



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Submission to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Culture in Communities

April 2023

[Creative Scotland](#), inclusive of [Screen Scotland](#), is the national body which supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland. We are a Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by Scottish Government and Scottish Ministers and we receive our funding from both the Scottish Government and the National Lottery.

Our remit is set out in Part 4 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 which describes the general functions of Creative Scotland as:

1. Identifying, supporting and developing quality and excellence in the arts and culture from those engaged in artistic and other creative endeavours
2. Promoting understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the arts and culture
3. Encouraging as many people as possible to access and participate in the arts and culture
4. Realising, as far as reasonably practicable to do so, the value and benefits (in particular, the national and international value and benefits) of the arts and culture
5. Encouraging and supporting artistic and other creative endeavours which contribute to an understanding of Scotland's national culture in its broad sense as a way of life
6. Promoting and supporting industries and other commercial activity, the primary focus of which is the application of creative skills.

We support the arts, screen and creative industries as a development organisation, a funder, an advocate, and as a public body that seeks to influence others to increase opportunity and maximise the impact our resources can offer. We work in partnership with Government, Local Authorities and the wider public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver this support.

What follows is our response to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee (CEEAC) inquiry into [Culture for Communities](#) and the questions asked as part of the call for views.

Specifically, through this inquiry the Committee want to understand:

- How do national and local layers of government, along with the third sector, complement each other to ensure that communities have opportunities to take part in cultural activities?
- How is unmet cultural need determined? And who decides this?
- What does good 'place-based' cultural policy look like in practice?

The response below provides Creative Scotland's perspective on these points.

Communities and Creativity

Art and creativity improve our communities, support regeneration, provide vital hubs and bring people together. Shared creative spaces can facilitate greater social inclusion while cultural events can foster pride in the places we live. Art and creativity have a transformative and empowering effect. They boost confidence and support people to participate in their wider communities, to take a role in decision-making and to change the society they live in.

Arts organisations and institutions can play a civic role, providing places for people to come together and spaces to make their voice heard. Organisations which promote co-creation are particularly significant: by reflecting, responding to, and creating with the communities of which they are part, they can better meet the specific needs of local groups and provide a platform for issues and people who might otherwise be underrepresented or unheard. As well as playing a vital role in developing, sustaining, and inspiring arts and creativity, communities are intrinsic to protecting and promoting our cultural heritage. Our oral traditions, festive events, social practices, and skills in traditional crafts are infused with invaluable knowledge and skills that are passed on from one generation to the next. We also create our own contemporary practices and cultures which hold deep meaning, provide connection to others and contribute to our sense of self. When creativity and community combine, we can express ourselves - as individuals, as groups and as a wider society.

The character of a place can be shaped by arts and creativity, defining the identity of a village, town, or city, and encourage residents to celebrate the places and spaces they share. Access to creative activity and events can also support inclusion, leading to an increased sense of belonging and tackling isolation. In addition, a place with a strong cultural offer makes it more desirable to people and businesses as a place to live and work, helping to sustain local economies.

There are clear and significant impacts of art and creativity to communities: contributing to stronger social ties, creating pride in the places we live, supporting a sense of citizenship and breaking down barriers. These benefits also highlight the importance of closing the gap in cultural participation between the most and least deprived areas of the country, of increasing access and engagement in the arts

especially amongst economically disadvantaged communities and challenging the barriers that prevent participation.

Through all our funding and development work Creative Scotland supports the arts, screen, and creative industries in all parts of Scotland and in all 32 Local Authorities, contributing to the sustainability, wellbeing and cultural life of people and communities.

Working in partnership to support access to cultural activities and address unmet need

Creative Scotland works in partnership with local and national government, and the wider public, private, and voluntary sectors to support culture in communities across Scotland.

Local Authorities and Culture/Leisure Trusts are key partners in supporting and developing local culture and creative sectors and providing access to culture. Local Authorities are required by Act of Parliament to ensure that there is 'adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities', although 'adequate' is not defined. The pressure on local authority services due to constrained budgets, rising costs of living and non-statutory nature of some cultural services has seen threats to arts development, as well as library and museum services, and an overall reduction in the provision of grant funding and specialist services, like Arts Development Officers. The reduction in the Arts Development function of Local Authorities creates barriers and a lack of consistent provision across Scotland. In some areas, creative networks and cultural organisations have capacity to provide the advice, funding, and connection to national opportunities for the creative sector in their area, however, the loss of Arts Development services in Local Authorities can result in significant challenges for national and local government, and national bodies, to work collaboratively for the benefit of communities.

