

Recommendations for an Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage & Culture Strategy

Report of the Expert Advisory Panel

February 2022

Contents

Introduction – Levelling Up Ulster-Scots	4
Executive Summary	5
Section One: Policy Analysis and Framework	13
Ulster-Scots Today	13
Ulster’s Cultural Tapestry	15
Principles, Concepts and Practice	16
Cultural Wealth	19
The Ulster-Scots Revival model	20
Reaching Beyond Northern Ireland	21
Section Two: Vision Statement	22
The Child of 2022 – the Adult of 2042	22
Section Three: Actions	25
Powers and Resources	25
Education	27
Academic Research and Development	28
Language	31
Institutional Establishment	33
Community and Cultural Life	34
Media	55
Our Human Rights	58
Connectedness	64
Economic Development	65
Section Four: Implementation and Monitoring	72

Introduction – Levelling Up Ulster-Scots

Our language, our heritage and our culture has come far but we are convinced our identity contains so much unfulfilled potential that our journey has much farther still to go.

The new structures, educational duty, and recognition in the New Decade New Approach Agreement (NDNA) combined with a new strategy can drive the Ulster-Scots revival forward with many fresh and exciting opportunities. As a member of the Co-Design Group described it, this is an opportunity for “levelling up Ulster-Scots.”

The Panel wishes to express its gratitude for the opportunity to serve and to provide recommendations for a framework, vision, and actions to shape a new Ulster-Scots Strategy to shape our Language, Heritage, and Culture (USSLHC).

Our thanks to those who made submissions and to the members of the Co-Design Group (CDG) who gave up their time to engage with us. It is a matter of deep regret of the Panel that the pre-ordained and highly limited timeframe that was not in the Panel’s gift prevented our engagement with the CDG from being more detailed and sustained, especially as it will play a key role as the strategy process moves forward.

For the Panel it has been an intense, but ultimately enjoyable, three months examining and debating the issues and drawing upon the individual expertise of the Panel, the submissions and the CDG feedback. Throughout we have sought to fulfil our individual and collective commitment to our identity by producing a recommendations report that will take it to the next level.

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December 2021

Executive Summary

The Recommendations Report is set out in four sections. The approach to each section was:

- Section One: Policy Analysis and Framework – This report and subsequent strategy is broad in its scope as the Panel believes that simply producing a list of new funding schemes would be easy but a disservice to the range of work that is needed to advance Ulster-Scots. This is about embedding the completed Ulster-Scots Strategy for Language, Heritage and Culture (USSLHC) in our communities, broader society and within government policy. Neither can one strategy document for the first five years within a twenty-year vision cover every issue. Therefore we are clear on a range of principles and practices that should inform all work detailed in this document and beyond it.
- Section Two: Vision Statement – The Panel believed that the legally defined strategy process has a risk of stop and starts and that the work ahead of us will take a generation. Our solution to this was to create a twenty-year vision with various areas of focus. This has been built around an Ulster-Scots child born in 2022 with the advancement of the elements of our identity matching their individual development.
- Section Three: Actions – The Panel took the twenty-year vision and then defined the actions across the areas of focus for the next five-years. This should give clear direction and ensure the actions in the next five years are not stand alone but future focused and with legacy built in.
- Section Four: Implementation and Monitoring – The Panel has set out a number of government and community partnership mechanisms to ensure the recommendations are taken forward and achieved.

It was part of the Panel’s remit to set out the evidence-base for its conclusions and we appreciate this has made the document lengthy which could contribute to inaccessibility. This section will summarise the recommendations with the full recommendations in the main document.

Section One: Policy Analysis and Framework Recommendations

1. A three traditions model – Scottish, Irish, and English – approach to Northern Ireland’s cultural underpinning.
 2. Policy should subscribe to:
 - a. The five principles of the Ulster Cultural charter towards our cultural diversity.
 - b. The three INCORE values of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence.
 - c. In practice abide by the four Rs – Recognition, Respect, Representation, and Resources.
 - d. Assessing Ulster-Scots proposals against the three tests of empowerment, mainstreaming and excellence.
 3. Recognition of the value of cultural wealth.
 4. The Ulster-Scots revival is built upon all three elements of our language, heritage, and culture.
 5. Our identity reaches beyond Northern Ireland and the need for the NI Executive approach to take account of that.
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Section Two: Vision Statement

The long-term vision for this report and subsequent strategy has been constructed around an Ulster-Scots child born in 2022. The milestones in their life should be matched by milestones in the development of Ulster-Scots resulting in Ulster-Scots as a thriving 21st century identity driven by the revival of its language, heritage, and culture, this will include:

- Education – as this child progresses through every level of the education system (nursery, primary, secondary, tertiary and/or adult education, online), Ulster-Scots has an ever-growing place in the curriculum and formal studies.
- Academic Research and Development – Academic research is central to accessing all our cultural wealth and empowering the next generation to add to it.
- Community and Cultural Life – the opportunity to participate and contribute to Ulster-Scots providing a vibrant cross-generational community life with proper facilities, programmes, and inclusion.
- A modern everyday language – Ulster-Scots is written and spoken, in public and private, more than ever.
- Media – whatever the form, you will find regular and positive representations of Ulster-Scots and new creative content for us and by us.
- Public space – We have a name, it is Ulster-Scots. We have a story. Both will be found within our museums, interpretative centres, and public realm.
- Rights Framework – the Ulster-Scots identity with its status as a national minority, enjoys its full rights protections.
- Connectedness – Deepening connections and re-connections with Scotland and our diaspora.
- Economic Contribution and Benefits – Ulster-Scots in its various manifestations contributes to advance Northern Ireland's economy.

Section Three: Actions – Recommendations

Powers and Resources

- A general review of government powers to implement the strategy, a targeted review of the new educational duty and if required, a programme for legislative action.

Education

- The creation of three research and educational bodies
 - The Ulster-Scots Research Institute – this would be university based and focused on academic research.
 - The Ulster-Scots College – this would be focused on the development of Ulster-Scots within the formal and adult education system.
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- Language Institution – this would take forward the language research and language development work with an associated publishing programme.
- The three bodies will operate within a commissioned ‘Research and Educational Framework.’
- A seven-step development process for these three bodies is set out.

Academic Research & Development

- The Ulster-Scots Research Institute work will include:
 - Conduct, commission and disseminate research addressing the identified needs such as:
 - Third-Level Education
 - Research to support the work of the Ulster-Scots College to develop educational materials
 - Musical Corpus and development
 - Research guidance and expertise in media development and media research.
 - Online materials and resources.
 - Conferences, talks, workshops, and events for academic, commemorative, and celebratory purposes.

Language

- A formal professional mediation process involving the key individuals and Ulster-Scots organisations with the aim of agreeing the partnerships, relationships, and ways of working to move the language institution forward.

Institutional Development

- A seven-point plan to create the research and educational institutions.

Community and Cultural Life

- The development of a grant programme for faith communities who do not accept lottery funding to support Ulster-Scots culture, arts, and heritage projects.
 - The development of a grant scheme to support the refurbishment of historic Ulster-Scots buildings, including relevant Churches.
 - The grant programmes of the Ulster-Scots Agency are extended to provide for a progression path for community project grants which allows groups to build and demonstrate their capacity by managing grants of assorted sizes.
 - Each Local Council should commission its own Ulster-Scots Strategy with funding streams.
 - The development and delivery of a range of programmes by the Ulster-Scots Community Network which supports volunteer development and community leadership within the Ulster-Scots sector.
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- Resources are made available to support student placements and internships within the Ulster-Scots sector by individuals who are studying relevant skill areas and any aspect of Ulster-Scots.
 - Resources should be made available to support the development of Ulster-Scots societies on campus at QUB, UU and, at the right time, the major universities in Scotland serving Northern Ireland students.
 - The establishment of a project/programme within the Ulster-Scots sector to develop all the practical skills necessary for Ulster-Scots groups to effectively promote and share their work and articulate their needs to decision-makers and the wider community.
 - The people resources of the Ulster-Scots Community Network should be reviewed as soon as possible, and sufficient resources put in place to properly address current and future needs in relation to both community support and community outreach.
 - New or existing thematic networks should be resourced within the Ulster-Scots sector, particularly in regard to the marching band community.
 - Resources should be put in place to allow the Ulster-Scots Agency's Community Impact Programme to be rolled out across the country.
 - Diaspora Engagement and Excellence – This would be to support the best of Ulster-Scots cultural talent to engage with equivalent talent elsewhere in the world and assist in promotional tours of our most talented bands, artists, writers, and creatives.
 - Artistic Development and Excellence Strategies developed with the Arts Council NI.
 - A Core Groups Support Scheme be established for all core Ulster-Scots cultural organisations offering resources for development strategies and full-time staff.
 - A Dance Collective be developed to promote teaching of the different forms of Ulster-Scots dance (country, highland, and clog) within schools and communities.
 - Funding of Ulster-Scots community festivals and events is expanded to provide for an increased number and larger community festivals.
 - A large events fund is established to support the development of flagship Ulster-Scots events that can form part of Northern Ireland's national and international visitor offer.
 - The Ulster-Scots Agency should be resourced to develop and staff a portable exhibition unit that can provide a professional and easily managed Ulster-Scots presence at a wide range of events.
 - The Ulster-Scots Community Network to develop event delivery training programmes.
 - The establishment of a flagship Ulster-Scots cultural hub in Belfast, to be established on a properly resourced, sustainable basis, preferably in Ulster-Scots ownership.
 - The establishment of Ulster-Scots capital and revenue funding streams to support the development and operation of Ulster-Scots cultural facilities.
 - The development of a planned approach to the establishment of facilities for key sectoral organisations and/or cultural genres that will see a series of quality and sustainable Ulster-Scots
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cultural and interpretive centres developed that will support the preservation, development and sharing of culture.

- The Ulster-Scots Agency should develop:
 - a focused initiative to promote school-to-community transition in Ulster-Scots music and dance; and work with Sport NI to identify successful approaches.
 - proposals for the establishment of progression routes to regional youth bands/groups across Ulster-Scots musical and dance disciplines.
 - proposals for the establishment and support of youth bands in both school and community settings across the various Ulster-Scots genres and the resourcing of this should be undertaken by the Education Authority.
 - a grant programme to support the delivery of Ulster-Scots activity by youth-providers and recommends that this should be supported by the Education Authority.
- The Ulster-Scots Hairtlan and Toon/Village Heirskip programmes are resourced and developed in partnership with councils and communities.

Public Space

- Each Council should commission the collation of all Ulster-Scots placenames within its district and from this collation, a rolling programme of heritage signs be placed.
 - The Ulster-Scots Agency should be supported to expand the interpretative sign work.
 - Public authorities, when undertaking public realm works in areas of Ulster-Scots settlement or speech, should make it a priority to include interpretation of Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture.
 - The Ulster-Scots Agency should be supported to establish a public art fund which can be used to deliver projects which highlight important aspects of Ulster-Scots heritage.
 - In the public libraries there should be:
 - An audit of present heritage collections to identify the Ulster-Scots material to improve the library cataloguing and contribute to a digital archive.
 - Ulster-Scots provision scheme – A fund to provide each heritage collection library and two copies for the general collection of all new Ulster-Scots publications and a copy for each of the research and educational bodies.
 - Exhibition and Events Programmes –A partnership should be established with Libraries NI and resources provided to have at least two Ulster-Scots exhibitions each year (one general and one local) and ongoing work for Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture to be included in events.
 - Inclusion of Ulster-Scots in Library Classification Systems.
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- National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) and Ulster-Scots Agency (U-SA) to jointly commission a review of each of the museum offerings identifying the opportunities to give the Ulster-Scots identity its rightful and proportionate place within the narrative of each facility and in any future refurbishment.
- Establish a partnership with the Ulster-Scots Agency and Ulster-Scots Community Network on developing, delivering, and updating museum events programmes. In future the research and educational bodies should join this partnership.
- In keeping with the 4Rs and representation, the NMNI is a public body that should have Ulster-Scots representation.
- Charter obligations for public and private use of the language met.

Media

- The establishment of an Ulster-Scots Media Development Forum – This forum should be drawn from broadcasters, production companies and the Ulster-Scots community.
 - Broadcast Fund Commissions should include requirements on additional and legacy content and skills development.
 - Outreach work with new streaming companies to ensure they are aware of potential support and opportunities.
 - Online Media Development Stream – part of the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF) budget should be ringfenced to develop for, and promote on, social media platforms as well as website development.
 - Media Skills Fund – The USBF, in collaboration with broadcasters and production companies, should finance and support a range of Ulster-Scots media apprenticeships.
 - Music Development – Support for the professional production of song and music recordings including collaboration with the Research Institute Music Project and its work.
 - Quality standards – when established, the involvement of the three research and education bodies should be a standard requirement in supported productions.
 - Script and Screenwriter Development.
 - Digital Archive – All commissioned material should be required to be placed in a digital archive held by the Research Institute (access subject to copyright).
 - Post-Broadcast Legacy – To increase the legacy and access to broadcast material it should be made available for sale in the appropriate format by the Ulster-Scots Social Economy Company.
 - The present community radio licensing model is the most appropriate with other recommendations increasing Ulster-Scots content. The provision of more training to empower more to do so should be considered under the Media Skills Fund if needed.
 - Media training for Ulster-Scots activists and practitioners.
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- Creation of Ulster-Scots linguistic and cultural ambassadors as way of promoting a positive image of Ulster-Scots.
- The creation of a dedicated Publications Fund that will support:
 - Community-based Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture publications.
 - Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture sections in various media formats.
 - Creative writing programmes.
 - A micro-press as part of the recommended Social Economy company.
- Self-publishing support scheme – Basic costs support for Ulster-Scots self-publishing.

Human Rights

- A timetable from the Northern Ireland Executive on the establishment of the Office of Identity, and Cultural Expression no longer than one year from the publication of these recommendations.
 - A timetable from the Northern Ireland Executive for the establishment and appointment of an Ulster-Scots/Ulster-British Commissioner no longer than one year from the publication of these recommendations.
 - Inclusion in the recruitment of the Head of the Office of Identity, and Cultural Expression including consultation on the personnel specification and job description.
 - Inclusion in the recruitment of the Ulster-Scots/Ulster-British Commissioner including consultation on the personnel specification and job description and representation on the recruitment Panel e.g. a representative from the Agency.
 - The provision of dedicated resources for Ulster-Scots human rights work within six months of the publication of these recommendations.
 - Public awareness campaigns to coincide with the recognition of Ulster-Scots as a national minority, with follow-up campaigns on its anniversary.
 - A legal fund.
 - A timetable from the national government on the implementation of the Ulster-Scots recognition as a national minority no longer than six months from the publication of these recommendations.
 - A commitment and timetable from the Irish government to recognise Ulster-Scots as a national minority no longer than eighteen months of this.
 - Support from the Irish government for the comparable human rights development work identified above in Ireland.
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Connectedness

- The Ninian Fund – this fund would support projects between Ulster-Scots and Scots cultural and community groups.
- Northern Ireland Bureau Partnership – There should be a North America Diaspora Development Officer from the Ulster-Scots Agency placed within the Northern Ireland Bureau to act to develop and deepen the relationship with the Scotch-Irish community in the USA and Ulster-Scots community in Canada.
- Research Institute and Language Institute – these two institutions should establish relationships with comparable international institutions, partnership working and events drawing international expertise and audiences.

Economic Development

- Development of a major initiative to develop and promote our Ulster-Scots/Scotch-Irish heritage tourism offer in the context of the 250th Anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence in 2026.
- Commissioning an Economic Strategy – This would assess the present economic impact, the economic potential of Ulster-Scots and the utilisation of its ‘soft power’ and diaspora to enhance Northern Ireland’s economic development.
- The establishment of an Ulster-Scots Social Economy Company.
- Commissioning an Ulster-Scots Tourism Strategy.
- The creation of a Tourism Development Fund – this will fund the development Ulster-Scots Tourism product and services.
- Major event programme – This programme will seek to secure international events relevant to the Ulster-Scots identity to be hosted in Northern Ireland.

Section Four: Implementation and Monitoring - Recommendations

- Ulster-Scots Champions – Each Northern Ireland Department should designate a senior official to act as a champion for Ulster-Scots within their department.
 - Ulster-Scots Strategic Delivery Group – An Ulster-Scots Strategic Delivery Group should be established to coordinate and oversee implementation of the strategy and the progressive realisation of cultural rights for Ulster-Scots.
 - Monitoring and Evaluation Framework – A framework put in place across the public sector which ensures that actions in relation to Ulster-Scots are captured, evaluated and publicised including the publication of an annual report on delivery for Ulster-Scots by Departments and relevant sponsored bodies.
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Section One: Policy Analysis and Framework

Ulster-Scots Today

In the preparation of any report, it is easy to simply generate a list of the problems, but the Panel wants to recognise the advances made through the dedication of so many. In comparison with where the Ulster-Scots revival began in the early 1990s, now in 2022 there is:

- More community activity.
- More educational activity.
- More media productions, with new increased investment.
- More of our language collected, written, and spoken.
- More global awareness.

