

## **Appendix 1: Context**

The arts in Aberdeenshire are vibrant and diverse. We have artists and arts organisations working in a variety of media, often inspired by a strong sense of place, identity and people - our cultural heritage.

We are lucky to have excellent arts organisations, facilities and projects based in Aberdeenshire including:

### **Scottish Sculpture Workshop**

Has national status and an international profile in the development of contemporary visual art and the environment.

### **Woodend Arts Association**

A voluntary organisation which delivers performances, workshops and activities within Woodend Barn Arts Centre and in the community. It also supports the work of local artists and groups such as Woodend Music Society and Sideline Multi Arts.

### **Deveron Arts**

A unique community-based organisation which develops high profile arts residencies, commissions, and arts events in the community.

### **North East Folklore Archive**

A resource managed by Aberdeenshire Council Arts Team, which uses digital technology to capture Aberdeenshire's traditional forms of expression and develop new ones.

### **Duff House**

A partnership between the National Galleries of Scotland, Historic Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council with a strong commitment to connecting contemporary arts and heritage.

### **Three Voluntary Art Forums**

Use their knowledge of local need to distribute small grants to talented individuals and arts groups, and initiate local development projects. The forums are grant-aided by Aberdeenshire Council.

### **Kaleidoscope**

An annual children's festival of performing arts. Supported by Aberdeenshire Council, the festival is expanding its year-round

offering of arts experiences for schools and families.

### **Fraserburgh Junior Arts Society**

Has a long, dynamic tradition of developing the arts for young people through workshops, productions, and an events programme.

### **North East Folklore Archive**

A resource managed by Aberdeenshire Council Arts Team, which uses digital technology to capture Aberdeenshire's cultural traditional.

### **Support**

Artists and arts organisations are supported in their work by Aberdeenshire Council through grants and through the work of the Arts Development Team. The Team works with many communities in Aberdeenshire to deliver arts projects by fundraising, commissioning research, developing arts projects, linking the arts to education, supporting the voluntary sector and disseminating information on the arts.

### **Population**

Aberdeenshire has a growing population which currently includes a significant percentage of young people. In the future, the demographic pattern will shift and more of the population will be older.

Aberdeenshire's population is dispersed across a wide geographic area. This is a significant factor in our lives and the delivery of our services. Many of us have to travel long distances every day and those with no access to transport are isolated. The road system often makes it easier to get to Aberdeen, Inverness or Elgin than to other local places. In winter, the weather can make all but the most hardy reluctant to make unnecessary journeys and many older people feel unsafe going out at night. Our work patterns also impact our ability to access the arts. Many of us travel into Aberdeen to work, not getting home until late; others work long hours farming and those working in offshore industries are regularly away from our communities.

### **Rural Communities**

For those in rural communities, access to the arts can be limited. Where communities have suitable facilities (such as schools and village halls) the small size of potential audiences makes it hard for groups to sustain activity and take the risk on producing an activity or event. Often we do not know what's on or have sufficient information about the opportunities available to us.

Individual arts initiatives, of which there are many, sometimes

suffer from a sense of isolation. The infrastructure for networking, partnerships and gathering information is limited. Our artists, who can help us interpret the past and look to the future, are not integrated or supported.

### **Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership**

Aberdeenshire contains several important towns, but people in these communities can feel isolated and excluded from arts activities. The [Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership](#) (ATP) is working toward the sustainable development of key towns and has recognised the role the arts can play in regenerating communities.

Although Aberdeenshire has a very strong identity, it is also part of a wider region. Many people work in Aberdeen and enjoy the benefits of its cultural provision. Others have stronger links with Inverness, Elgin or Dundee. There are strong cultural affiliations with Europe, in particular countries around the North Sea, as well as further afield such as with New Zealand and Canada.

### **Technology**

We live in a world of technological change, much of which is bringing communities together through improved communications. Digital Scotland, the government's initiative, is aiming to ensure that the economic and social benefits of digital technology are utilised by the people of Scotland. New technologies also have been adopted by those working in the arts and we have witnessed the development of new forms of expression and delivery of arts activities. They also provide the means to create multiple links between individuals and organisations by transcending the limitations of geography and transport infrastructures. The current political agenda has a focus on equality of opportunity with the Scottish Executive committed to the achievement of social justice. The Executive's plan focuses on enterprise and life-long learning and on the creation of a prosperous economy and healthy nation. It aims to empower communities and enhance rural Scotland.

### **Scotland's National Cultural Strategy**

Scotland's National Cultural Strategy was published in 2000. It aims to promote creativity, the arts, and other cultural activity; to celebrate Scotland's cultural heritage in its full diversity; to realise culture's potential contribution to education, promoting inclusion and enhancing people's quality of life; and to assure an effective national support framework for culture. The Strategy commits the Executive to promoting the arts for their intrinsic values, as well as to exploiting the contributions of the arts to other areas of public policy such as social inclusion and education. Cultural agencies and organisations in Scotland are required to follow the priorities established in the Strategy.

### **Aberdeenshire Council**

Aberdeenshire Council is the local authority charged with delivering

services to the residents of Aberdeenshire. It is committed to improving the quality of life for its residents through jobs and the economy, learning, community wellbeing and the creation of a sustainable environment. The arts are the responsibility of the Education and Recreation service, which also includes Heritage, Libraries, Schools, Community Education and Sports. The Service's priorities include opportunity and inclusion, community involvement, participation, life-long learning and quality.

Aberdeenshire Council aims to work locally and has established six decentralised Areas which are used to deliver services in response to local need. These will be important for the future delivery of the arts. Although the Council is committed to devolved decision-making and meeting the needs of local communities, there are some aspects of planning and delivery which are more effective and have more impact when developed on a regional level. Local authorities are being encouraged to work in partnership with agencies both within their boundaries and outside.

### **Aberdeenshire Organisations**

There are many other organisations and agencies active in Aberdeenshire. Some are involved in providing venues, such as the National Trust for Scotland at Haddo House. Aberdeenshire has sustained and developed vital links with the university sector, in particular with Aberdeen University and the Robert Gordon University. There is a high level of cultural research taking place here. Others have a role to play in the development of Aberdeenshire's economy, such as Scottish Enterprise Grampian, which is charged with developing enterprise and skills. Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board is responsible for promoting the area to tourists and attracting people to visit.

On a local level, there are many agencies and groups that deliver services and activities. These include statutory council services such as social services and education, and voluntary services which work for the benefit of our communities.

All these agencies, services and groups could be involved in the successful delivery of our arts strategy:

<b>National</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Local</b>
UK Government	Scottish Enterprise Grampian	Aberdeenshire Council including Community
Scottish Executive— National Cultural	Aberdeen & Grampian Tourist	Arts Forums
Scottish Arts Council	Aberdeen City Council	Local businesses
National Trust for Scotland	Moray Council	Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership

National Trust for Scotland	Moray Council	Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership
Historic Scotland	Angus Council	Village Hall committees
National Galleries of Scotland	Regional arts providers such as City Moves, Peacock Visual Arts, North East Arts Touring	Independent providers
Scottish Natural Heritage	Grampian Health Board, Grampian Hospitals Arts Trust	Voluntary sector
		Community groups