

Strategy for Scottish Theatre and Dance Update August 2020

At the FST members' meeting in June 2020 we shared our planned approach to the Strategy Development and the outline of a sector SWOT analysis – we greatly appreciated members input to this. Since June we have been exploring some highlighted key issues further and reflecting on how best to develop the sector-led strategy during this time. We are revising our approach to take account of the current difficult circumstances for our members and the wider sector and we are hopeful that our adapted plan will work to give a wide representation in the development of the strategy.

You told us clearly that equality, wellbeing and a just recovery were priorities in moving forward. With this in mind we have developed a framework for the strategy development that adopts the principles of a wellbeing economy and sets the priorities identified by members in the context of government cultural policy.

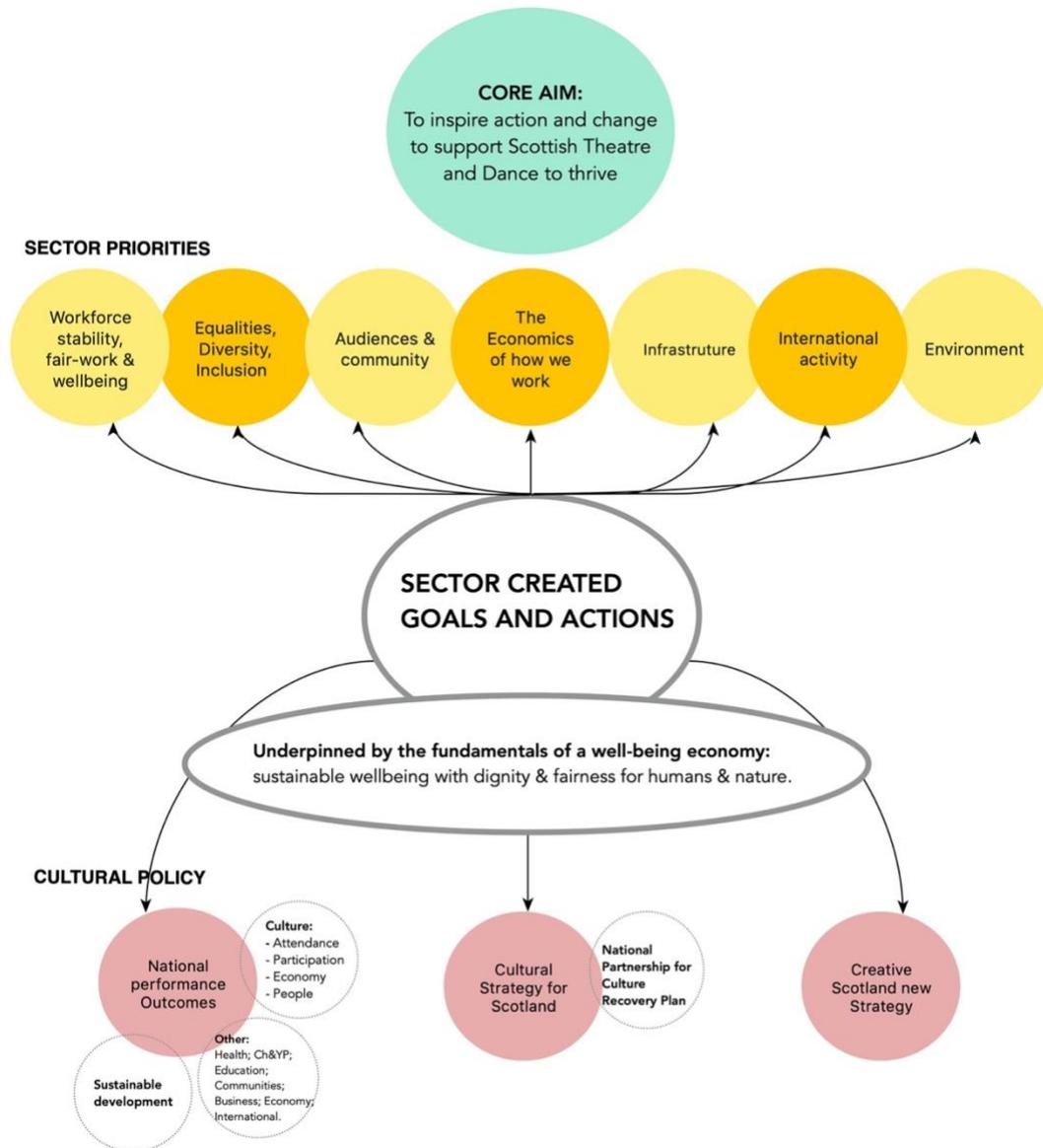
The framework focuses on the development of goals and actions around the following key issues identified during our work so far:

- Workforce stability, fair-work and wellbeing
- Equalities, diversity and inclusion
- The economics of how we work
- Infrastructure
- Audience and community connection
- International activity
- Environment

Our sector is affected by a great deal of change right now - we need to evolve, develop and transition to be sustainable in the long run. We have a huge amount to contribute to the changing landscape in Scotland which is recognised by the Scottish government. We believe that by working and learning together now we will be in a much stronger position to strategically respond and contribute to the recovery and future plans currently being designed by government and funders.