Most of this work and Ulster-Scots cultural life is delivered on a voluntary basis with individuals, communities and organisations committing their time and resources to inspire the next generation and to develop excellence. This work spans from the writer, the musician, the class in a community hall growing the delivery of local, national, and international events with artists that can perform to world-class standards. Custodians, tutors, ambassadors, and the creatives of the Ulster-Scots identity. This success is often in the face of many practical difficulties including limited financial support and sometimes despite personal adversity. The everyday does not mean it is unimportant. The everyday is the foundation of all future success.

However, this positivity is tempered with the knowledge that:

1. Past government promises have been unfulfilled e.g. the Ulster-Scots Academy (exacerbated by the treatment of individuals and Ulster-Scots groups as well as when the budgeted resources were reallocated, they were not redistributed to other Ulster-Scots work).
2. The last strategy has not resulted in significant policy or resource improvements, held back by political disagreement and the Executive hiatus. There is a sense of official stasis at best and at worst a retreat. The policy approach of too much of government is either to ignore Ulster-Scots, treat it as an afterthought or tokenistic treatment.
3. The loss of Ministerial Advisory Group on Ulster-Scots (MAGUS) funding support had a particular negative impact on academic activity.
4. There is little to no mainstreaming of Ulster-Scots by government departments or public bodies with groups rejected and pushed to showcase the Ulster-Scots Agency and its highly limited

resources. For example, the Department of Education only funds one Ulster-Scots project, the successful dance tuition programme in the North-West.

5. These all combine to leave Ulster-Scots with a stop-start-stop development process when what is needed is sustained development.

These five factors mean that as the Panel has tried to progress with its work it has been met with significant levels of scepticism from the community. The Panel is aware of this, acknowledges it and believes it sets out necessary actions to address it. If a new strategy, based on our recommendations is to succeed there must likewise be governmental awareness, acknowledgement, and action to overcome this.

In response to this scepticism, we would highlight the significant cultural package for Ulster-Scots in NDNA. This included a number of the long-standing demands of the Ulster-Scots revival. This includes:

- Recognition of Ulster-Scots as a national minority in the United Kingdom, first raised by Ulster-Scots groups in the 1990s.
- A new legal duty on the Department of Education.
- The Ulster-British/Ulster-Scots Commissioner whose powers focus heavily on Ulster-Scots.
- The establishment of the Office for Identity and Cultural Expression with additional resources to support cultural development.

The Panel believes this package and a new strategy is an opportunity for a step change. The creation of these new accountability mechanisms, human rights protections and legal recourse will coincide with the adoption of a new strategy. Our recommendations will likewise seek to empower the Ulster-Scots community to fully use them.

Whatever the past successes and challenges, there is a common commitment that can unite us all – seeing Ulster-Scots fulfil its true and full potential.

Ulster's Cultural Tapestry

The report and subsequent strategy should be underpinned by the following cultural analysis of Northern Ireland.

The modern cultural debate in Northern Ireland was shaped by the Cultural Traditions Group of the late 1980s, which was the primary propagator of the 'Two Traditions' model. This model is in the view of the Ulster-Scots Panel of Experts represents a deeply flawed, reductionist and unhelpful approach as:

- It directly mirrors the primary political division, encouraging and reinforcing the politicisation of culture.
- It oversimplifies and does not reflect the true diversity of Northern Ireland and its cultural influences historically or today.
- It misrepresents the nature of identity and the possibilities for it to be multi-layered and/or mixed identity.

In terms of Northern Ireland's cultural underlay, a three-tradition model is a much more accurate starting point. Throughout its history, this land has been subject to Irish, Scottish, and English influences with movements of people, ideas and cultures flowing back and forth, not simply tied to the Settlement and Plantation period. Over the centuries the scale, depth and appreciation of those influences have risen and fallen, for example at the end of the 17th century, Ulster-Scots outnumbered the Irish by a ratio of two to one.

These three strands are reflected in Christianity through the predominance of Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism and Presbyterianism or to use its historical terminology Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter. It is reflected in the predominance of the Irish Gaelic and Scots languages in our shared Ulster-English dialect.

This confluence and interaction of three of the four primary influences within the British Isles in this one place makes it both diverse and distinctive. Never has one of these three traditions ever become fully predominant over the others, even when one has tried to become so.

The predominance of Englishness within Britishness has meant the Ulster-English did not fully develop as a conscious community, while the Irish and Ulster-Scots communities can be considered and recognised as national minorities within a UK context.

The tapestry has been and will be added to through our established and new minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland who are making their own contribution to our collective cultural wealth.

Ulster-Scots and our minority ethnic communities have a common feature – a global outlook and reach of past migrations. This diaspora and broader cultural wealth also represent a 'soft' power of

Northern Ireland that is not being fully used for our common benefit.

Principles, Concepts and Practice

Any vision must be based on a set of principles, and these can be drawn from two sources. First the Ulster Cultural Charter by the then Ulster-Scots Heritage Council (USHC), which advocated a three traditions model and aimed to encourage mutual respect and to sustain an inclusive cultural plurality. It set out five principles:

1. That our diverse cultural traditions, individually and collectively, constitute the cultural wealth of our society and should be the source of common pride, value, and celebration.
2. That the celebration of our different cultural traditions should foster individual and community self-esteem and encourage respect for others.
3. That in our culturally plural society each cultural tradition should enjoy equality of recognition, parity of respect and uniformity of treatment from individuals and institutions.
4. That within our diversity no single cultural tradition should be entitled to claim the monopoly of indigenous culture or to seek exclusive treatment thereby.
5. That cultural traditions should be valued for themselves and should not be exploited for ulterior purposes.

Concepts

In addition, there is the work of INCORE at the Ulster University that developed three core concepts of Equity, Diversity, and Interdependence. They defined them as:

- Equity – We treat our diverse cultures and cultural traditions fairly and equitably. Equity is intended to address inequality.
- Diversity – We recognise and respect our diverse cultures and cultural traditions.
- Interdependence – We seek to build social cohesion and we need all three if we are to have a ‘shared and better’ future. Anything less will not work.

This work also concluded that:

“No one sector of society can or should be looked at on its own when adopting a multicultural approach, a holistic approach is central to any discussion of the management of diversity.”

The Four Rs

These principles and values need to be translated into policy practice. We believe fulfilment of the four Rs – Recognition, Respect, Representation and Resources. These practices mean:

- There must be **recognition** of the existence of each cultural tradition. Those whose cultural traditions are excluded or ignored will feel themselves to be excluded or ignored and indeed not included.
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- There must be **respect** for each cultural tradition and it should not be demonised or disparaged. Those whose cultural traditions are demonised or disparaged will feel themselves to be demonised or disparaged. Cultural Identity is part of who people are and to ridicule their cultural identity is to ridicule them. This inevitably results in suspicion, distrust, and long-term distancing by a cultural group, which in turn produces difficulties in terms of a cohesive society.
- Where public **resources** are being allocated, then each of our cultural traditions should be treated on the basis of equity and this is about more than money. As well as public funding, it is about such things as access to the media and inclusion in the education system because education and the media are especially important in affirming and promoting cultural traditions. The recognition of the validity of cultural traditions is fundamental to an inclusive, stable, and successful society.
- The fourth area of equality is that of **representation**. In our society, there are publicly appointed bodies that have a specific cultural remit, for example dealing with arts, broadcasting, cultural diversity, or museums. Our cultural communities should be represented on those bodies and the bodies should be representative of Northern Ireland society

Embedding the Revival

The principles and practices detailed above are not Ulster-Scots specific but can be a better policy framework for all. Therefore, we need to reflect on the circumstances of Ulster-Scots too.

Although we have come far since the revival began in the 1990s manifesting in the establishment of the Ulster-Scotch Leid Societie (Ulster-Scots Language Society) and then the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council (bringing together the long-established Ulster-Scots groups with new community-based groups), Ulster-Scots is still under-developed and under-appreciated. Some still dismiss and denigrate it. If the Ulster-Scots revival is to advance at the pace this report sets out and overcome such challenges, then government must commit to three further principles:

- Empowerment – As the Ulster-Scots revival expands into new areas or grows existing areas of work this will require new skills or expansion of human resource. All major and strategic programmes, projects and funding streams must have an empowerment element. We should not seek to simply ‘buy-in’ services but ensure where possible, projects and programmes build capacity to empower the Ulster-Scots sector to deliver such work in future. In other words, the long-term outcome from this empowerment is that what is “for us” will be “by us”.
 - Mainstreaming – These recommendations are for all future Ulster-Scots development. The comprehensive delivery of the subsequent strategy and the cultural rights which underpin it will require concerted effort across government departments and the public sector. Responsibility for implementation cannot simply be left on the shoulders of the Ulster-Scots Agency, as it has been in the past, with insufficient powers and resources to deliver. The Agency will have a crucial role that will require additional resources and capacity but the delivery of many of the recommendations in this report are not its responsibility. It is vital that Departments and public
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bodies mainstream support for Ulster-Scots within their work, while taking advantage of the advice and guidance that the Ulster-Scots Agency is there to provide, in line with its statutory remit.

- Excellence – This must permeate all the work of Ulster-Scots revival. We need to attract the next generation. We need to help many Ulster-Scots overcome what the Catalans call ‘the cultural cringe’. We need to put forward our best face to those of goodwill outside the Ulster-Scots community and deny ammunition to those who seek to dismiss. This will be best demonstrated with a consistent high quality of production and design approaches.

Both increase the ask of this report with resource implications, but both are necessary.

Cultural Wealth

The concept of cultural wealth is central to this report so what do we mean by that?

Cultures, their expression and their development have two primary values.

First, they have a value in their own right. It is often cultural development and innovation that contribute to broader societal and human development. It enables old ideas to be examined, developed, criticised, and improved and provides new inspiration to present and future generations. The cultures that thrive are the cultures that do this and take the best from it all.

Second, there is a relationship between cultural confidence and successful economies. Cultural empowerment produces a positive economic outcome. In the modern global economy, creativity is more important than ever.

These values combine into cultural wealth and worth which mean it is appropriate for cultures to be part of public policy and have appropriate levels of public resources. Government already provides significant financial support for education, culture, arts, lesser used languages, and sports. Support for cultural traditions is part of that existing policy and resources context but Ulster-Scots has not been given its appropriate place within those policies and resources.

The Ulster-Scots Revival model

The Panel wishes to highlight how the report and recommendations are for our language, heritage, and culture. These are the ‘trinity’ of the Ulster-Scots revival. Success will be the advancement of all three and we believe they are interdependent. They are not for cherry-picking nor ranking but advanced individually and collectively to their needs and potential.

The recovery and future development of our language cannot proceed without the nurturing of its culture and heritage. A culture and heritage devalue, if disconnected from their language. A language and culture ignorant of its heritage will misunderstand itself and be misunderstood.

A multi-layered approach increases the opportunities and likelihood of long-term success of our revival. Many Ulster-Scots have a limited understanding of the full value of their identity. Some are disconnected entirely from it. This is even more true of those outwith the Ulster-Scots community. The strength of the tri-partite approach is it maximises the opportunities to engage, as we rebuild and grow ‘our shining city on the hill’ it must be a city of many gateways.

This is crucial for the part of our inheritance that has suffered the greatest neglect, our language. It is like a shoal of fish trying to survive in a shrinking and polluted lake. Without expanding and restoring the lake then the fish will not flourish. The development of our culture and heritage will clean the water, refill the lake and our work on the language will restock and return the shoal to full size. The impact of this work will not be limited to Ulster-Scots – the restoration of the lake will mean Ulster-Scots’ value is recognised beyond it and contributes to the broader societal and cultural ‘ecosystem’.

Therefore, it is crucial that policy fully recognises this multi-layered and inter-connected nature of the revival. Ulster-Scots must not be a square peg forced into the round hole of other revival models.

Reaching Beyond Northern Ireland

The Panel fully acknowledges that a strategy is a statutory duty only of the Northern Ireland Executive with most of the proposals focused on what is within its responsibilities. However, the Ulster-Scots community is not limited to Northern Ireland nor is its cultural wealth or story. It is cross-border, cross-channel, and cross-continental.

The Ulster-Scots spoken in Donegal is as much a part of our language as that spoken in Antrim and Down. There are the burgeoning relationships amongst Ulster-Scots and Scots language writers providing inspiration and practical support to one another. There is the music that flowed from Scotland to Ulster that evolved or inspired more and was then taken to North America where it took many different paths. This is all part of our cultural wealth.

However, the Panel believes it should be recognised that our Executive has a reach beyond Northern Ireland. The Executive: is a member of the North-South Ministerial Council with a Language Body one of its sub-organisations; a member of the British-Irish Council within which it can be the policy lead; has a representational role for Northern Ireland to the national government; working relationships with the Scottish government; and in some cases, relationships and access at a senior level with foreign governments relevant to the Ulster-Scots diaspora e.g. the United States of America (USA). Likewise, many public bodies and agencies accountable to Executive Departments e.g. Arts Council have relationships with their sister organisations in the rest of the UK and in Ireland of potential value.

The Panel believes such work is vital for the success of the revival by building a multiplicity of relationships between communities, organisations, creatives, and academics. It is central to the connectedness we want the Ulster-Scots identity, through its language, heritage, and culture, to achieve. We also believe it will unleash the ‘soft power’ of the Ulster-Scots diaspora to the benefit of Northern Ireland, the full economic potential of the revival including diaspora tourism and the potential to attract further resources to support Ulster-Scots development from outside Northern Ireland (it is often forgotten that the Ulster-American Folk Park was established with significant financial support from the USA).

The recognition of the significance of Ulster-Scots enables multiple connections to people, cultures, and markets in the global economy. Full and enlightened awareness of the Ulster-Scots story is not only a means to provide proper healing and understanding within Northern Ireland but provides a means to communicate this story to those beyond. The utilisation and development of Ulster-Scots ‘soft power’ and co-investing it with the soft power of others for the benefit of all. We are one of many multiple-stranded countries in the world and our story has resonance and attraction everywhere.

Section Two: Vision Statement

The Child of 2022 – the Adult of 2042

Based on the analysis, principles and practices set out, the Panel's long-term vision for the development of this report has been constructed around an Ulster-Scots child born in 2022.

The identity development work grows as they grow to adulthood. It sets out what is needed for that child to become a culturally and linguistically confident adult living in a Northern Ireland that fully recognises and embraces the breadth and depth of the Ulster-Scots identity. They are connected to their cultural wealth with positive relationships with other communities and identities.

The milestones in their life should be matched by milestones in the development of Ulster-Scots.

Long-term vision can often be the enemy of short-term action or tie the hands of those who come after. Therefore, the Panel have worked back from our twenty-year vision and set out proposals for the first five years. This is not a rejection of past Ulster-Scots strategy work. Many of the ideas contained within past work are central to this new framework for our long-term advancement. It is important that real progress is made in preserving, enhancing, and developing Ulster-Scots through this report and subsequent strategy and not a repetition of past inaction by Departments, inaction partly driven by an Executive impasse.

The strategic framework is driven by tri-partite approach of values, capacity, and environment. The work undertaken fits with the values of the Ulster-Scots revival, the community has the capability to progress the work (with an emphasis on 'For Us, By Us') and the external environment is an accepting one.

What does this all mean in practical terms?

Ulster-Scots as a thriving 21st century identity driven by the revival of its language, heritage, and culture, this will include:

- Education – as this child progresses through every level of the education system (nursery, primary, secondary, tertiary and/or adult education), Ulster-Scots has an ever-growing place in the curriculum and formal studies. This will include:
 - General Curriculum – materials produced, and teachers empowered, to deliver curriculum themes with an Ulster-Scots emphasis within all Key Stages.
 - Direct study – this can begin with time-bound programmes with a general focus that then broadens to offer discrete topics. In parallel the work to go further should begin with the development of syllabuses at GCSE, A- and degree levels with the aim the child of 2022 will be a student (if not before then).
 - Teaching the teachers – educational practitioners and teachers, both as part of qualification

and further professional development, are developed to utilise educational materials and then taught as discrete subjects.

