **wider contacts** to prepare a **2021 Manifesto for Community Regeneration**. The 2021 Manifesto will set out what the SURF network thinks the **Scottish Government** should be **doing differently** to better support the regeneration of socially and economically challenged places over the next term of the Scottish Parliament.

SURF's consultation process is structured on **13 key themes**. This briefing paper concerns one of these themes: **Culture & Heritage**. This broad topic encompasses the links between artistic, cultural & heritage-based activities in Scotland, and community regeneration.

Briefing papers are circulated to SURF contacts with relevant knowledge and experience with a view to sharing **helpful background information** on the process and theme in advance of consultations. Please click the following links to **learn more** about: [What is SURF?](#) How will the [2021 Manifesto be developed?](#)

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

During the COVID-19 crisis, **SURF policy and research staff** will be consulting via telephone calls, video interviews, and by requesting email submissions. **SURF is grateful to all participants for their time.**

The **following questions** will be used to structure interviews and submissions. They are **optional** and participants may answer as many or as few as they wish. **General comments and views** relevant to the theme are also very welcome.

1. Do you think the Scottish Government's Culture Strategy will deliver on its central ambitions, including to strengthen cultural activity in Scotland and enhance its use in place-based regeneration?
2. The Culture Strategy and the Place Principle call for greater levels of collaboration across all sectors in support of place-based regeneration. In your view, what, if anything, needs to change to make this happen, particularly with regard to the involvement of organisations in the arts and heritage sectors?
3. Do you have any views on what is preventing increased levels of cultural participation, particularly for specific groups such as people living in deprived places, and how this might be overcome?
4. Do you know of any examples in which creative, cultural approaches have been used to bridge divides in understanding, opportunity and cooperation in any type of place-based regeneration?
5. Do you think there are any particular aspects of tangible and intangible heritage in Scotland that are being overlooked or under-resourced in current policy?
6. There has been a debate in the SURF network comparing the effectiveness of nationwide or regional approaches to supporting cultural led regeneration with more targeted, localised approaches. Do you have any views on this?
7. Are there any cultural regeneration approaches or initiatives that you are aware of in other countries, that you think offer useful learning outcomes for Scotland?
8. Among other actions, the Scottish Government will be making £107m available to cultural venues and organisations in the forms of grants and repayable loans to alleviate the impacts of the pandemic on the sector. Do you have any views on its current response to the COVID-19 situation?

9. Accepting that the COVID-19 situation is still unfolding, what measures do you think the Scottish Government should be putting in place to ease the longer term impacts for the creative industries and players in built heritage?
10. Do you have any other views or suggestions on what the Scottish Government could be doing differently in the future to better align cultural and regeneration policy agendas?

MANIFESTO FOCUS

Some **general information** for participants:

- SURF intends to **record interviews**, for internal use only in supporting the taking of summary notes. Permission to record will be requested at the start of each interview and recording will only take place where active consent is given.
- All individual responses will be **anonymised** in the Manifesto. With permission, SURF intends to publish a list of consultees in the final presentation, noting that inclusion of an individual or organisation does not necessarily imply their agreement with the final policy recommendations.
- SURF's 2021 Manifesto is **targeted at the Scottish Government** that will be formed after the 2021 Scottish elections. Policy recommendations must be **practical** for the Scottish Government to progress or deliver within its powers and resources over the 2021-2026 Parliamentary term;
- SURF's overall objective is to **improve the lives and opportunities of people living in Scotland's socially and economically challenged places**.
- The consultation process will run while the **COVID-19 pandemic** is unfolding. The long-term implications for Scotland's economy and society are likely to be significant. SURF would like to learn more about views on these implications and several questions are specific to COVID-19.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Strategy Overview

The Scottish Government published a new Culture Strategy in February 2020, following three years of formal preparation and consultation.ⁱ The strategy's vision is for Scotland to be a place:

"...where culture is valued, protected and nurtured. Culture is woven through everyday life, shapes and is shaped by society, and its transformative potential is experienced by everyone. Scotland's rich cultural heritage and creativity of today is inspired by people and place, enlivens every community and is celebrated around the world."

The Strategy has three main strands, all of which have relevance to place-based regeneration, inclusive growth and community development:

1. *Strengthening Culture – Focusing on the nurture and sustainment of cultural activity and creative practitioners in Scotland.*
2. *Transforming Through Culture – Opening up the potential for culture as a transformative force in society, embedding it across all policy areas, including: regeneration, health and wellbeing, and equalities.*
3. *Empowering Through Culture – Recognising and promoting culture as a vital part of every community, in all its forms: the everyday and the formal, the established and the emerging.*

Deprivation & Participation

The Culture Strategy acknowledges the benefits of cultural participation to individuals and communities, extending its definition of culture to include "everyday culture", which includes less formal activities such as gardening, craft clubs and knitting groups. Despite this broad definition, there are barriers to all kinds of cultural participation.ⁱⁱ Access barriers are closely related to wider issues of deprivation and inequality, and have been compounded by the effects of austerity-based policy decisions.ⁱⁱⁱ

The SURF Awards have highlighted the impact of successful community arts groups that work in areas of relative deprivation. Recent examples include WHALE Arts (Wester Hailes, Edinburgh), The Portal (Govan, Glasgow) and RIG Arts (Greenock).^{iv} Such initiatives provide accessible opportunities for people to build confidence, skills, and social connections by sharing knowledge and providing activities based on local heritage and assets. The associated improvements in social cohesion, pride of place, prospects for employment and education, and mental wellbeing are highly beneficial to the wider community.