Our plan between September and December 2020 is to further our understanding of and options for change for the 'key issues' identified, with the support of Working Groups made up of members and, where necessary, non-member specialists. Each group will work with the Strategy Lead and FST board and team to explore the issues and to guide and curate an event for the wider membership and sector relating to the relevant key issue.

Strategy development framework



Working towards a sustainable wellbeing economy

Based on feedback from our members, FST proposes that as a sector we embrace the visions of a 'wellbeing economy' as fundamental in supporting the sector to thrive. A wellbeing economy has the goal of achieving sustainable wellbeing with dignity and fairness for humans and nature.

The fundamentals of a wellbeing economy are:

1. Dignity: Everyone has enough to live in comfort, safety and happiness
2. Nature: A restored and safe natural world for all life
3. Connection: A sense of belonging and institutions that serve the common good
4. Fairness: Equality and justice in all its dimensions at the heart of systems and policies
5. Participation: People are actively engaged in their communities (and locally rooted theatres)

For more details about the ethos, principles and vision of wellbeing economies visit:

<https://wellbeingeconomy.org/>

Creating Goals aligned with Cultural policy

We propose that the strategic goals and actions recommended by the Working Groups are created explicitly in alignment with the Scottish Government's National Indicators for the [Outcome for Culture](#) in the National Performance Framework. The National Indicators for Culture are:

- Attendance at cultural events or places of culture
- Participation in a cultural activity
- Growth in the cultural economy
- People working in arts and culture

Scottish Theatre and Dance also contribute to a number of other National Outcomes and indicators (in Health; Education; Children and Young People; Communities; Business; Economy; International) and these will be cross referenced when developing sector goals and actions.

Other wider policy issues that sector goals should be aware of include the [National Culture Strategy](#); the Recovery Plans being created by the National Partnership for Culture and Creative Scotland's refreshed [Strategy and Funding Framework](#) (to be announced later in 2020).

Timeline for development

2020

- August Establish membership of Key Issues Working Groups
- September Members meeting Strategy update
- October / November Key Issues Learning Events
- November Working Groups Follow up session (after events) and creating options for change
- December Members meeting – discussing and prioritising options for change

2021

- January Present shortlist of strategic actions, with outline indication of impact, feasibility and next steps for each action

Background context

In 2017 FST members agreed the proposal from its Touring Working Groups to develop a sector-led strategy for touring dance and theatre. The FST board agreed in 2019 that the need for a strategy remained and went beyond touring work. The membership mandated FST in December 2019 to develop a collaborative strategic approach to theatre and dance in Scotland. In April 2020 FST appointed Alice McGrath as Strategy Development Lead to take this work forward. The Strategy Development Lead has been appointed for 9 months, part-time from May 2020 to end January 2021 to work with FST members to create the Strategy and actions required to allow the sector to thrive.

In February 2020 the Scottish Government published [A Culture Strategy for Scotland](#) that outlines the Scottish Government's commitment to strengthening the sector in order to value, protect and nurture culture. This strategy, its visions and aims provide an important context for the development of the FST Sector Strategy.

In March 2020 the COVID19 pandemic created unprecedented disruption for performing arts around the world. FST's members have been hit hard by Covid-19. International tours were cancelled from the start of the year and by mid-March all theatres and arts centres were closed to protect the public. Throughout the lockdown FST members have stayed in touch with their audiences by streaming work, offering dance classes online and contacting vulnerable and isolated audience members to offer support. However almost all earned income, representing around 70% of turnover across FST's membership, ceased and physical distancing means future income is under severe threat. FST has responded providing on-going support, advice and information for the sector. We welcome the Scottish and UK Government's announcements of funds to help secure the future of live theatre and dance in Scotland and will work with Creative Scotland to ensure the funding supports the sector to thrive long term. It is anticipated that restrictions on the theatre community will be in place well into 2021. The FST Sector Strategy is being developed within this context.

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