- Adult education – the development of the full range of adult education opportunities to tackle the historic legacy of neglect within the education system and to fulfil our commitments to raising broader community awareness and understanding.
 - Online – in all the above developments the utilisation of online education should be a key facet to maximise uptake, access and legacy to investment and development.
 - Academic Research and Development – Our cultural wealth is not fully appreciated as its breadth and depth is not completely known. No Ulster-Scots today, nor broader society, have full access to it. Academic research is central to accessing all our cultural wealth and empowering the next generation to add to it. This will involve appropriate levels of participation, partnership, and leadership in:
 - Education – providing the academic basis for educational developments that deepen awareness of our culture, heritage, and language.
 - Language – speaker-driven research, establishing the Ulster-Scots language corpus and language planning.
 - Music – establishing, collecting and restoring the Ulster-Scots music corpus.
 - Historical and anthropological research of role models – the stories of Ulster-Scots achievers whether it is politics, education, industry, science, or the arts to inspire the next generation.
 - Community Life – the opportunity to participate, contribute to Ulster-Scots providing a vibrant community life. This will include:
 - A network of local cultural centres and collectives (local partnerships delivering activity in a variety of venues) built around the skills and creativity of the Ulster-Scots communities and individuals across Northern Ireland.
 - Culture programming – local Ulster-Scots, national and international events, and festivals some with regional profiles as well as inclusion in general arts and cultural programmes.
 - The core cultural institutions continue to hold and pass on our skills and traditions e.g. musical and dance instruction to future generations to the excellent standards of past generations.
 - Inclusion in the public space.
 - A modern everyday language – Ulster-Scots is written and spoken, in public and private, more than ever before across the generations and capable of discussing all aspects of 2042 life.
 - Media – whatever the form you will find regular and positive representations and new creative content. Content driven by Ulster-Scot creatives and companies that the empowerment approach has developed and maintained a skills development pipeline and talent pool within our community. This will banish the negative representations, representations that speak to the fears and prejudices of their authors not the value of our identity.
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- Public space – we have a name, it is Ulster-Scots. We have a story. Both will be found within our museums and interpretative centres.
- Rights Framework – the Ulster-Scots identity with its status as a national minority, enjoys its full rights protections and participates at all levels in the protection structures.
- Connectedness – this flourishing is matched by deepening connections and re-connections with Scotland and our diaspora – rooted not just to Northern Ireland but an identity with global relationships.
- Economic Contribution and Benefits – Ulster-Scots whether through the cultural confidence and creativity it instils, the inspiration of past achievements and using the cross-border, cross channel, and cross-continental connections to advance Northern Ireland’s economy.

Section Three: Actions

Powers and Resources

Powers

There was a previous ministerial commitment to action, the Ulster-Scots Institute, which went unfulfilled when a lack of Departmental legal powers was identified. The Panel wishes to ensure this does not arise again for any proposals within this report and subsequent strategy.

Therefore, the first recommendation of the Panel is that all the proposals for action set out below are reviewed by all appropriate government legal authorities to confirm that they fall within existing Executive and Departmental powers. If any are identified as falling outwith existing powers, then the powers necessary should be identified and the necessary legislation passed within a prompt timeframe. If this is not possible, then an alternative delivery mechanism should be identified.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends:

- The completion of a legal review within 3 months of the adoption of this report with actions identified for Departments.
- Departmental submissions to the Executive for legislative action within 6 months of the adoption of this report.
- Legislation presented to the Assembly at the earliest possible opportunity after that.

Furthermore, the Panel notes that there is an inconsistency in the language of NDNA, which has been carried into the draft legislation in relation to the cultural package which was published alongside it. The remit of the Commissioner with responsibility for Ulster-Scots is described as dealing with Ulster-Scots language, arts, and literature, while this strategy, also a product of NDNA, has a remit in respect of Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture. The latter formulation is reflective of a decade of policy and the broad human rights framework, including the Framework Convention for National Minorities, under which the national government has committed to recognise the Ulster-Scots community as a national minority within the UK, also an NDNA commitment. The panel noted the difference in the language of the legal duty of the strategy for the Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture and the New Decade New Approach (NDNA) terminology of language, literature, and arts. There is no legal or policy basis for the language, arts and literature formulation currently proposed and the legislation should be revised in line with human rights and established policy as language, heritage, and culture.

We also note the draft NDNA legislation creates a duty for Ulster-Scots in education but does not contain legal text clearly setting out powers to act. The Panel does not consider this a barrier to

action. This duty was modelled on the integrated education and Irish-medium duties, but these involved the establishment of new sectors/schools while the Ulster-Scots duty is more focused on a place within the existing educational system. Therefore, we would anticipate that it would be possible to give effect to the duty using the existing statutory powers of the Department of Education.

Recommendations

However, the Panel is convinced that the ability to act should be unambiguous and being conscious of past problems, we recommend two steps that need to commence immediately:

1. The Department of Education should seek legal opinion, if necessary, from the Attorney General, confirming that existing powers are sufficient for the duty to be implemented without any material difference or disadvantage to the Ulster-Scots community.
2. If the legal opinion indicates any doubt at all over the power to act, then this technical correction should be pursued by the Department of Education with the Northern Ireland Office as it takes forward the legislation at Westminster.

Broader work that is supported by departments or public agencies must be progressed in consultation with the Ulster-Scots community and in consultation with the Ulster-Scots Agency, in recognition of its standing of the Ulster-Scots Agency as a statutory body established to advise government in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

Resources

The Panel considers the additional resources being made available through:

- Existing Departmental Budgets – in keeping with the mainstreaming principles and fulfilment of legal duties.
- The Office of Identity and Cultural Expression Funding programmes.
- Increased funding to the U-SA for cross-border and NI work.
- Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund.
- BBC and other broadcasters.
- Academic Research funding streams.
- Relationship building with charities and foundations of the diaspora.
- Income generation from projects.
- An increase in government resources provided.

Education

If Ulster-Scots is to move forward and to be transmitted to present and future generations it must have the necessary materials, resourcing and pedagogic support required to be able to deliver it across all areas of education in Northern Ireland from pre-school, through primary, secondary, tertiary and community education.

Recommendations

The Panel believes these multiple roles require a triumvirate of organisations and recommends:

- Ulster-Scots Research Institute – this would be university-based with bursaries offered to researchers and students, module and course development, academic publishing and academic event development and contributions. Its broader work is detailed in the Academic Research and Development Section.
- Ulster-Scots College – this would be focused on developing the knowledge base in relation to Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture in order to support:
 - The development and delivery of accredited and non-accredited courses and programmes of lifelong learning, both in-person and online.
 - The development and delivery of publications, exhibitions, and conferences in Northern Ireland and beyond.
 - The development of curriculum materials working in partnership with by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA). In the interim any such work should be in partnership with the Ulster-Scots Agency.
 - Professional development of teachers.
 - Future general curriculum development.
- Language Institution – this would take forward the language research and language development programme with an associated publishing programme.

The work of the three institutions is interlocking and interdependent. It is vital they focus on the needs and plans of the Ulster-Scots community. Therefore, they should work within a 'Research and Educational Framework' developed by the community, the work planning processes of these three institutions should be co-ordinated to maximise mutual support and delivery of that framework and the community embedded in the structure to maintain accountability during implementation.

Academic Research and Development

The Panel recognises the fundamental requirement of maintaining, preserving, and developing Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture through a strong, focused, and sustained research base.

This foundation should operate under the auspices of the highest possible academic standards, working in collaboration between academia and the community of Northern Ireland. All strands of the areas for action in this report and subsequent strategy need to be underpinned by sound academic practice, benchmarking, and auditing. Furthermore, they need to be informed by ongoing, robust, and directed research that provides shape, direction, clarity, and detail to aid the progress of Ulster-Scots.

There is at present no body capable of delivering what is necessary in the area of Research. This is a grave impediment which prevents the consolidation and advancement of Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture. Despite past initiatives to drive the Research Strategy forward, there remains a major gap in provision for Ulster-Scots in Northern Ireland. Past initiatives include The Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies, The Ulster-Scots Academy Implementation Group, The Stranmillis Education Project, The Ministerial Advisory Group for an Ulster-Scots Academy, alongside a range of projects generated by the Ulster-Scots Language Society, and a variety of community groups. Rather than a sustained and informed process of research and dissemination of findings, there has been a ‘stop-start’ approach that has been highly damaging to Ulster-Scots language development in particular and caused much hurt and frustration in the community. It is essential that this situation is rectified and that proper measures are put in place to redress the current state of academic engagement and capacity.

The Panel wishes to draw attention to previous strategy and consultation documents in which the need for research as an underpinning driver of the entire process of development was recognised and recommended. The Panel have found it frustrating to read in several strategy documents the lip-service paid to research-planning and action only to see these never come to fruition. Many of the proposals the Panel would make are those that have been requested since the times of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. A phrase that occurs often in carrying out research is the necessity to avoid reinventing the wheel. The thing that saddens the Panel is that it has often not been a case that strategies have sought to reinvent the wheel, but that they have developed the concept of the wheel without this ever being fully trialled or implemented. We must move beyond this impasse. There is much work to be done to develop a proper and robust research sector in Ulster-Scots and the Panel would like to make the following two-stage plan for consolidation and further development.

Recommendations

In order to generate a viable and sustainable research culture in Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture the Panel recommends that:

- The Ulster-Scots Research Institute be responsible for generating and commissioning research.
- This portfolio of research activity of the Institute would address the areas of action outlined in the previous research strategy:
 - Third Level Education
 - Research and Development including supporting the work of the College to develop educational materials
 - Musical Corpus and development
 - Expert support to media project development

At this point in time Ulster-Scots faces a number of challenges which require a multi-agency approach to stabilise, consolidate, and attain the rich potential that exists. Fundamental to this process is the need to create a Research Institute that will provide the best possible guidance, resourcing and critical scrutiny that is needed across all of the proposed areas of action.

Media

The Panel recognises the major contribution that Media and Creative Industries provide to Northern Ireland. The Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF) has demonstrated how far the development of programming and upskilling of practitioners has enhanced the Northern Ireland economy and culture during the lifetime of the Fund. The Panel recognises the need for research to underpin this growing sector in the province to ensure it meets our commitment to excellence and how support is required to inform and direct the development of traditional and new forms of media. There remains much of the Ulster-Scots story that has not been articulated and many facets which would benefit from examination and exploration. While there exists at present a small, but highly informed and indispensable body of media consultants, there is much opportunity to expand and diversify the expertise and approach of this grouping.

Recommendations

As part of its remit for the Institute the Panel recommends:

1. Work closely with the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund to offer research guidance and expertise.
 2. Provide online materials and resources of excellent academic quality that illuminate Ulster-Scots heritage and culture.
 3. Offer conferences, talks, workshops, and events that will be of interest to professional and community practitioners.
 4. Conduct research on the reception, reach and appropriateness of media programming and content.
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Heritage and Culture

The Panel recognises the considerable cultural wealth that Ulster-Scots has within Northern Ireland and within its diaspora in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and across the world. While many inroads have been made into researching this immensely significant and much cherished cultural sphere there remains much to be done in this area. The Research Institute will co-ordinate efforts to research and publish on this area. Ulster-Scots culture covers many historical periods and places, and the Institute will seek to co-ordinate and lead on the creation of top-quality research in this field.

There is a long Ulster-Scots music tradition that covers a broad range of folk, religious, and marching band genres. This is preserved across many formats in poetry collections, chapbooks, broadsheets, field and electronic recordings, public and private archives, and the oral tradition. One example of a gap in our inheritance is from the weaver poets tradition. They were songwriters too, but the words are nowhere set to the tunes they wrote them for. Alongside this history of composition and handing of tunes and song lyrics there is a wealth of knowledge of musical competition, innovation, song and playing styles and instrument making.

The Ulster-Scots tradition is a major component of the musical and lyrical interchange between the United Kingdom, Ireland, and North America. The establishment and recognition of this corpus would be of immense cultural value to Northern Ireland and would offer considerable benefits:

1. To communities through extending opportunities for creative and commercial self-expression.
2. In enhancing the standing and employment prospects of musicians and technicians within this area.
3. By expanding the cultural exchange benefits and ambassadorial function music provides in a Transatlantic setting.

The Panel wants to see a re-birth of the song tradition. This is highlighted as an example of how such work could link to broader developments in the revival. The material can be published and/or used in music training classes. It can provide new material for Ulster-Scots performers. The music and songs can become recorded material. This will feed into media output for US community radio and visual programming on social and mainstream media – an academic base to a growing identity.

Recommendations

For heritage and culture the Panel recommends it will:

1. Conduct and disseminate research into its variety and extent.
 2. Work with stakeholders within academia and the community to explore areas of cultural practice.
 3. Host conferences, workshops, talks, and events that commemorate and celebrate.
 4. A music-focused workstream to archive and restore the Ulster-Scots music.
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Language

Previous strategies have raised the issue of standardisation of spelling in Ulster-Scots as a prerequisite for embedding it within the curriculum. This, the Panel finds, should not be a barrier to developing Ulster-Scots in the classroom. Given that the delivery of Scots language materials is not hindered by the fact that the Scots language does not have agreement on spelling, it should not follow that Ulster-Scots has to. In addition, there has been a considerable amount of work conducted in the last 15 years that illuminates Ulster-Scots orthography and much already in place that should not make the variety of spelling of certain Ulster-Scots words an issue or an obstruction to learning.

In earlier sections we have made mention of distrust and relationships deeply harmed by past events and behaviour. This has had the greatest impact in language development. A resolution for any past injustice is sadly not within the gift of the Panel. The Panel believes it must acknowledge it and its legacy.

The Panel does not believe it needs to waste a lot of time for no reason on what needs done. The issues identified in the Ulster-Scots Language Strategy (July 2000) remain the same. The plans developed by the Ulster-Scots Academy Implementation Group (and then prevented from progressing) are what must be advanced. The belief that the Frisian Academy model is the most appropriate for Ulster-Scots remains true¹. All who wish to see the language advance want to see the speakers field research to recommence; to establish the Ulster-Scots language corpus; the further development of the Ulster-Scots dictionary and grammar; language development; and all to enable us to pass the part of our identity at greatest risk to future generations.

There is a core consensus on language issues despite the past fracturing of relationships, it is vital that we build on that consensus and do so promptly. The involvement and confidence of the established language groups will ensure all of this work advances in the quickest manner.

The Panel is convinced that to allow this situation to remain would be an act of self-harm. Further inaction means those who intended for Ulster-Scots not to advance have succeeded. A renewed effort to move forward a language institution and its vital work is the greatest rebuke to our opponents and the greatest gift we can give to future generations, but relationships need rebuilt first.

¹ The Fryske Akademy (Frisian for Frisian Academy), founded in 1938, is the scientific centre for research and education concerning Friesland (Fryslân in West Frisian) and its people, language, and culture. Its work focuses particularly on the West Frisian language. It has also done a great deal to regulate the language. The Fryske Akademy publishes the *Wurdboek fan de Fryske Taal* [fy] (Dictionary of the (West) Frisian Language), which serves as the language's principal authority. The social purpose of the Fryske Akademy is, as its statutes have it, the maintenance of societies for the study of Friesland, in which professional scientists and amateur scientists participate.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends:

- A formal professional mediation process involving the key individuals and Ulster-Scots organisations with the aim of agreeing the partnerships, relationships, and ways of working to move the language institution forward.

The Panel is also conscious that the decline of the language is not waiting for any of us, and that any mediation process must be timebound. Therefore we suggest a process of six months (but participants will be open to change that if they so decide).

In the absence of a successful outcome to this process then the language institution work will have to progress in its absence. This would be far from ideal and not the outcome sought by the Panel, but the work must begin.

Institutional Establishment

The Panel believes these institutions can be established and their work commenced well before the end of the expected strategy time period. It recommends the following steps:

- 1 Commissioning the 'Research and Educational Framework'. This framework will require in-depth research and consultation. It must approach the Language Institution work with sensitivity. This will set out and co-ordinate the five-year work plans for the three institutions. The Panel expects this work to take six months.
- 2 The establishment of the membership and governance of these three new bodies. The Panel expects this work to take three months.
- 3 The development of business plans. The Panel expects this work to take four months.
- 4 The development of business cases. The Panel expects this work to take two months.
- 5 Completion of Economic Appraisals. The Panel expects this work to take three months.
- 6 Allocation of Resources. The Panel expects this to occur at once.
- 7 Recruitment and establishment of the new research and educational bodies within six months of resources secured.

The time taken to establish these new institutions will create a difference with the next strategy timeline. This will enable the future Ulster-Scots strategy work to reflect on progress to date and consider what priorities it will feed into the second Research and Education Framework process.