The success of these projects is based on proactive out-reach work and a long-standing commitment to their communities. A large-scale literature review commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in 2016 found that smaller cultural assets and institutions often have a more positive effect on communities than larger, high-profile investments, contributing a more sustainable and organic form of community regeneration to the places in which they operate.^v

The Cultural Strategy commits the Scottish Government to a new programme of investment in community arts work. A new programme, *Creative Communities*, will focus on empowering individuals and communities to develop their own cultural activity in areas with limited opportunities and lower levels of cultural engagement. The programme will be delivered by Inspiring Scotland in partnership with Creative Scotland, and will invest £600k in projects across Scotland over 2020-21.^{vi}

Culture & Place

The Scottish Government and COSLA adopted the Place Principle in 2019.^{vii} This encourages all spheres of local and national government to put place at the heart of decision-making, advocating enhanced levels of collaboration across sectors based on shared aims and resources. The 2020 Cultural Strategy makes clear the key role that culture and heritage can play in place-based interventions, and reiterates the aspiration for greater partnership working in this sphere across local government, businesses, creative arts organisations and other bodies.ⁱ

At the larger scale, 'City of Culture' bidding processes and the development of major cultural draws such as the Dundee V&A Museum, Glasgow's Emirates Arena and Perth Theatre have been successfully used to attract major public & private investments in wider physical regeneration masterplans. Dundee is a particularly strong example of place-based, culture-led regeneration, with Dundee City Council and partners demonstrating long term commitment through a host of strategies over the past 25 years.^{viii ix}

Combined, these efforts have improved the city's image, creative industries, grassroots cultural activity and supported wider economic growth in the city and strengthen its communities. Culture and creativity have provided the city with fresh hope and inspiration amid post-industrial challenges.^x The Cultural Strategy has a number of action points focused on encouraging similar place-focused partnership approaches. The Scottish Government and Creative Scotland will map local authority support for culture, explore future models of collaboration, and engage culture trusts, local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships to realise local outcomes across the country.ⁱ

The Cultural Strategy stated that culture and heritage have further strengths in encouraging public engagement in the planning system and community development. A significant number of cultural and heritage organisations in the SURF network play a crucial wider role in their communities, acting as anchor organisations and interfaces for community consultation, and catalysing wider community regeneration. SURF Award winners, such as the Stove Network in Dumfries, which has helped revive a declining town centre, and North Edinburgh Arts, which has created a vital space for community participation and engagement in Muirhouse, provide useful case studies.^{iv}

Heritage

The Scottish Government places a strong emphasis on the protection, celebration and development of Scotland's heritage in many forms, from the Gaelic language and natural heritage to traditional skills and historic buildings. The current Programme for Government, for example, announced new measures to support new entrants into the crofting industry, development of a Tapestry Visitor Centre in Galashiels and a

Design Museum in Paisley, a revision of the Scots Language Action Plan and new Community Planning Partnership led efforts to promote the historic environment in place-making.^{xi}

Historic Environment Scotland's 'Our Place In Time' current ten-year strategy emphasises the additional potential available in the nation's historic assets and stories to deliver social and economic benefits to communities. The Conservation Regeneration Area Scheme and Townscape Heritage Initiative grant programmes are among the policy mechanisms available to support new heritage-based regeneration activity across Scotland.^{xii}

Finance and Sustainability

The issue of sustainability and funding for culture and heritage organisations, of varying sizes, is key, and one that has been raised widely across the SURF network, and in initial responses to the draft cultural strategy.^{xiii}

^{xiv} There is a wider context of wider uncertainty around funding for the arts as a whole, with fluctuations in National Lottery funding, continuing pressure on public finances and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit.^{xv} At a local authority level, culture and leisure spending has faced some of the steepest cuts over the last decade, with overall spending across Scotland's local authorities declining by 22% since 2010/11.^{xvi}

The creative industries make a considerable contribution to the Scottish economy.^{xvii} It is apparent, however, that many cultural organisations – particularly in areas of deprivation, where scope for income generation is highly limited – require core funding and support from public sector and trusts. Creative Scotland, through a Regular Funding Network and open grant programmes, offer a notable of support, and arts bodies are eligible to apply for regeneration programmes such as the Scottish Government's Investing in Communities Fund.^{xviii} Policy-makers have acknowledged a tension between the resourcing of new projects, and the on-going support for existing organisations and initiatives within limited funding programmes.^{xix}

End of briefing paper (SURF contact details and references follow)

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SURF CONTACT

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Interviews will be carried out by Christopher and by SURF Policy & Participation Manager, Derek Rankine.

For further information on SURF, please visit: www.surf.scot

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