



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Convener  
Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

20 December 2023

Dear Convener,

**RE: Response to Culture in Communities: The challenges and opportunities in delivering a place-based approach report**

Thank you for your report on the above inquiry.

We welcome the opportunity to make a further submission and are pleased to see that your report reflects many of the points that we discussed in our original submission. Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee to expand on many of these points and respond to questions from Committee Members. I would also like to recognise the contributions made to the inquiry by people and organisations from across Scotland's culture and creative sector, enabling their important perspectives to be considered.

I will not go over Creative Scotland's perspectives on this again, as this was covered in [our submission to the inquiry](#), and at the evidence session attended by Creative Scotland, and has been well summarised in your report. However, I will respond to a small number of significant points you have raised, as requested. I would also note that many of the recommendations in the report for further resource would depend on Creative Scotland having access to additional funding support.

**Supporting community-based cultural activity**

In the report, point 63 states: *The Committee therefore notes the calls from organisations representing the voluntary sector for there to be greater support for voluntary arts, both in terms of capacity-building for volunteers and regular micro-grant funding for voluntary groups, in response to some of the resource challenges we have highlighted above; and invites the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland to explore whether further support can be provided to protect and*

*encourage the vital contribution of volunteers to culture in communities, including in communities with fewer resources.*

In response to this point:

Creative Scotland funds Creative Lives, a charity which champions community and volunteer-led creative activity, as a Regularly Funded Organisation. In 2021, Creative Scotland was pleased to provide support to Creative Lives for Get Creative micro-commissions, and we know from experience in other programmes that small sums of funding can make a big difference to volunteer and community-led groups. Our work in Youth Arts also includes small grants which aim to ensure creative opportunities for children and young people's participation. Creative Scotland is a partner in the [National Lottery Awards for All](#) programme, alongside sportscotland and the National Lottery Community Fund, which provides smaller grants for community based activity. Creative Scotland would be pleased to work with the Scottish Government and colleagues in the sector to explore how to further support this area. However, providing further funding and support in this area would make additional demands on our budget.

Points 75 and 76 state:

*75. The Committee consistently heard throughout its inquiry that the Culture Collective programme had been a powerful example of a national place-based initiative which had supported cultural organisations to work in partnership with artists and communities to develop local cultural projects.*

*76. Given that the funding for the programme and its projects will soon conclude, the Committee calls on the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland to set out how the foundation and legacy of Culture Collective will be built upon through future place-based initiatives. We further consider the role of funding to support community-based cultural activity below.*

Creative Scotland welcomes the Committee's support for our Culture Collective programme, and we are pleased that Scottish Government confirmed in November 2023 the release of £1.5m towards the programme in this financial year. The Culture Collective Programme is supported by a national research and evaluation programme which will inform how we take forward the network and programme in future. The programme is intended to explore new and existing models for working in and with communities, and to develop long-term change. We look forward to continuing discussions with Scottish Government on support for this significant programme.

### **Funding culture in communities**

Points 82, 90 and 117: We note the SPICe analysis that sets out real terms cuts to Creative Scotland's budget since 2014-15 and would agree with the Committee's assessment that a shift to multi-year funding would allow enhanced progress on mainstreaming culture across all policy areas. On 28 November 2023, Iain Munro

wrote to you providing a response to the Committee report [Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2024-25: Funding for Culture](#) and acknowledging the scale of the budgetary pressures faced by the cultural and creative sector at this time.

Point 121: Creative Scotland appreciates the view of the committee and from some of those providing evidence to committee that community-based culture should be considered and funded separately from professional arts. However, we do not believe this is appropriate or desirable. As our Culture Collective programme demonstrates, community-based culture and professional arts cannot be separated, with the flexibility of the programme being highlighted by submissions to this inquiry. Many of the people and organisations funded by Creative Scotland support cultural participation on in their communities. Separating funding between 'community' and 'professional' would further enforce an artificial division between these two areas, complicating and adding to the burden of groups and organisations seeking funding for their activities. Structuring against this false distinction would be regressive and could impact areas of the sector, such as traditional arts and culture, disproportionately. We believe that the best of culture and creativity exists in communities and with community practice as much as in any institution. Scotland's cultural organisations are part of a diverse and interdependent network of individuals, collaborating widely with and responding to the needs of their communities.

Points 122 and 123: We agree that cross-portfolio funding is vital for culture, in addition to increased core support for the culture budget, highlighting that participation in culture can achieve objectives across many portfolio areas. Creative Scotland already works in partnership with a range of sectors - for example, Education, Environment, Health, Heritage, Tourism - and with Scotland's Local Authorities, and we recognise the opportunity that exists for exploring how culture can be better supported across different parts of Government, beyond Culture itself.

### **Providing and supporting local cultural services**

Points 144 and 167: Creative Scotland is currently undertaking research, with partners Community Leisure UK and sportscotland, to further understand the current financial challenges facing local authorities in relation to culture and arts. Creative Scotland is, with Scottish Government, COSLA and other national bodies including SLIC, Museums Galleries Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland, part of the Local and National Delivery Group, formed to address the action in the National Culture Strategy for Scottish Government to work in partnership to explore future models of collaboration between national and local bodies. The work of this group is ongoing.

Point 198: We welcome the Committee's support of our call to become a statutory partner in Community Planning Partnerships. As other national and regional bodies, from Historic Environment Scotland and sportscotland to South of Scotland Enterprise, are named partners, the exclusion of Creative Scotland is detrimental to

the inclusion, participation and consideration of local cultural organisations and cultural needs in local planning processes.

### **Providing and protecting physical spaces in communities for cultural activity**

Point 227: Creative Scotland welcomes this point as timely, both in consideration of the increasing loss of community assets and spaces for culture across Scotland and in relation to the drive to meet Net Zero. We have recently begun a programme of research, in collaboration with the Scottish Futures Trust, to better understand the net-zero readiness of physical infrastructure in Scotland's creative and cultural estate.

Point 233: We do not believe that a national assets register is necessary and reiterate that the scale of resources required for the creation and upkeep of such a register would be significant. The sector not only utilises established venues but temporary places and spaces and buildings that are ordinarily used for other purposes. As a national body which supports people and organisations in every local authority, Creative Scotland has an excellent overview of the cultural context in each area. At a local level, mapping of cultural assets is only useful if it is in relation to practical and active strategies to support cultural engagement and participation. Local asset registers would also be challenging and time consuming to maintain.

We thank the Committee for their time and focus on Culture in Communities, which is a key area of Creative Scotland's work.

We look forward to working closely with colleagues at the Scottish Government, other partners, and with the Committee, to help deliver against the recommendations set out in this report.

Best wishes,

**Alastair Evans**

Director, Strategy and Planning  
Creative Scotland