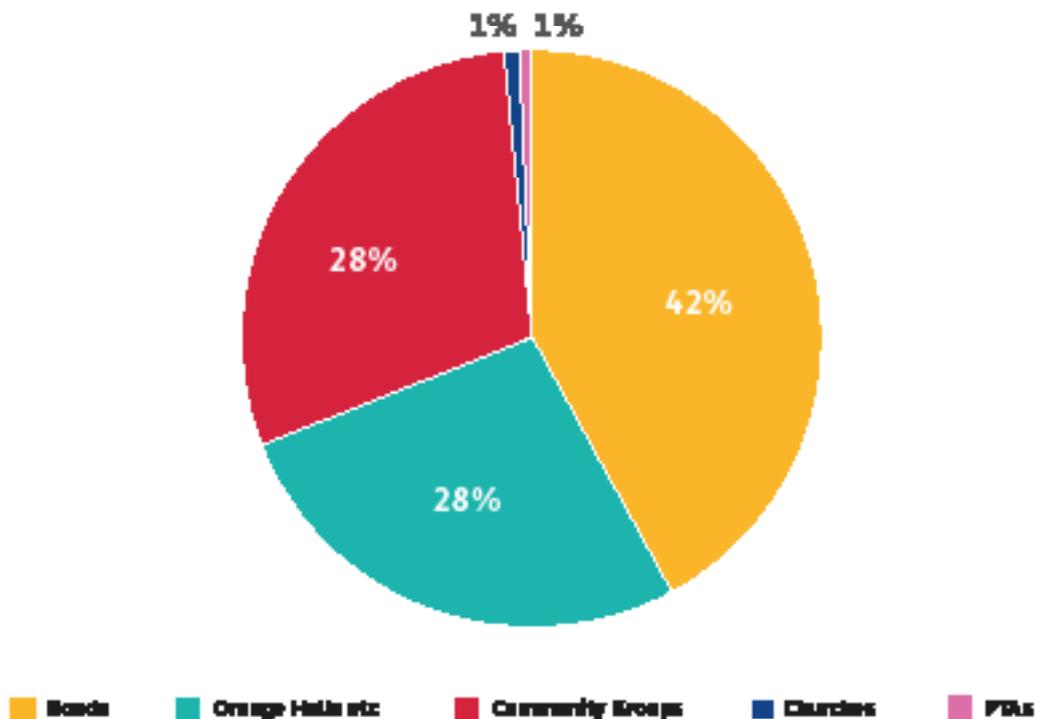
Community and Cultural Life

As a group, the Panel has over 100 years of experience working in and with the Ulster-Scots community sector, which we define as community groups engaging in whole or part in Ulster-Scots language, heritage, or culture.

State of the Sector

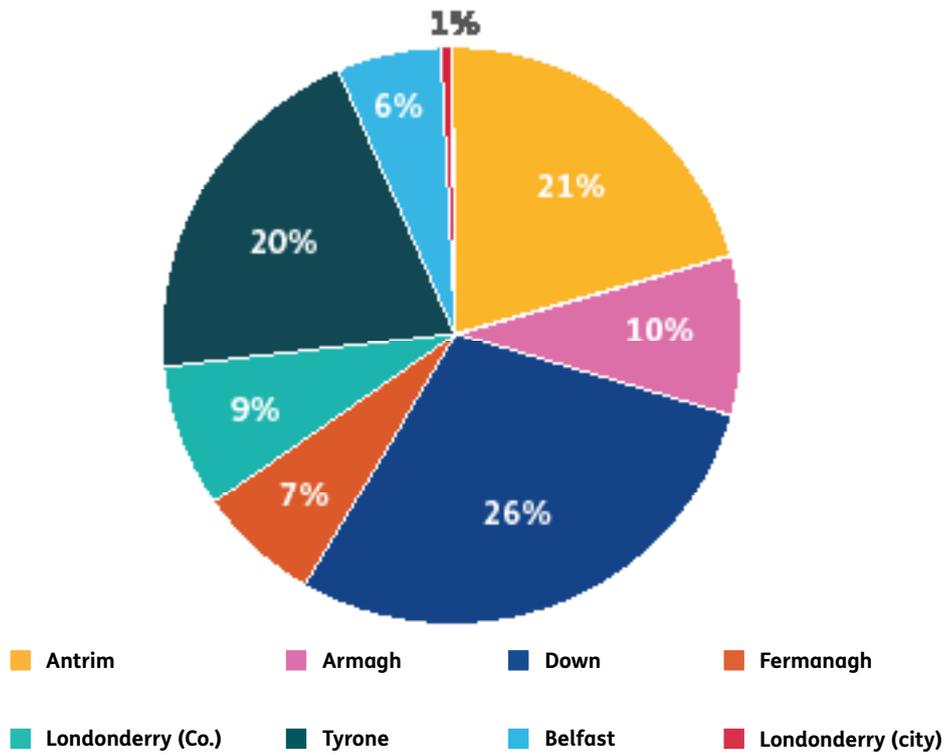
The Ulster-Scots community sector is large, diverse, and geographically distributed across Northern Ireland. It ranges from groups which focus exclusively on aspects of Ulster-Scots to those which have Ulster-Scots as an element within a broader programme and varies widely in form encompassing numerous genres of music and dance, language, literature, and a wide variety of local heritage. Analysis shared by the Ulster-Scots Agency in relation to more than 600 groups funded under a recent Covid-19 funding round showed that there was a diverse mix of groups supported, with grants made to bands, community groups, churches, Parent Teacher Associations, and Orange Halls.

Ulster-Scots Covid Funds by type of group

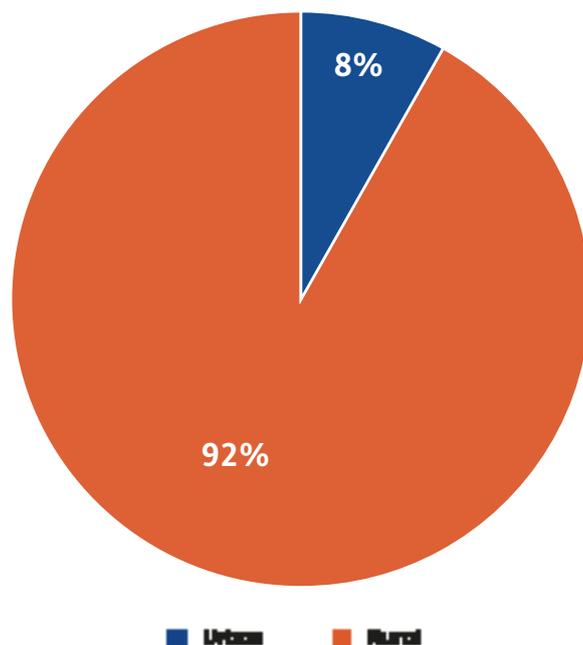


There was also a broad geographical spread of funding. Significantly, 92% of grants were made to groups outside Belfast and Londonderry.

Ulster-Scots Covid Funding



Ulster-Scots Covid Funds – Urban / Rural split



Most of the groups that engage in Ulster-Scots activity are not explicitly branded as Ulster-Scots. Therefore the size of the Ulster-Scots community sector tends to be underestimated. Out of a total of 624 groups funded under the Covid scheme, 42% or 262 were bands. However, we know from mapping work undertaken by activists in the marching bands sector that there are at least 640 marching bands which operate in an Ulster-Scots cultural context. This suggests that a further 378 could be added to the 624, to give a figure of 1002 groups that are currently delivering or supporting Ulster-Scots activity to some level.

Potential for Further Growth

It is important to differentiate between existing, unmet need and potential need. The figure of roughly 1000 groups represents those that are actively engaging with Ulster-Scots cultural activity to some degree now. Most of whom are not receiving support, but we can be sure that there are many more groups all over Northern Ireland that could and would engage with Ulster-Scots but have not yet done so, because no-one has so far engaged with them.

Church communities are a good example; of the groups that received a Covid grant from the Ulster-Scots Agency, 1% were church groups, roughly six groups. Presbyterianism is a key element of the story of the Ulster-Scots identity and religious faith. There are in the region of 500 Presbyterian congregations of various denominations in Northern Ireland. Each of those congregations, in terms of their heritage, could identify as an Ulster-Scots community. Each contains sub-groups which focus on women, men, and young people. Often, they also host other independent organisations such as the Boys' and Girls' Brigades.

It should also be remembered that not all Ulster-Scots are Presbyterians and not all Presbyterians are Ulster-Scots. Although many will have Presbyterian heritage, today, a proportion are members of other denominations too. This is exemplified in Fermanagh, where riding or reiving families, who relocated from the Scottish Borders, tended to join the Church of Ireland. Today, names like Armstrong, Elliot, Johnston, and Graham are among the most numerous names within the Ulster-Scots community in that area. The passage of time, religious conversions and development of new denominations means that there are many more communities out there that could become part of the Ulster-Scots sector.

It is worth noting at this point that some faith/church communities face a particular barrier in relation to developing activities to engage with their cultural identity. One of the largest sources of mainstream funding for community, art and heritage activity is the National Lottery, via Big Lottery, Arts Council NI, and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). HLF is also one of the most significant sources of funding for the preservation of historic churches. However, for reasons of conscience, some faith communities do not accept lottery funding. Given the importance of faith within the Ulster-Scots community and broader society, as communities of people; custodians of significant heritage assets; and a major delivery vehicle for youth provision in Ulster-Scots communities; this funding gap presents a significant problem.

It had been hoped that the Dormant Accounts Fund would have addressed the disadvantage for all faith groups that could not avail of lottery funds, but this proved not to be the case. This situation needs to be addressed to ensure that Presbyterianism is recognised and included as an integral element of Ulster-Scots identity and Presbyterian communities can access resources to preserve, promote and develop their cultural heritage on a fair footing with others in society.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends:

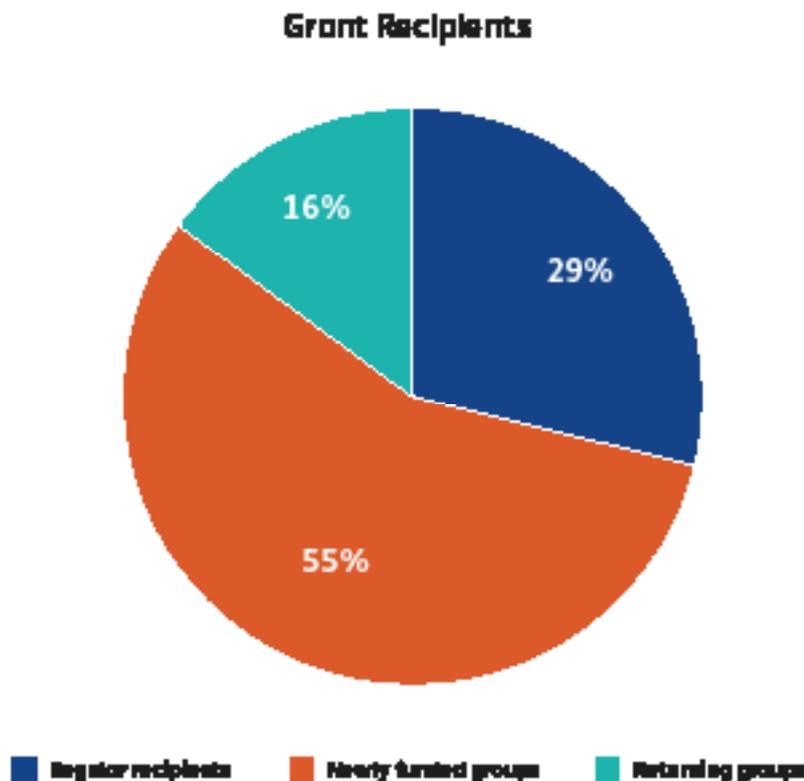
- The development of a grant programme by the Ulster-Scots Agency which faith communities can access to support Ulster-Scots culture, arts, and heritage projects that they might not otherwise be able to deliver because of this work being usually supported by lottery funding.
- The development of a grant scheme to support the refurbishment of historic Ulster-Scots buildings, including relevant Churches, to be managed by the Historic Environment Division with support from the Ulster-Scots Agency.

Effective Communities

In order to be effective, community groups need to have good governance, be well resourced, and embedded and connected. This enables them to learn and act collectively; articulate the value of their work; and express the needs of their group and their community. The Ulster-Scots community sector faces significant challenges in this regard.

The Panel is aware from experience that many of the groups in the Ulster-Scots community sector lack community development capacity. That is not to say that they lack capability. Many of the groups have great organisational skills and are excellent at what they do but they do not necessarily have the skill sets that have been developed through the organised ‘community sector’, with which they often have limited interaction. Many groups within the sector, although they have been around for a long time, did not benefit from EU funding and the community development activity of local councils, when it happens, often does not reach them. Most are also not connected to wider regional community infrastructure support organisations (only a handful of groups in the Ulster-Scots sector would be members of Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action for example). The capacity level of the groups is evidenced by the fact that only 15% of Ulster-Scots groups in receipt of a Covid grant had their own registration with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Most of the groups in the sector receive little or no public funding. Of the groups that secured funding through the Ulster-Scots Agency’s last Covid round, only 29% were regular funding clients of the Agency. A further 16% returned after a long break, but the majority (55%) were first-time applicants.



The potential scale of unmet need within the Ulster-Scots community sector becomes clear when the 1000 or so groups is compared to the pre-Covid footprint of funding. In a normal year, the Ulster-Scots Agency might fund in the region of 100 to 120 and 20 groups in Northern Ireland (around half of which are from the band sector) to deliver a combination of music and dance tuition, summer schools and community festivals. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland might fund 30 groups, almost all through their musical instruments for bands scheme. Some of those will also be included in the number funded by the Ulster-Scots Agency. At best, around 150 groups are being resourced, which represents 15% of the groups engaging in Ulster-Scots activity.

The resource streams that are normally offered to most community groups by the Ulster-Scots Agency are specific. They are for music/dance tuition, summer schools for children/young people or community festivals. Even within these headings, the elements that can make up a project and how they can be delivered are highly prescribed.

This level of detail has undoubtedly grown up in an effort to be supportive of groups with developing capacity, in a context where the Ulster-Scots Agency has had limited resources to distribute. However, the lack of flexibility makes it difficult for experience of Ulster-Scots specific funding to be transferred to attracting funding from other sources. The fact that most Ulster-Scots Agency grants are also relatively small (normally £2.5k or less for tuition and summer schools and £10k or less for festivals), also stops groups from progressing and more importantly demonstrating progress to other funders. The Panel believes that new Ulster-Scots specific funding streams should

be developed which promote capacity building and progression by providing groups with the opportunity to apply for more innovative projects of progressively bigger value, so that groups can increase the scale and complexity of their projects according to their needs. These grants should also be flexible enough to accommodate Ulster-Scots culture and heritage projects from church-based groups, helping to address their lack of access to provision delivered to others via lottery funds.

Given this resourcing picture, it is not surprising that Ulster-Scots cultural activity is undertaken almost exclusively on a voluntary basis. This generates particular challenges for groups, in relation to ensuring they have the necessary skills to recruit, support, develop and appreciate their volunteers. It also generally means that groups are reliant on volunteer leaders as well. This opens up other needs in terms of how to support and develop existing leaders such as officers or tutors; how to encourage others in community leadership roles to get involved, such as teachers, clergy, community workers and politicians; and how to encourage potential future leaders to get involved, particularly young people.

Dedicated volunteers and leaders are the lifeblood of the community, but we cannot expect the Ulster-Scots sector to develop to its full potential without a significant expansion in the number of full-time workers. There are only a handful of resourced posts in the entire sector, even though it has at least 1000 groups. This makes it difficult for Ulster-Scots groups to participate in mainstream community/voluntary sector structures which are built around the participation of paid workers. It also mitigates against professionalisation and specialisation within the sector because volunteers cannot dedicate the same amount of time to developing their skills; and it prevents groups from developing the variety and scale of activities that they can deliver because there are understandable constraints on the amount of time that volunteers can contribute.

The structure of the Ulster-Scots community sector at present is relatively simple. Most groups would be communities of interest rather than geographical communities. Around 500 groups, representing roughly half of the sector, are members of the Ulster-Scots Community Network, the umbrella organisation for the sector which has been in existence for the last 25 years. There are presently no dedicated Ulster-Scots sub-regional or local networks.

The only areas of the sector which have local or regional networks are the music communities. Several organisations include bands from the Ulster-Scots sector, such as the RSPBANI, which has around 70 bands, Flute Band Association of Northern Ireland, and North of Ireland Bands Association. At a local level, there are also a number of band forums, such as the Londonderry Bands Forum, which are/were affiliated to the Confederation of Ulster Bands. However, the substantial majority of bands in the Ulster-Scots sector are not affiliated to any musical umbrella group. Many bands would be informally networked with other bands in their locality for the purposes of participating in each other's parades/competitions, but there is little sense that this informal networking translates into cohesive community action. Within the Lambeg drumming fraternity, there are six drumming associations covering different areas of Northern Ireland, which would each have a range of affiliated clubs. The lack of connectedness is not helped by the fact

that organisations which could draw people together receive little or no funding. Of the musical umbrella bodies, only RSPBA has funding in place for staff, but the cohesion/effectiveness of the community is not a focus of their work.

