Local Government and Communities Committee

Planning (Scotland) Bill

Submission from Culture Counts

Evidence to Scottish Parliament, Local Government Committee - Planning (Scotland) Bill

Q1/ Do you think the Bill, taken as a whole, will produce a planning system for Scotland that balances the need to secure the appropriate development with the views of communities and protection of the built and natural environment?

The Planning (Scotland) Bill should adopt the Agent of Change Principle. The Agent of Change principle is simple; it makes the person responsible for the change responsible for managing the impact of the change. For example: If an apartment block was built near to an established live music venue those building the apartment block would be responsible for building to a standard that meets the noise requirements of the surrounding area; potentially incorporating sound proofing and double glazing as required.

Currently an apartment blocks can be constructed next to a music venues; and when residents move in, complaints about noise can lead to venues closing down. Cultural venues often contribute to the economic, environmental, social and cultural landscape of the area and they can be lost due to noise, if planning for noise is not considered at the early planning stage.

Agent of Change should not be regarded simply as a live music issue; it’s a planning for noise issue which can impact in a range of ways. For example: Noise nuisance can include complaints about the noise of sheep in a neighbouring field, church bells ringing or a local speedway bike-track. The planning process needs to account for noise at the planning stage; after the building is there it’s too late, and the problem is left to local authorities to try to solve. Edinburgh City Council commissioned a report from the Music Venues Trust in 2015 to guide them in how to manage noise while securing cultural venues for the city; which recommends that the Scottish Government adopt the Agent of Change principle.¹

The British Council; As Others See Us report shows that Britain was ranked 2nd overall for “attractiveness” among the top 15 global economies. The top characteristics making Britain attractive were, cultural and historic attractions, cities and arts. In 2015 Scotland attracted over 14.6 million visitors. Spending by tourists in Scotland generates around £12 billion of economic activity in the wider Scottish supply chain and contributes around £6 billion to Scottish GDP (in basic prices). This represents about 5% of total Scottish GDP.²

² http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/Tourism
In January 2018, The Planning (Agent of Change) Private Members Bill has had a successful first reading in Westminster; the Bill has received cross party support.\textsuperscript{3} \textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{3} https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-10/debates/5CF45828-15A5-4AB6-9E26-85AF6B8C763E/Planning(AgentOfChange)#contribution-CB8253DD-C8D3-414E-BFF4-8CB52AA9A30D
\textsuperscript{4} https://www.iq-mag.net/2018/01/uk-govt-sajid-javid-backs-agent-change/#.WnBhA6inEuU