Overall, the structure of the Ulster-Scots sector tends to be relatively loose, with most groups maintaining a degree of independence. It could be argued that this situation reflects a more general mindset within the Ulster-Scots community, but the result is that the Ulster-Scots sector is often less well organised when compared with other communities across Northern Ireland. It would make considerable sense to support the development of themed (e.g. musical) and geographical networks which can help diverse groups within the Ulster-Scots sector to coalesce, identify common aims and work together for the development of the sector or their part of the sector.

The Ulster-Scots Community Network, as the umbrella body for the sector, has a key role to play in helping to establish these networks on a firm footing and facilitating their growth and development. However, this is a process that will require the allocation of resources at both local and regional levels. In the first instance, focus could be placed on supporting a number of network organisations within the bands community (currently the largest constituency within the sector) and the creation of local Ulster-Scots networks which coincide with the 11 local council areas.

In terms of advocacy, it is well known that engagement with human rights and equality structures has never been universal. The perception of these being something that is used on them rather than something to be used by them is common in the Ulster-Scots community (proposals on this are in the 'Human Rights' section of the report). Even though culture is a major topic within the public discourse, Ulster-Scots groups tend not to be vocal in debates. The Panel believes that this is due to a combination of factors.

First, a lack of resources. The people who respond to consultations, organise protests or go on the media to talk are most often paid staff who have the time, skills, and confidence to do these things. Second, a lack of skills. Effectively presenting any case today involves creating PR opportunities, converting them to digital content and getting them to target audiences. The Ulster-Scots community has started to increase the amount of digital content being produced, but there is much more potential. Third, the Ulster-Scots community has historically tended to leave what are perceived to be political discussions to politicians. This presents significant risks because it means that issues are left in the hands of people who for genuine reasons, lack detailed understanding of sectoral issues. Fourth, for many years, the Ulster-Scots community has been the target of negativity within the media (and now social media) which leaves people reluctant to speak out for fear that it will be focused upon them.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- The grant programmes of the Ulster-Scots Agency are extended to provide for a progression path for community project grants which allows groups to build and demonstrate their capacity by managing grants of assorted sizes, for example with a small grant of £1,000-£10,000; medium grant of £11,000-£20,000; and large grant of £20,000-£30,000. The scale of funds available should be sufficient to meet the needs of the sector.
- Each Local Council should commission its own Ulster-Scots Strategy with funding streams.
- The development and delivery of a range of programmes by the Ulster-Scots Community Network which support volunteer development and community leadership within the Ulster-Scots sector.
- Resources are made available to support student placements and internships within the Ulster-Scots sector by individuals who are studying relevant skill areas including hospitality, marketing, event management, policy, education, law, journalism, and any aspect of Ulster-Scots. Not only will this provide valuable skills and additional capacity for the sector, but it will also encourage young people to think of the Ulster-Scots sector as a potential career pathway.
- Resources should be made available to support the development of Ulster-Scots societies on campus at QUB, UU and at the right time the major universities in Scotland serving Northern Irish students. This recognises the importance of universities as potential training grounds for future leaders of the sector and influencers in wider society.
- The establishment of a project/programme within the Ulster-Scots sector to develop all of the practical skills necessary for Ulster-Scots groups to effectively promote and share their work and articulate their needs to decision-makers and the wider community, including crafting, developing, disseminating, and evaluating the effectiveness of their message.

Support and Development Resources

The Ulster-Scots Community Network (USCN), which is the umbrella support organisation for the sector, works hard to support groups with governance and fundraising, as well as undertaking a wide variety of cultural projects and running the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre. Most of the money which flows into the Ulster-Scots sector does so with their support. However, the level of resources that the USCN has is nowhere near sufficient to the scale of the task. They have seven staff (six supported by the Ulster-Scots Agency and one supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland) to support over 500 member groups and the rest of the Ulster-Scots sector across nine counties of Ulster. This situation needs to be urgently reviewed with a view to putting in place sufficient people resources to properly meet the support needs of the Ulster-Scots sector.

In addition to the USCN, the Ulster-Scots Agency funds three Community Impact Projects in South Down, West Tyrone and North/West Belfast, which deliver Ulster-Scots development activities within their respective areas. The Agency provides support for salary and overheads and the

projects must source their own programme budgets. An external review of the programme in 2018 confirmed that these groups have been successful in promoting Ulster-Scots cultural engagement and significantly increased the number of individuals and groups engaging with Ulster-Scots cultural activities and with the Agency.

In many instances these groups have made effective use of other Agency programmes to anchor the development opportunity. Working with bands to secure funding and provide tuition, supporting highland dance and language development programmes and making connections into schools has made valuable community connections at local level. The projects have also demonstrated the fact that Ulster-Scots can be effectively presented to a wide range of church and community groups beyond the traditional catchment. The external review recommended the expansion of the programme, and we understand that the Ulster-Scots Agency hopes to add an extra project in 2022, but the Panel believes that resources need to be put in place for a more ambitious roll out of the scheme.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- The people resources of the Ulster-Scots Community Network, the umbrella support organisation for the Ulster-Scots sector, should be reviewed as soon as possible and sufficient resources put in place over the next five years to properly address current and future needs in relation to both community support and community outreach.
- New or existing thematic networks should be resourced within the Ulster-Scots sector, in particular regarding the marching band community.
- Resources should be put in place to allow the Ulster-Scots Agency's Community Impact Programme to be rolled out across the country as quickly as possible, with at least one new project per year over the next five years.

Cultural Communities

Most groups currently within the Ulster-Scots community sector have a focus which involves cultural expression, via music, dance, language, or literature. This means that they need support not just to function as community groups, in terms of governance, fundraising and so on, they also need support to develop and grow in their cultural expression. The Ulster-Scots Agency provides funding for grassroots groups to teach music and dance, but as we have seen, the extent of the support is severely restricted by available resources, with only a small fraction of groups who would benefit from the support actually able to access it. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) provides funding for an even smaller number of groups to support the purchase of musical instruments. ACNI also provides support to the pipe band community through grants to RSPBA to organise events and support teaching; and the Northern Ireland Piping and Drumming School to support individual musicianship. However, this support, worth £70,000 per year, is the extent of ACNI Annual Funding for the whole marching band sector, which has around 650 bands and

a membership estimated from 20,000-30,000. The limitations of the available support are clear when compared to the Ulster Orchestra, which receives annual funding of £1.7million from ACNI to support around 60 musicians.

It should be remembered that Sir James Galway, one of Northern Ireland's most famous musicians, emerged from this Ulster-Scots musical scene. The challenge is to develop progression paths that will facilitate the next Galway to emerge, not by accident, but by design. Young Ulster-Scots need to be given the opportunity to practice their artform, study it and to earn money from it, whether as a teacher or a performer. It should be possible to develop more opportunities for musicians than exist at present. Many young musicians from Northern Ireland have also gone on to have extraordinarily successful careers in the military because of their music and this needs to be given greater profile.

Ulster-Scots bands should also be supported to perform on the world stage. There is a significant marching band scene internationally, especially in the United States; and that has exciting potential for our bands, both as a context for performance and a catalyst for upskilling and professionalisation.

In 2019, the Ulster-Scots Agency worked with the Northern Ireland Bureau and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs to support the Omagh Protestant Boys to take part in the St Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah, Georgia. The band were fantastic ambassadors for Northern Ireland and for Ulster-Scots and the project was an example of our potential as a source of 'soft power' in operation. The visit also generated incredibly positive media coverage locally and in the US. However, the project cost over £50,000 in total, which the Ulster-Scots Agency could not have financed alone, making it reliant on contributions from partners, which is not always available. A secure source of sufficient resources needs to be available to enable this kind of work to be undertaken in a planned and consistent way.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- Diaspora Engagement – This would be to support the best of Ulster-Scots cultural talent to engage with equivalent talent elsewhere in the world and assist in promotional tours of our most talented bands, artists, writers, and creatives.
- Artistic Development and Excellence - Within the next five years, the Ulster-Scots Agency, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and Department for Communities, develop and resource bespoke strategies for the long-term artistic development, resourcing, and promotion of excellence for the various Ulster-Scots musical genres, our different dance traditions, and literature.

Core Ulster-Scots Cultural Organisations

At the same time, it is important to remember that participation in an Ulster-Scots art form does not by itself, encourage a sense of Ulster-Scots identity. Participation in the art form needs to be accompanied by education about the Ulster-Scots origin or context of the art form and

about Ulster-Scots more widely. This should be accompanied by the development of Ulster-Scots repertoire, both traditional and contemporary, which ensures that the material being performed also expresses and reinforces a sense of Ulster-Scots identity.

There are several organisations within the Ulster-Scots community sector which may be regarded as custodians of a particular aspect of Ulster-Scots culture or heritage (some of them also have direct connections to parent organisations or governing bodies in Scotland), including the RSPBA (NI); Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (Belfast Branch); Belfast Burns Association; Ulster-Scots Language Society; and Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland (PHSI). Of these, the RSPBA (NI) and PHSI also have a sizeable membership base.

Most of these organisations pre-date the Ulster-Scots revival of the 1990s and all of them include individuals with significant expertise, built up over many years, which is directly relevant to the promotion of Ulster-Scots. However, all of them are heavily reliant on volunteers and only one of them (RSPBA) has any full-time staff. This resourcing situation mitigates against the development of new activities or indeed the expansion of existing ones. It is also a fact that the volunteer base within all these organisations is aging and there is an urgent need to provide support to ensure the sustainability of their activities into the future. We understand that the Ulster-Scots Agency currently has plans for the establishment of a funding stream that would support the provision of development workers for organisations such as these, based on the successful Community Impact Project model, but the resources that the Agency currently has available for this are modest.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- A Core Groups Support Scheme be established and resourced within the first year for all core Ulster-Scots cultural organisations offering support for:
 - Development strategy to maximise their contribution to the revival and delivery of this report and subsequent strategy.
 - Full-time staff resources.
 - If the organisations do not wish to employ staff, then developmental resources should be put in place via the Ulster-Scots Community Network to support their needs.
- A Dance Collective be developed to promote teaching of the different forms of Ulster-Scots dance (country, highland, and clog) within schools and communities. This would include developing:
 - An audit of present activity.
 - A development strategy.
 - A register of teachers.
 - A training programme and certification for trainee teachers in country dancing comparable to Scottish programmes.

Events

Given the significant focus on cultural expression and performance within the Ulster-Scots sector, the potential for the development of events as both a driver of participation, recruitment, community vitality and economic opportunity is obvious.

The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (Northern Ireland Branch) delivers a range of pipe band contests across Northern Ireland every year, in partnership with local councils. The RSPBA centrally also normally organises a Major Championship contest, which attracts national and international bands. These events are generally well attended and provide an excellent opportunity to present wider Ulster-Scots identity to an audience that is already in tune to one aspect of Ulster-Scots culture. The Ulster-Scots Agency should support the RSPBA to develop a number of their contests into larger flagship cultural events, with an extended range of Ulster-Scots content and better marketing.

Many communities in Northern Ireland have sought to develop Ulster-Scots festival programmes alongside the Twelfth which have often been funded by the Ulster-Scots Agency, however capacity and resources have often limited their scale.

Given the strength of Ulster-Scots identity in more rural areas, the popularity of major events like the Balmoral Show and other agricultural events in places like Lurgan and Armagh represent a significant opportunity to present Ulster-Scots to a ready audience. In 2021 the Ulster-Scots Agency took a stand at the Balmoral Show which was staffed by the Agency and key sectoral partners. Despite the attendance being smaller than normal due to the Pandemic, the stall was extremely busy and had a remarkably elevated level of positive engagement. This kind of promotional activity should be encouraged and put on to a sustainable footing.

The Ulster-Scots Agency delivers a modest funding stream for community festivals which has funded 10-12 festivals per year in the last few years. In 2021, 10 festivals were funded, with all but one located east of the Bann. Most of the festivals were small scale local programmes, with 90% having a total budget of £12,000 or less. The scale of resources available mitigates against the long-term growth or development of the events, which are largely run by volunteers. The Ulster-Scots Agency is the principal funder of most of these small festivals.

Burns Night has always been an important focus of events within the Ulster-Scots community, but until recently, these had been small local affairs. In more recent years, the Ulster-Scots Agency has sought to significantly increase the profile of Burns Night and put on a number of major Burns Night concerts, in conjunction variously with the Ulster Orchestra and the BBC, which have been televised and have seen some of the best young musicians from the Ulster-Scots community performing alongside professional musicians with a national or international profile.

The most recent of these, Burns by the Lagan, took place at Titanic Belfast in January 2019 and was televised to an audience of over 160,000 in Northern Ireland and Scotland. In subsequent years however, the BBC has not been interested in large scale performance events, preferring much smaller productions; and without the additional resource and exposure that comes with television production, it has not been affordable for the Ulster-Scots Agency to go it alone on such large-scale events, so Burns celebrations have been reduced in scale, albeit with a larger number of events. Again however, the issue is one of resources: the Ulster-Scots community has performers who can deliver on a big stage if they are given the opportunity.

The Walled City Tattoo was a splendid example of a major Ulster-Scots event contributing to a broader cultural programme, the City of Culture. Furthermore, the Belfast International Tattoo has created a brilliant platform for Ulster-Scots groups to perform alongside the best military and civilian performers from the UK and around the world in recent years, drawing significant crowds to the SSE Arena. However, the organisers must deal with significant funding uncertainty every year due to a lack of the kind of core organisational funding which most large-scale festivals would have, either from the Arts Council or local authorities.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the following should occur in the next two years:

- Funding of Ulster-Scots community festivals and events is expanded to provide for an increased number of community festivals to be delivered on a larger scale and with a more balanced geographical spread.
- A large events fund is established to support the development of flagship Ulster-Scots events that can form part of Northern Ireland's national and international visitor offer.
- The Ulster-Scots Agency should be resourced to develop and staff a portable exhibition unit that can provide a professional and easily managed Ulster-Scots presence at a wide range of events.
- The Ulster-Scots Community Network to develop event delivery training programmes.

Ulster-Scots Facilities

There are very few dedicated Ulster-Scots cultural spaces in Northern Ireland and even fewer that are owned by Ulster-Scots groups. Most activity within the sector happens in various community venues, with Ulster-Scots groups contributing to running costs through some form of venue hire arrangement. This is a two-edged sword.

On the positive side, most Ulster-Scots groups do not have the burden of running, maintaining, and insuring a building. On the negative side, they do not have the freedom to do what they want, when they want; or develop their activities and facilities in a way that maximises the opportunities for their group or for Ulster-Scots more widely.

The most significant Ulster-Scots space is the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre in Belfast. It is run by the Ulster-Scots Community Network with funding from the Ulster-Scots Agency. Operating since 2014,

the centre is an important culture and heritage resource, highlighting the key stories of Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture. Prior to the Pandemic, it was attracting six thousand visitors per year (75% international). The centre is also a busy hub for Ulster-Scots cultural activity.

At the time of the last Ulster-Scots strategy, it had been expected that the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre would form the core of a larger Ulster-Scots hub, located in the same building as the headquarters of the Ulster-Scots Agency and the anticipated Ulster-Scots Institute. Since then, the Institute has failed to materialise and floorspace which had been utilised for Ulster-Scots activities has been lost to other uses. It is extremely important that Ulster-Scots has a flagship presence in the capital city, which is not only a central location for local people and visitors, but also a rich source of Ulster-Scots heritage and culture; and the principal location for travelling to or from Scotland.

The New Gate Arts and Cultural Centre in Londonderry is a fine example of how Ulster-Scots community-based activity and partnerships advancing to a sufficient level to establish a common facility. It has plans for further development which will enable it to best showcase its Ulster-Scots work, generate revenue and work with other culture and arts groups.

A recent exciting development is the launch of the Livingston Centre in Killinchy, a facility in the local Church of Ireland parish which tells the story of Rev John Livingston, an early Presbyterian minister who served in the Church of Ireland and is regarded as the founding father of the local Church of Ireland, but also of the Presbyterian and Non-Subscribing Presbyterian churches in the village. Livingston led the ill-fated Eagle Wing expedition to America in 1636 and later died in exile in Holland, but his children reached America and have made an immense impact there ever since. The Centre tells the story of Livingston and his descendants in the context of Ulster-Scots here and in America.

The heritage element of the Centre was funded by the Ulster-Scots Agency with capital funding from the Department for Communities. Although the Pandemic has greatly hampered its operation, it is serving as an important inspiration for other churches and community groups in the area who are very keen to find ways to incorporate their Ulster-Scots heritage into their respective venues.

There is significant scope for the development of Ulster-Scots cultural facilities at local, sub-regional and regional levels, with varying focus on culture and heritage as needs dictate. The various cultural traditions/artistic genres associated with Ulster-Scots could clearly support a range of facilities which could naturally be in different areas of the country depending on the strength of traditions in particular areas. Cultural/heritage centres associated with the pipe band movement in County Down, Tyrone or Fermanagh; a Lambeg drumming/fifing facility in County Armagh and a marching band centre of excellence, would have obvious potential. At the same time, there are many small local halls and churches which serve Ulster-Scots communities and where a local story could be told which would be valuable as a validation of Ulster-Scots identity in the area. Where necessary, these facilities will have to be supported with staff and running costs, although there is clearly an opportunity to co-locate sectoral development resources in such facilities, or indeed for

sectoral development resources to serve as a catalyst for the development of capital infrastructure. The Department for Communities has recently piloted a small capital grants programme for the Ulster-Scots, Irish Language and Sign Language communities which has seen healthy interest from the Ulster-Scots sector.

A network of facilities across the country, linked to a central hub in Belfast, would help to address issues such as the social exclusion and marginalisation of Ulster-Scots by improving capacity, confidence, and awareness of the value of Ulster-Scots both within the sector and more broadly across all the community. These centres would also provide an economic benefit through local employment opportunities and the further development and promotion of cultural and heritage tourism.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends the following work to be undertaken in the next five years:

- The establishment of a flagship Ulster-Scots cultural hub in Belfast, to be established on a properly resourced, sustainable basis, preferably in Ulster-Scots ownership.
- The establishment of Ulster-Scots capital and revenue funding streams to support the development and operation of Ulster-Scots cultural facilities.
- The development of a planned approach to the establishment of facilities for key sectoral organisations and/or cultural genres that will see a series of quality and sustainable Ulster-Scots cultural and interpretive centres developed that will support the preservation, development and sharing of culture.

Reaching Out to Young People

The sustainability of Ulster-Scots communities will require the effective engagement of young people with their Ulster-Scots identity.

An extensive range of work currently goes on in schools with the support of the Ulster-Scots Agency which revolves around introducing young people to Ulster-Scots music and dance traditions. These interventions have a positive benefit in terms of enriching the delivery of the school curriculum. They also present a fantastic opportunity for young people to have a lifelong involvement with music if they want it. There are well over 600 marching bands in the Ulster-Scots sector, which means that there are many outlets for young people at all levels of ability all over the country. This is also a two-way street, as far as it presents bands with an opportunity to attract new young players who can be the future of their band. However, the transition from school participation to community participation is something which needs to be consciously nurtured. The Panel understands that only a relatively small proportion of the hundreds of young people who are currently being engaged in school, make the move from participating in school to participating in the community; and often those are young people who already have a family tradition of involvement.

This situation is unlikely to be unique, indeed it would appear analogous to the situation with sport. Almost all students participate in sport at some level in school, but most of them will not take it up outside school. However, various sports, through their governing bodies and local clubs, recognise the importance of engaging with schools and creating opportunities for young people to get involved. It may be that there is an opportunity for the Ulster-Scots sector to learn from the approaches taken elsewhere to encourage participation.

Given that the Ulster-Scots Agency and Sport NI are both Arm's Length Bodies of the Department for Communities, the Agency would be well placed to lead on such an approach. We understand that the Ulster-Scots Agency has plans for an officer within its education team to focus on youth engagement, so this might be an early priority. It is also possible that this could be a mutually beneficial exchange, as the fact that the Ulster-Scots brought a number of sports to Ireland, specifically football, golf and bowls could present an opportunity for cultural skills and awareness to complement sport in schools as well as the other way round.

The Ulster-Scots Agency Juvenile Pipe Band, which has now been operating for a number of years, has provided a progression path for young players into a regional setting and has proved a successful catalyst for the development of youth-focused activities in the pipe-band world. Intensive tuition and high-profile performance opportunities have encouraged the participation of strong numbers of young people, and this has generated a wider interest in the development of youth bands. In more recent years, the Pipes and Drums of Campbell College has also undergone a renaissance and this year a second school pipe band has begun in Down Academy.

The Ulster-Scots Agency should explore how the development of bands, substantially or exclusively for young people, can be advanced in school and community settings as a vital element of bringing young players through into the wider band scene. The concept is already well seeded in the pipe band world, but given time and resources, there is no reason such a model should not thrive across all the music and dance genres associated with Ulster-Scots.

All Ulster-Scots activity for young people in the community does not have to be delivered in an exclusively Ulster-Scots or even cultural context. Most youth provision in Ulster-Scots communities takes place in churches, often in the form of uniformed youth organisations like the Boys' and Girls' Brigades, Scouts and Guides. These organisations are well run and provide structured activities for young people, often delivered against a curriculum in the context of badge work. There is plenty of scope to incorporate Ulster-Scots activity within this framework, indeed some of these organisations, in particular the Boys' Brigade, also have a strong pipe band/marching band tradition which could be revitalised. We understand that the Ulster-Scots Agency has plans for a grant programme to encourage youth providers to engage with Ulster-Scots and is currently working with headquarters of organisations in this regard. This is positive work which should be strongly supported.

However, we believe that given the sparsity of funding across in this area at present, the Education Authority has a vital role to play in supporting the Ulster-Scots Agency to resource this work.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- The Ulster-Scots Agency should develop a focused initiative to promote school to community transition in Ulster-Scots music and dance; and work with Sport NI to identify successful approaches that have been used to support school to community transition in sport with a view to replicating this success in the Ulster-Scots sector.
- The Ulster-Scots Agency should develop proposals for the establishment of progression routes to regional youth bands/groups across Ulster-Scots musical and dance disciplines.
- The Ulster-Scots Agency should develop proposals for the establishment and support of youth bands in both school and community settings across the various Ulster-Scots genres and the resourcing of this should be undertaken by the Education Authority.
- The Ulster-Scots Agency to establish a grant programme to support the delivery of Ulster-Scots activity by youth providers and recommends that the Education Authority should support this.

A Sense of Place

Supporting and developing Ulster-Scots community and cultural activities, events, and facilities; and setting up geographically based Ulster-Scots networks will inexorably start to bring into focus areas that have a particular concentration of Ulster-Scots identity. When that is combined with rich local heritage and then made visible, it has the potential to create a very real sense of place, which can make a unique contribution to how a community feels about itself and how it is seen and understood by visitors.

The concept of Ulster-Scotch Hairtlans (Heartlands), areas with a rich mix of all the different elements of Ulster-Scots identity, was developed by the Ulster-Scots Agency and included in the 2015 strategy. It was further refined to include the concept of Ulster-Scotch Heirskip (Heritage) Toons or Villages (a Hairtlan being assumed to be a larger area encompassing several settlements), but in the absence of additional resource, did not progress. The Panel believes that the idea of providing a special designation for settlements or larger areas with a strong Ulster-Scots character remains relevant and can play a vital role in reinforcing local identity, acting as a catalyst for the development of community or cultural activity and providing a foundation for the development of unique experiential tourism opportunities.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- The Ulster-Scots Agency is resourced to take forward a programme of designation for Ulster-Scotch Heirskip Toons/Villages and Ulster-Scotch Hairtlans in partnership with local communities and local councils, to include suitable signage and promotional materials.
 - This work can also be included and supported by the Council strategies the Panel proposes.
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Inclusion in the Public Space

For the purposes of the report, we are defining public space as:

- Public Realm
- Public Collections
- Public Museums and Interpretative Centres
- Public Forums

Public Realm

The visibility of culture within the public realm plays an important function in recognising the existence of a community and demonstrating respect for its identity. This can come in several forms, including placename signage, interpretive signage, and public art.

The law currently allows for translation of street names into Ulster-Scots in certain circumstances. However, this tool is not always appropriate as it only allows for a direct translation of the English name. This fails to recognise the fact that many existing street names have significant Ulster-Scots elements. It also fails to provide for the situation where a road traditionally known by an Ulster-Scots name was later renamed in English. In terms of public signage, the heritage/brown signage pioneered by the then Ards Council is an appropriate supplementary model for heritage or 'lang syne' Ulster-Scots names. This allows the traditional Ulster-Scots placename to be displayed alongside the official English name. There is not yet a standard approach to recognising Ulster-Scots within an existing street name (which is incorrectly classified/perceived as English), but the panel understands that the Ulster-Scots Agency has developed a proposed approach for this.

The Panel highlights that the European Language Charter for Regional and Minority Languages expressly requires that administrative reform should not negatively impact on a minority language community. However, the more supportive policy approach to the Ulster-Scots identity was not pursued by the amalgamated Ards and North Down Council.

However, there is a limitation to this approach. Ulster-Scots placenames are not limited to alternative names for roads but other geographical features. Therefore, in traditional Ulster-Scots speaking areas, Councils should adopt the following policies and actions within the lifetime of the subsequent strategy based on this report:

- Each Council should commission the collation of all Ulster-Scots placenames within its district. This should include public appeals for people especially targeted at the older generations.
- From this list of placenames, a rolling programme of heritage signs be placed.
- These rolling programmes should take no longer than 5 years to be fully implemented.

The development of interpretive signage projects has been an area of positive progress for Ulster-Scots in recent years, with a range of projects supported by the Ulster-Scots Agency including the

Belfast Maritime Trail. A significant signage project at The Gobbins visitor attraction in Islandmagee is also currently nearing completion. The Agency has also supported to Ulster History Circle in the placement of a wide variety of 'Blue Plaques' commemorating prominent citizens from the Ulster-Scots community. These projects play a key role in highlighting the stories of local Ulster-Scots communities and bringing them to life for locals and visitors alike. They often help to anchor or complement other storytelling, delivered in print or online. The development of the Discover Ulster-Scots brand, which is used across all Agency-led projects, has also been important in bringing consistency and coherence around the country.

The provision of public art, whether in the form of statues, sculptures, murals, or other installations can also play a vital role in animating the public realm and bringing local heritage to life. The Ulster-Scots Agency has been successful in having several important pieces placed back on display which had slipped out of public view. These include the statue of Robert Burns currently on display in the Linen Hall Library and the Burning Bush and Knights sculptures at the Scotch Quarter in Carrickfergus. All three served as a catalyst for further Ulster-Scots activity.

The Ulster-Scots Agency, when resources permit, has also been able to support some larger scale public art projects, such as the major installation on Ulster-Scots Who Connected Belfast to the World, delivered in partnership with Translink at their engineering depot on York Street; they have recently supported a project to erect a statue of Robert Hill Hanna VC in his hometown of Kilkeel and are also supporting a project to install a bust of Andrew Bonar Law in Coleraine.

The substantial number of Ulster-Scots who have made a significant mark on the world means that there is enormous scope for the development of public art around the country, albeit such projects are relatively expensive and therefore likely to be limited by resources, however there is no doubt that well-chosen projects could make a significant contribution to the telling of our story. An obvious example would be a sculpture in East Antrim to celebrate the considerable number of American Presidents with roots in that area.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- The Ulster-Scots Agency should be supported to expand its interpretative sign work.
- Public authorities, when undertaking public realm works in areas of Ulster-Scots settlement or speech, should make it a priority to include interpretation of Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture.
- The Ulster-Scots Agency should be supported to establish a public art fund which can be used to deliver projects which highlight important aspects of Ulster-Scots heritage and will help to develop a powerful sense of place and/or promote an important aspect of our visitor offer.

Public Collections

The Panel engaged with Libraries NI to deepen its understanding of its policy and approaches. From that engagement we were able to identify the following opportunities and approaches.

Recommendations

The panel recommends:

- Present Cultural Heritage Collections - Libraries NI have nine such collections. These will undoubtedly have a range of texts relevant to the aspects of the Ulster-Scots identity. Therefore, an audit of these collections should be commissioned to identify and digitise the content of texts (where permissible by copyright). The Bibliography of Ulster-Scots Literature and its Supplement will have a central relevance to this work. From this audit will flow two benefits:
 - The Libraries NI cataloguing system would then identify as Ulster-Scots relevant texts increasing what is available to users to access.
 - This material would be included in a digital archive programme. A technical discussion identified that Libraries NI would not be the appropriate developer or host for such an archive. It would be appropriate for the Research Institute to be the collator and host of such an archive.
 - Future Cultural Heritage Collections – As new Ulster-Scots material is produced the Panel wishes to ensure it is added to these collections for future generations. The issue of self-publishing makes it harder for Libraries NI to identify books to add to its collections as they often do not have an ISBN. ISBN has a cost and obligation to provide copies to the depository libraries (this is dealt with in the Media section). This requires action on two levels:
 - Ulster-Scots provision scheme – A fund to provide each heritage collection library and two copies for the general collection of all new Ulster-Scots publications and a copy for each of the research and educational bodies.
 - Self-publishing support scheme – further details below
 - Exhibition Programmes – Libraries NI highlighted the success of their exhibition programmes in engaging the public. This can have a regional or local focus. A partnership should be established with Libraries NI and resources provided to have at least two Ulster-Scots exhibitions each year (one general and one local).
 - Event programmes – Libraries are looking for events within their programmes with Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture able to be included. This is an issue of maintaining regular communication with Libraries NI to maximise these opportunities.
 - Inclusion of Ulster-Scots in Library Classification Systems – This was not considered a priority for the general user, but it was something that would be helpful to academic study. Therefore, a technical report be commissioned on the process and appropriate placement within the relevant classification systems.
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Public Museums and Interpretative centres

Panel members had two facilitated visits – the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and Ulster-American Folk Park – and one unfacilitated visit to the Ulster Museum (to have an ordinary visitor experience). A written submission was also received from National Museums of Northern Ireland (NMNI) which was especially helpful on the collections held and their events programme.

The Panel's conclusion is that neither our name nor story is given its rightful and proportionate place within the present offering. The situation at the Ulster American Folk Park is particularly disappointing, given the huge amount of available material and the fact that the facility was established to tell the story of Ulster-Scots migration to America in the first place. This is a negative conclusion, but the submission and engagements did help identify areas in which much needed and rapid progress could be made.

These opportunities included:

- Expansion on display materials – Booklets, audio guides and apps to add layers to the displays.
- Bespoke tours for Ulster-Scots groups.
- Museum Events programmes – both one-off events and collaboration in Ulster-Scots programmes e.g. Ulster-Scots Language Week and including work with first-person interpreters.
- Museum Merchandise.

The Panel recommends:

- NMNI and U-SA to jointly commission a review of each of the museum offerings identifying the opportunities to give the Ulster-Scots identity its rightful and proportionate place within the narrative of each facility and in any future refurbishment.
- Establish a partnership with the Ulster-Scots Agency and Ulster-Scots Community Network on developing, delivering, and updating museum events programmes. In future the research and educational bodies should join this partnership.
- In keeping with the 4Rs and representation, the NMNI is a public body that should have Ulster-Scots representation.

Public Forums

The Panel expects the Charter obligations on facilitating the public and private use of the Ulster-Scots language to be met.

Media

All forms of media have the potential to raise the profile and positive image of Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture, develop a wider understanding and respect from others, and increase community pride. There is also the potential to boost the social and local economy and most certainly contribute significantly to the development of Ulster-Scots tourism. The creation and delivery of quality media skills training across all formats, and for all ages, is essential to realise that potential. Alongside developments within ‘traditional’ radio and television, developing innovative formats on social media, online and in print should all be included in the aims of this report and subsequent strategy.

However, it is noted by the Panel, and in submissions to us, that Ulster-Scots is regularly disparaged in the media. Without impacting on the right of free speech such belittling of a people and its culture would not be tolerated when cast at other identities. This derision is a chill factor against greater participation, to celebration and support in respect our identity.

The Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF) is one of the clear successes of public intervention in support of the revival with several quality productions over the years. Therefore increasing its resources was a priority and happily a success. However we believe this existing and additional resource can and should do even more. This will involve broadening the remit and work of the fund.

Since the revival began, media and its public consumption has been fundamentally transformed. The Panel has three focused criticisms of the present USBF model:

- It is heavily traditional media (TV and radio) and local broadcasters focused. This is what it was asked to focus upon, but we believe it is time to address the shifts in viewing patterns (e.g. social media), breadth of broadcasters (e.g. streaming companies) and move to the next level, film. This material cannot only help build knowledge and pride here but is a means to deepen the connections with our diaspora.
- It has a reactive and non-community model – it is responding to proposals from production companies, many of which have a limited understanding of Ulster-Scots or relationship with the community. It needs to be clearly a more collaborative model between the community, funders, broadcasters, and production companies.
- The legacy to media investment – the Panel wishes to see a legacy in both product and skills. A wonderful programme that is only broadcast once in a later time slot or a production that does not upskill someone in the Ulster-Scots community in media and broadcasting is not maximising return of investment.

This broader media scope means the broadcast fund should be seeking to support the full remit of media including television, radio, podcasts, ‘shorts’ for social media and whatever new opportunities arise in the future. For example, podcasts can be used to learn and develop the use of Ulster-Scots language, for storytelling, for topical issues, for showcasing writers and poets, past and present, for tourism, for delivery of Ulster-Scots heritage and culture. They can present Ulster-Scots

language, heritage and culture to more than just a local audience, but for a quality product skills training is essential.

The Panel believes that where possible this diversity of product should be built into USBF commissions – namely a new tv programme would have a podcast, social media shorts and training opportunities as part of the agreement. Commissioned material would be for both the general viewer but also the work of the new educational institutions. In addition it should be seeking to upskill the community (in partnership with other government training support programmes to maximise resources).

This greater scope may need a further uplift in resources for the USBF. The community has supported this before and if work of this depth and value can be delivered by USBF then it would be again.

Recommendations

In addition to the continuation of the existing work of the USBF, the Panel recommends:

- The establishment of an Ulster-Scots Media Development Forum – This forum should be drawn from broadcasters, production companies and the Ulster-Scots community. It should meet twice a year to discuss community priorities with the media sector facilitated by an Ulster-Scots sectoral group e.g. the Community Network. It will explore all opportunities to increase the quality and quantity of Ulster-Scots broadcasting on radio, television, and all other media platforms.
 - Commissions should include requirements on additional and legacy content and skills development.
 - Outreach work with new streaming companies to ensure they are aware of potential support and opportunities.
 - Online Media Development Stream – part of the USBF budget should be ringfenced to develop for, and promote on, social media platforms as well as website development.
 - Media Skills Fund – The USBF, in collaboration with broadcasters and production companies, should finance and support a range of U-S media apprenticeships (radio, television, film) involving these apprentices in general media training, U-S production development and in on/off screen roles. It would also have smaller training programmes that are community focused e.g. audio skills for podcasts.
 - Music Development – Support for the professional production of song and music recordings including collaboration with the USRI Music Project and its work.
 - Quality standards – when established the involvement of USRI, USC and USLI should be a standard requirement in USBF supported productions.
 - Script Development – the Panel recognises that this is a higher risk area of media work but believes within the next five years support for script commissioning and development for film should commence.
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- Digital Archive – All commissioned material should be required to be placed in a digital archive held by the USRI (access subject to copyright).
- Post-Broadcast Legacy – To increase the legacy and access to broadcast material it should be made available for sale in the appropriate format. The Panel appreciates that most broadcasters, or their franchising section, only produce such materials when high volume sales (e.g. tens of thousands) are expected. Within this plan we call for the support of a U-S social economy company. We believe it should be a requirement of USBF commissioning support that if the broadcaster/production company decides not to produce such materials then the social economy company is licensed to do so.
- In terms of community radio, the Panel believes the present community licensing model is the most appropriate for this five-year plan with the other developments in this report and subsequent strategy enabling the U-S content to grow and expand as well as community radio contribute to the development of new material e.g. podcasts. The provision of more training to empower more to do so should be considered under the Media Skills Fund if needed.

Beyond the Broadcast Fund the Panel recommends:

- Media training for U-S activists and practitioners.
- Creating Ulster-Scots linguistic and cultural ambassadors as way of promoting a positive image.

Overall, the Panel wishes this to be an area that sees a clear shift from ‘For us but not by us’ towards ‘For us, by us.’

Newspapers, Periodicals and Publishing

In this area the Panel recommends:

- The creation of a dedicated Publications Fund that will support:
 - Community-based Ulster Scots language heritage and culture publications. This should include:
 - support for high quality design/presentation standards.
 - innovative formats e.g. graphic novels.
 - Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture sections in mainstream newspapers and periodicals making use of the online media as appropriate.
 - Creative writing programmes.
 - A micro-press as part of the recommended Social Economy company.
 - Self-publishing support scheme – Basic costs support for Ulster-Scots self-publishing. This would cover the ISBN costs; the purchase and delivery of the Depository Library copies; the purchase of copies for the heritage collections and general circulation of the Library Service. A condition would be that the texts will be digitised but only made publicly available when out of copyright.
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Our Human Rights

Our vision sets out the 20-year aim of:

“Rights Framework – the Ulster-Scots identity with its status as a national minority, enjoys its full rights protections and participates at all levels in the protection structures.”

Today

In the 1998 Belfast Agreement, under the Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity section, the linguistic part of our Ulster-Scots identity received its first official recognition.

“3. All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.”

As with all citizens an Ulster-Scot has the protections of the common law and Human Rights Act (1998) in the United Kingdom and in Ireland from the Constitution and the European Charter of Human Rights Act (2003). In Northern Ireland, there is a permanent oversight body: the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission; and in Ireland; by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

In the UK, our language has Part II recognition under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages as does our mother language Scots. This means seven principles apply to government policy:

- “a. the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth;
- b. the respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question;
- c. the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;
- d. the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;
- e. the maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using a regional or minority language and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;
- f. the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;

- g. the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
- h. the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;
- i. the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more States

The next substantive steps forward for rights protection have come with the New Decade New Approach agreement to restore devolution. It contained a range of commitments to cultural identity in general and Ulster-Scots in particular.

It committed to the nearly 30-year-old demand for recognition of the Ulster-Scots as a national minority within the United Kingdom and the first recognition of the identity in its entirety (not just limited to language):

24. Recognise Ulster-Scots as a national minority under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

It also committed to new cultural institutions:

27. The framework will be underpinned by an affirmation of the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, while acknowledging and accommodating those within our community who define themselves as 'other' and those who form our ethnic and newcomer communities. It will comprise:

a. An Office of Identity and Cultural Expression to promote cultural pluralism and respect for diversity, build social cohesion and reconciliation and to celebrate and support all aspects of Northern Ireland's rich cultural and linguistic heritage...

c. Legislation to create a further such Commissioner to enhance and develop the language, arts and literature associated with the Ulster-Scots / Ulster British tradition and to provide official recognition of the status of the Ulster-Scots language in Northern Ireland. The legislation will also place a legal 16 duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate the use of Ulster-Scots in the education system...

e. The main function of the further such Commissioner will be to enhance and develop the language, arts and literature associated with the Ulster-Scots/ Ulster British tradition in Northern Ireland.

f. A central Translation Hub will also be established in the Department of Finance within three months of an agreement, in order to provide language translation services for the nine Executive Departments, Arm's Length Bodies, Local Government and Public Bodies.

g. The Assembly's Standing Orders will also be amended to allow any person to conduct their business before the Assembly or an Assembly Committee through Irish or Ulster-Scots. A simultaneous translation system will be made available in the Assembly to ensure that a person without Irish or Ulster-Scots is not placed at a disadvantage.

h. This legislation - including establishing the Office and both Commissioners - will be established as new dedicated parts of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This is the legislation which implements the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and subsequent agreements and establishes the Assembly and Executive in law. The enactment of these new Parts of the Northern Ireland Act will reflect the importance of these issues to people and society in Northern Ireland.

i. The Office of Identity will provide funding streams and schemes, including publishing and broadcasting, small grants, events and tourism, exhibition, and museum curation, built heritage, cultural education and tourism projects.

The role of the Commissioner is set out in more detail with specific mention to three human rights instruments as was a renewed commitment to the subsequent strategy based on this report:

“5.14. A further such commissioner will be appointed by the First Minister and deputy First Minister to enhance and develop the language, arts and literature associated with the Ulster-Scots / Ulster British tradition in Northern Ireland.

5.15. The Commissioner's remit will include the areas of education, research, media, cultural activities and facilities and tourism initiatives.

5.16. The functions of the Commissioner will be to –

5.16.1. increase awareness and visibility of relevant services which are provided by public authorities in Northern Ireland;

5.16.2. provide advice and guidance to public authorities, including where relevant on the effect and implementation, so far as affecting Ulster-Scots, of commitments under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and;

5.16.3. investigate complaints where a public authority fails to have due regard to such advice provided by the Commissioner in respect of facilitating the use of Ulster-Scots.

5.17. With specific reference to 5.16 above, the functions of the Commissioner should be exercised in a way that:

5.17.1. reflects the guiding principles of the framework as set out in legislation, and serve to promote mutual respect, good relations, understanding and reconciliation;

5.17.2. takes account of consultation with public authorities;

5.17.3. are reasonable, proportionate and practical.

5.18. Both Commissioners will, in discharging their functions, act independently and consistently with the principles set out in paragraph 5.2 above.

5.19. The legislation will also include a duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate the use and understanding of Ulster-Scots in the education system.

5.20. In fulfilling their roles, both Commissioners will work in close cooperation with the Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch, and with Foras na Gaeilge with a view to ensuring complementarity.

5.21. Furthermore, provisions for both Irish language and Ulster-Scots will be made for the following:

5.21.1. a central Translation Hub will be established in the Department of Finance within three months of an agreement, in order to provide language translation services for the 9 Executive Departments, Arm's Length Bodies, Local Government and Public Bodies.

5.21.2. the Assembly's Standing Orders will be amended to allow any person to conduct their business before the Assembly or an Assembly Committee through Irish or Ulster-Scots. A simultaneous translation system will be made available in the Assembly to ensure that a person without Irish or Ulster-Scots is not placed at a disadvantage.

5.21.3. under Section 28D of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 the re-established Executive will produce a draft Irish Language Strategy and a draft Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture Strategy for consultations within six months. This will include programmes and schemes which will assist in the development of the Irish language and the Ulster-Scots language, culture and heritage.

5.21.4. however, nothing in legislation or in the functions of the Commissioners shall require any quotas in employment for speakers of any particular language.”

Therefore, it can be clearly stated that greater commitments have presently been given with more accountability and support structures than ever before.

These are vital to challenge the failure to implement the Language Charter and other issues including:

- An Ulster-Scots Academy was to have been established over a decade ago with commitments in political agreements and ministerial pledges.
- In past engagements with Departments, too often they have neither understood nor felt obligated by the human rights commitments of the national government.

- Past strategies gathered dust because of political stalemate and Departments placed their own ‘tests’ to justify continuing inaction.
- A Commissioner position is shaped by who gains that position.
- The New Decade New Approach commitments are significantly behind schedule, although the Panel fully accepts the unique circumstances the national government and NI Executive faced with the COVID pandemic so soon after devolution was re-established.

The Ulster-Scots community infrastructure is built around many small groups. Some within broader structures but most not. This means their awareness of human rights protections and how to ensure our voice is heard within the institutions is low. There has been no dedicated and sustained Ulster-Scots human rights group or work, except for occasional work by the Ulster-Scots Community Network.

Outside of the Bill of Rights processes, NIHRC engagement with the Ulster-Scots community was virtually non-existent. The renewed engagement since the NDNA agreement is most welcome. ‘Civic society’ shows similar attitudes to Ulster-Scots as public bodies and government shows. We have also seen the peculiar circumstances of a local human rights group criticising Ulster-Scots recognition as a national minority.

Recommendations

Therefore, to ensure this new opportunity does indeed become a new dawn, the Panel recommends:

1. From the Northern Ireland Executive
 - a. A timetable from the Northern Ireland executive on the establishment of the Office of Identity, and Cultural Expression no longer than one year from the publication of this report.
 - b. A timetable from the Northern Ireland Executive for the establishment and appointment of an Ulster-Scots/Ulster-British Commissioner no longer than one year from the publication of this report.
 - c. Inclusion for the Ulster-Scots sector in relation to the recruitment of the Head of the Office of Identity, and Cultural Expression including consultation on the personnel specification and job description.
 - d. Inclusion in the recruitment of the Ulster-Scots/Ulster-British Commissioner including consultation on the personnel specification and job description and representation on the recruitment Panel e.g. a representative from the Ulster-Scots Agency.
 - e. The provision of dedicated resources for Ulster-Scots human rights work within six months of the publication of this report. These resources would be used for:
 - i. Research base of treatment of the Ulster-Scots identity.
 - ii. Representation of Ulster-Scots views to relevant international expert Panels and organisations (including attendance at relevant conferences, symposiums, and engagement sessions).
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- iii. Build links with UK, Irish, European national minorities.
- iv. Human Rights awareness training (available in in-person, hybrid, and online formats) for:
 - 1. Ulster-Scots community
 - 2. Departments and Public Bodies
- v. Public awareness campaigns to coincide with the recognition of Ulster-Scots as a national minority, with follow-up campaigns on its anniversary.
- vi. A legal fund

In terms of the delivery model the Panel is flexible on it being for a dedicated organisation, embedded within an existing Ulster-Scots organisation or tendered.

- Beyond Northern Ireland
 - 1. A timetable from the national government on the implementation of the Ulster-Scots recognition as a national minority no longer than six months from the publication of this report.
 - 2. A commitment and timetable from the Irish government to recognise Ulster-Scots as a national minority no longer than eighteen months of this.
 - 3. Support from the Irish government for comparable work in Ireland as detailed in Recommendation 1 (e) above.

Connectedness

The Ulster-Scots identity is connected to a global community, and we have tried to build that into various parts of this report. However, there are a few areas that further work is needed. The size and range of Ulster-Scots diaspora communities means that the practical maintenance of connections present significant challenges and we wish to ensure they can be overcome.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends:

- The Ninian Fund – this fund would support projects between Ulster-Scots and Scots cultural and community groups. This would include:
 - Joint cultural and linguistic projects
 - School linkages
 - Community group engagements
- Northern Ireland Bureau Partnership – There should be a North America Diaspora Development Officer from the Ulster-Scots Agency placed within the Northern Ireland Bureau in North America to develop and deepen the relationship with the Scotch-Irish community in the USA and Ulster-Scots community in Canada. This should be underpinned by an appropriate budget to develop promotional resources and support events
- Research Institute and Language Institute – these two institutions should establish relationships with comparable international institutions, partnership working and events drawing international expertise and audiences.

Economic Development

In the 2019 report ‘Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK economy’, produced for Arts Council England, the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) estimated that in 2016 the arts and culture industry directly generated £21.2 billion in turnover, £10.8 billion in Gross Value Added, and over 137,000 jobs.

Arts and Business NI, in addressing the current situation regarding the arts and culture sector in Northern Ireland in 2020 highlighted those creative industries here account for almost 40,000 of the workforce and contribute £797 million to the economy. In the fiscal year 2018-19 arts events across Northern Ireland generated over £24 million in ticket revenue, with further ancillary spend estimated at an additional £90 million.

The latest figures pre-Covid suggested that four million visitors to Northern Ireland each year engage with the arts and culture here; £400 million of all spending by NI visitors in 2018 involved engagement with arts and culture. Festivals and events created a return of £7 for every £1 of public investment, attracting visitors, participants, and tourists.

The Panel believes that Ulster-Scots identity provides a unique cultural offering for visitors and tourists and would welcome a plan to conduct an economic assessment of the current economic value of Ulster-Scots, considering the breadth of music, dancing, culture, and community activities which currently exist, and would also strongly advocate exploring of the potential to enhance and develop our economic potential.

Tourism NI has highlighted the value of experiential tourism to the tourist industry and to our economy. In 2013 it noted that:

“Traditionally many tourism destinations and NI too, have developed and marketed tourism as a series of products and services – a hotel room, a beach, a museum, a beautiful landscape, and so on. But we know that to truly engage with our visitors today we must shift our thinking and connect with them on a deeper, more emotional, more personal level. Visitors want to feel something from the places they visit, they want to be touched by the stories of the people and actively participate in the culture and community,”²

In September 2019 Tourism Ireland, which is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland as a tourist destination overseas, highlighted what has been perceived as the growing significance of Ulster-Scots.

Tourism Ireland hosted eight leading tour operators from the USA and Canada in Northern Ireland to learn about the historical links between North America and the Ulster-Scots community. For a number of years people of Ulster-Scots descent in the US and Canada have been targeted and the aim has been to provide an overall tourism package which will encourage visitors to sample Northern Ireland as part of an Ulster-Scots journey.

However, such initiatives as outlined are limited in their scope and breadth. The Ulster-Scots cultural and tourism product has to date not been promoted to its maximum capacity in the view of the Panel and requires significant development to allow it to fully express the story of the Ulster Scots. While marketing of the concept of Ulster-Scots has taken place, there does not appear to be a defined strategy for this, and Ulster-Scots while being identified as the means of encouraging visitors, is not being supported at community level to develop cultural products which would engage with tourists and build capacity within the community.

We need to avoid a situation where there is merely lip service being paid to Ulster Scots and the overall tourist package when visitors arrive gives them little flavour of the language, heritage, and culture of the community they are interested in learning more about. This would be doing a disservice to the cultural wealth which Ulster-Scots has to offer.

There is a rich reserve of heritage assets in Northern Ireland associated with Ulster-Scots, but these have often suffered from historic neglect and under investment. A good example is our Ulster-Scots/Scotch-Irish heritage. We have several key heritage sites connected with US Presidents around the country, but for many years they languished in a poor state. More recently, as a result of the Ulster-Scots Agency working with local councils, the US Grant Homestead near Ballygawley has been extensively upgraded, the Andrew Jackson Cottage outside Carrickfergus is undergoing upgrade and plans are in development for an overhaul of the Chester A. Arthur Homestead at Cullybackey.

As has been highlighted elsewhere however, the principal attraction which should anchor this offering, the Ulster American Folk Park, has developed in a way that has rendered our story all but invisible. There is however a significant opportunity to address the situation. In 2026, it will be the 250th Anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence. Given the unique link that Ulster-Scots provides Northern Ireland with the events of the American Revolution, it is obvious that this anniversary must be the catalyst for a major programme of work to upgrade all our Ulster-Scots/Scotch-Irish heritage offering, including the Ulster American Folk Park, within the context of a strategic positioning of Northern Ireland in relation to the United States. Such developments should also include bringing one of the three Dunlap Broadside (the first published Declaration of Independence which was printed by John Dunlap of Strabane) which are housed at the National Archives in Kew to be put on display in Northern Ireland. Failure to grasp the unique opportunity of 2026 would be unforgivable.

2 Culture and Creative Vibe. A practical guide to experiential tourism in Northern Ireland, 2013.

3 <https://eisteddfod.wales>

4 See, for example, <https://fleadhcheoil.ie>

There are other elements of tourist products in other areas such as signage, as has been the case at the Gobbins Cliff Path walk in Islandmagee, for example, but the overall product offering requires development to inform the visitor of the Ulster-Scots story.

One major element which is missing is the cultural tourism offering which Ulster-Scots can provide. The difficulty of community festivals has been highlighted in the submission of the Ballycarry & District Community Association to the Panel, and this highlights that community capacity and available human resource is limited within the Ulster Scots areas. The festival, sustained by volunteers for 25 years, has now ceased owing to the lack of capacity among younger members of the community and due to funding structures from grant bodies which prevent longer-term strategic planning and development. Other community festivals have suffered a similar fate over shorter timeframes.

This indicates that community capacity must be built in Ulster-Scots areas and that grassroots cultural festivals which can attract tourists should not be dependent on annual funding streams, since this prevents longer-term strategy which exists in other more commercially-driven tourist initiatives across the British Isles. Recommendations earlier in this report aims to address these capacity and sustainability issues.

As we build capacity and sustainability we should consider the longer-term goal of an annual large Ulster-Scots festival which moves around the province to different venues and takes place over several days, and which is held in the heartlands of the Ulster-Scots with strong community buy-in and involvement. The potential for such a festival to draw large internal tourist numbers as well as external tourism should be something to strive towards.

The National Eisteddfod in Wales could be considered as a useful example of such a cultural festival, celebrating the culture and language of Wales each August and travelling from place to place, alternating between North and South Wales and attracting around 150,000 visitors and over 250 trade stands and stalls.³ The Irish Fleadh Cheoil is an Irish music festival organised by Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann (CCE) and attracts entrants from across the British Isles. Established in 1951, the largest attendance to date was in 2018 when half a million attended the event in Drogheda.⁴

The Panel has not chosen to make this a recommendation within this report but raise it as an idea for further discussion within the community and potentially for a future report and subsequent strategy to develop further.

Tourists who wish to experience the culture of an area must have access to local communities who can interact with them, and this is something which has not been addressed in any meaningful way over the years in the context of Ulster-Scots. The importance of this is underlined when we consider how statistics show that, pre-Covid, tourism sustained approximately 65,000 jobs in Northern Ireland, reflecting over 5% of GDP.

5 Lynott Tours, New York, Ireland, and Great Britain tour, 2022, <https://www.lynotttours.com/>

In 2018, 2,200,000 overseas visitors were welcomed to Northern Ireland, providing a revenue of over £560 million to the economy. According to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), in 2019 there were an estimated three million overnight trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors. Nearly 12 million nights were associated with these trips, with £731 million being spent by external visitors.

The 2019 NISRA survey highlighted that the top five places of origin for external visitors included Scotland, the United States and Canada, the other two being the Republic of Ireland and England. 39% of the visits were for holiday/pleasure/leisure purposes. Given that there are many family connections with various parts of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and given the emphasis of ancestry-driven tourism by Tourism Ireland in North America, it is undoubtedly the case that an Ulster Scots cultural offering would be of considerable interest and could encourage greater economic benefit.

The statistics indicate that, while there was slight change in the figures from 2018 to 2019, the overall tourism trend from 2016 onwards had shown a statistically significant increase. This is something that clearly can be built upon in the years ahead.

The tour itinerary offered by one North American Tour Company⁵ in 2022, for example, offers two full days in Northern Ireland on its 11-day Scots-Irish tour, visiting the Glens of Antrim, Giant's Causeway, the walls of Londonderry and Belfast. However, the aim of tourism providers in Northern Ireland should be to encourage a much longer window for remaining in the province, and development of the Ulster-Scots tourism product has in our view much potential and exciting opportunities. Especially given the drive for staycations in the Covid-era, it should not be forgotten that early tourism initiatives in Northern Ireland focused on areas such as Scotland and the North of England to encourage package tours.

To date the tourism product which has been developed for Ulster-Scots remains modest. Funding from the Ministerial Advisory Group on Ulster Scots (MAGUS), for example, developed a tourism app in North Down and Ards, allowing users to visit the main Ulster-Scots sites of interest. There have been other initiatives, some of them community driven, but all are piecemeal in the absence of a published strategy or an integrated development plan.

Yet development of a tourism product for Ulster-Scots would be a key factor in encouraging confidence and capacity within the community; it could help to provide employment (both full-time and part-time); preserve and enhance our heritage; and promote and enhance the Ulster-Scots language and linguistic awareness.

The development of a strategic plan for cultural tourism would help to develop professionalism in product marketing, build career prospects for young people, provide a role for older and retired community members, build confidence, and pride within communities, and have an economic impact.

This economic imperative would not only bring benefit to Ulster-Scots communities, but would, as a matter of course, spread into the wider tourist economy.

While there is a primary role for tourist product development within the business and commerce sector, a specific focus of and support of, grassroots and genuine Ulster-Scots products would help to energise this field and encourage entrepreneurial ability - for which Ulster-Scots are well-known - to take root and flourish. Given that the product is at such a low point of development, it is important that there is a strategic direction from government and the tourist authorities.

In the 2015-2035 Ulster-Scots development strategy, the benefits of tourism were acknowledged, and it was stated that:

“Ulster-Scots culture and heritage activities particularly with regard to tourism should be promoted and strengthened as a resource for all the community and particularly our visitors and tourists. Opportunities to promote and benefit from the economic and social potential of Ulster-Scots diaspora in countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and further afield needs to be fully explored.”

This must be developed over the next five years to capitalise on the post-Covid tourist markets and to integrate with developments within the Ulster-Scots sector. The strategy pledged that:

“The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) will continue to explore opportunities with the Ulster Scots sector to develop cultural tourism products. Emphasis will be on the development of quality Ulster-Scots visitor experiences. Tourism Ireland is responsible for the promotion of the island of Ireland in Great Britain and overseas markets. It engages with NITB and a wide range of other organisations and agencies (including, for example, the Ulster-Scots Agency) with a view to ensuring that all aspects of our diverse culture and heritage are reflected strongly in its overseas promotional materials, activities and marketing campaigns.”

But the pledge to

“Develop the Ulster-Scots contribution to cultural and heritage tourism on the island of Ireland”

must be about more than paying lip-service to Ulster-Scots and then leaving visitors without any opportunity to meet authentic Ulster-Scots, listen to their stories at community level, enjoy their music, and learn about their heritage and what has shaped them, and, in turn, what has shaped those who emigrated to many distinct parts of the world.

The pledge should also seek to capitalise on the nearest relevant tourist market, which is in Scotland. Particularly the west coast and Borders regions have close links to Northern Ireland and the Ulster-Scots, and this familial connection should be worthy of focus to encourage visits and organised tours. In the summer the Twelfth of July and Derry Day festivals and parades attract thousands from Scotland who come to attend, participate, or view the parades. This should be built upon, to encourage a longer stay; even one extra bed night would be economically significant.

This market is closer to hand and already exists on a small scale but could be greatly enhanced. At the same time, other markets, as detailed by the tourist authorities, particularly in Canada, Australia, the United States, New Zealand, and elsewhere, should be part of the wider strategy.

The Panel believes that in order to kick-start a process of integrating Ulster-Scots into the tourist economy and fully understanding and developing the potential of Ulster-Scots to the tourist economy, a study should be undertaken to review the tourist product and the potential benefits to the economy. This should be carried out within a year to allow product development to occur, providing a firm and definable product within the five-year period, which is our first interest, with continued development over the 20-year period.

This tourist development should also ensure the mainstreaming of Ulster-Scots language, heritage, and culture into our cultural fabric e.g. libraries, museums, and festivals. It should also seek to develop Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture ‘influenced’ creative industries.

Such developments would strengthen and dovetail with the establishment of quality and sustainable Ulster-Scots cultural and interpretive centres, helping address issues such as the social exclusion and marginalisation by improving capacity, confidence, and awareness of the value both within the Ulster-Scots sector and more broadly across all the community. These centres would also provide an economic benefit through local employment opportunities and the further development and promotion of cultural and heritage tourism. In the longer term a network of local cultural centres could be established linked to any Ulster-Scots Academy/Institute which would serve as a regional resource for them.

Development of feasibility studies and relevant business cases for Ulster-Scots language, heritage and cultural centres and securing funding for sustainable Ulster-Scots language, heritage and cultural centres was mentioned in the previous strategy. So too was piloting of Ulster-Scots Hairstlan areas as partnerships between district councils, schools, and local communities. This is another element of the report which needs urgent attention. Such areas could be springboards for tourism initiatives, projects, and programmes, integrating the various elements and proving transformational for the Ulster-Scots community. It is now overdue that there should be activity in relation to these proposals.

The development of Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language will be something which opens many avenues within the community, not least in terms of employment within the tourist economy. Provision of tour guides from an authentic Ulster-Scots background would help to enhance the cultural tourism offering for visitors to areas and would also help to revive use to the Ulster-Scots language for new audiences. The development of writing within the linguistic community can also add to the performance potential of individuals within the community and help develop community pride and confidence.

Book publishing, artistic creation and performing arts are the three largest sets of productive activities noted in the Centre for Economics and Business Research report at the start of this

section. In the context of book publishing, this accounted for the largest single amount; 36% of the total Gross Value Added (GVA) of the enterprise-based arts and culture industry in 2016. The potential for a social enterprise publishing company within the Ulster-Scots sector is a worthy consideration, which could again help develop skills for the community such as editing, proof reading, design, printing, and marketing. The existence of a social enterprise of this nature could also provide a catalyst for writing in Ulster Scots. Such a social enterprise should also not be confined within Ulster but could also develop publishing links with Scotland.

The Ulster-Scots cultural community in its entirety provides a significant boost to the local economy through events such as staging of pipe band competitions, production of items such as uniforms for bands and Scottish dancing schools, festivals and events focusing on Ulster-Scots themes, employment within the sector, and productions funded through the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund for local companies. The enhancement and development of our sector will bring additional economic benefits, and this must be viewed as a short-term (five year) strategy to bring immediate enhanced benefit and realisation, with continued development beyond that period.

An economic strategy for Ulster-Scots will be a factor which highlights the potential and the authenticity of the product, and in bringing economic benefit, the Panel believes that this will positively impact on the overall view of Ulster-Scots both within and outwith the community. Cultural tourism as a means of Northern Ireland drawing down needed revenue to the local economy, can thrive to the benefit of all into the future if areas such as the potential for Ulster-Scots are understood and there is a genuine willingness to develop the sector.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends:

- Development of a major initiative to develop and promote our Ulster-Scots/Scotch-Irish heritage tourism offer in the context of the 250th Anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence in 2026.
 - Commissioning an Economic Strategy – This would assess the present economic impact, the economic potential of Ulster-Scots and the utilisation of its ‘soft power’ and diaspora to enhance Northern Ireland’s economic development and can be delivered in the first year of the strategy.
 - The establishment of an Ulster-Scots Social Economy Company to develop publications, crafts, and other merchandise.
 - Commissioning an Ulster-Scots Tourism Strategy by the Northern Ireland Tourism Board and Tourism Ireland.
 - The creation of a Tourism Development Fund to be managed by Tourism NI with support from the Ulster-Scots Agency – this will fund the development Ulster-Scots Tourism product and services.
 - Major event programme – This programme will seek to secure international events relevant to the Ulster-Scots identity to be hosted in Northern Ireland e.g. World Pipe Band Championships and develop major Ulster-Scots tourism events.
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Section Four: Implementation and Monitoring

A Step Change

This report and subsequent strategy are intended to bring about a step-change in the situation of Ulster-Scots and makes a wide range of recommendations in that regard. However, it is not in any way intended to detract or distract from cultural rights obligations which already exist, many of which have gone undelivered for too long.

The structures proposed in the context of the last Ulster-Scots strategy were never established because the strategy itself never received the approval of the Executive. The other structure which should have provided a degree of oversight/support for Ulster-Scots, the Interdepartmental Charter Implementation Group (ICIG) which was chaired by DCAL/DfC and supposed to oversee the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ceased to function in 2016. It says much about the effectiveness of the ICIG that no-one noticed when it ceased to function.

Going forward we need structures that will see the right people in the right places doing the right things, supporting not only the implementation of this report and subsequent strategy, but also the progressive realisation of cultural rights for Ulster-Scots in a way that minimises duplication and maximises effectiveness.

Ulster-Scots Champions

Each Northern Ireland Department should designate a senior official to act as a champion for Ulster-Scots within their department. That person should be of sufficient seniority to effect change within their department, so we would recommend someone at Director level (Grade 5) or above. The individual so designated should work closely with the Ulster-Scots Agency to build their expertise in relation to Ulster-Scots and how it is relevant to the work of their department. They should be responsible for coordinating delivery by their department and any sponsored bodies in relation to this report and subsequent strategy and all relevant human rights obligations including the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Framework Convention for National Minorities and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Ulster-Scots Community Advisory Forum

An advisory forum should be established and facilitated by the Ulster-Scots Community Network which broadly reflects the Ulster-Scots community sector. The role of the Forum will be to provide a voice for the Ulster-Scots community sector in relation to the implementation of the strategy and developments affecting Ulster-Scots more generally. Departments (via their Ulster-Scots Champions) and the Ulster-Scots Agency should engage regularly with the forum to inform their work. The role of the Forum will be particularly important in the context of recognition of Ulster-Scots under the Framework Convention for National Minorities.

Ulster-Scots Strategic Delivery Group

An Ulster-Scots Strategic Delivery Group should be established to coordinate and oversee implementation of this report and subsequent strategy and the progressive realisation of cultural rights for Ulster-Scots. The group should be chaired by the Minister for Communities and comprised of the Departmental Ulster-Scots Champions and the Ulster-Scots Agency CEO. The Junior Ministers of the Executive Office should act as the Vice-Chairs of the Group to embed and recognise it as an Executive Strategy. The Ulster-Scots Community Advisory Forum should be invited to nominate a representative to attend the Group. The secretariat for the USSDG should be provided by the Department for Communities.

In particular, the USSDG will:

- Lead and champion the delivery of the strategy.
- Agree Departmental implementation plans to deliver the strategy.
- Receive regular reports from members in relation to their performance in implementing the strategy.
- Champion the realisation of cultural rights for Ulster-Scots.
- Receive regular reports from members in relation to their performance in giving effect to cultural rights obligations including ECRML, FCNM and UNCRC.
- Agree a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Ulster-Scots which underpins delivery of the strategy and key cultural rights obligations and complements the Programme for Government.
- Provide regular reports on progress to the Northern Ireland Executive.

While an Executive Strategy, the division of responsibilities means the Departments for Communities, Education and the Economy are central to much of the work. Therefore, Departmental level Strategy Development groups in those three should be considered as well.

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