An example of partnership working across national, local and third sector to deliver creative opportunities is the [Youth Music Initiative](#) (YMI), launched in 2003. Funded by the Scottish Government, YMI aims to break down the barriers to music making by offering free access to children and young people across Scotland. Over the last 20 years, the music education programme has increased participation from 60,000 to 360,000 young people per year¹.

Each of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities receives funding through the YMI to allow children and young people across Scotland, to take their first steps in their musical journey through an eclectic range of inclusive music making activities in school settings. From whole class African Drumming workshops in Shetland and a Hip Hop project in Aberdeenshire to North Lanarkshire's Rock Fest the fund supports

¹[Youth Music Initiative 2021/22 Evaluation](#)

children to develop new skills, their imaginations, self-expression, and confidence, offering new experiences and helping us all learn more about ourselves and others.

The Youth Music Initiative's school-based programme sees Local Authorities and Cultural Trusts work in partnership with third sector cultural organisations. In Highland, [Fèisean nan Gàidheal](#) works successfully in partnership with [Highlife Highland](#), delivering tuition covering an introduction to traditional music in all 173 primary schools in the area over eight weeks per year.

YMI funded projects working in communities include:

- [The Lullaby Project](#) delivered by [Fèis Rois](#) pairs musicians and isolated new mothers in the Highlands to write lullabies for their wee ones.
- The [Aberdeen Youth Music Partnership](#) delivered by [Station House Media Unit](#) will bring together organisations, practitioners and young people in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to work together to further the area's Youth Music Action Plan.

Every community has its own unique culture. It is important to recognise that a lack of established traditional artistic infrastructure does not mean that there is a lack of creative or cultural activity or expression – successful national or centralised initiatives need to understand these individual cultures. It is important that local and national government and national bodies recognise the individual needs and requirements of different communities and places, and of different artforms and creative practices. Cultural practices which do not necessarily take place in theatres or music venues, including Gaelic culture and Traditional Arts, are vital to the cultural life and heritage of communities. Supporting and trusting people, artists, and communities to create their own artistic infrastructure and drive their own creative lives, without pre-determined expectations, would allow communities to explore unmet cultural needs. This may include, for example, funding for screen equipment for local community halls or to create festivals and performances.

There are good examples of community-led creative infrastructure development, responding to the need. The development of [Cromarty Cinema](#) is an example of a relatively low-cost facility (sub-£250,000 for the whole facility) which supports the continued sustainability of a community.

[National Lottery Awards for All](#) is a partnership between The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland, sportscotland and Creative Scotland.

This programme offers funding between £300 and £10,000 to support what matters to people and communities. Creative projects supported through the National Lottery Awards for All programme benefit communities and people across Scotland, demonstrating the big impact of small amounts of funding.

While funding for activity is important, it is also crucial to recognise the role of everyday culture in contributing to the lives of communities and to ensure that these activities are also supported, whether through access to spaces or providing advice on running voluntary or grassroots organisations. Small grants can make a big difference for community led organisations. Reducing barriers to accessing spaces, including addressing high rental costs or supporting community asset transfers (with access to revenue funding, not only building costs) can ensure the sustainability of smaller communities and neighbourhoods.

While it's important to recognise the difference between cultural ambitions and needs across communities, it's also important to be able to support people to identify unmet needs and how to achieve their ambitions.

Creative Scotland's funding and development work has supported artists, creative and community organisations to map, research and identify the gaps and opportunities for culture in their area.

Education Scotland's review of Creative Scotland's [Creative Place Awards](#) programme, in 2015, highlighted the wider benefits where people worked together to celebrate their place through arts and culture. This involved self-evaluation and engagement with HM Inspectors as part of the process. The reviews highlighted the economic and social benefit of culture to local communities:

[Creative Place Review | Education Scotland](#)

Creative Scotland's [Place Partnership Programme](#) is a strategic programme designed to encourage and support local partners to work together with their creative communities and Creative Scotland. The partnership should aim to make significant interventions which address opportunities and issues and help to strengthen creative development in their area. The programme supports local groups to come together to spark ideas, promote collaborative working, build capacity, and ultimately deliver creative activity which responds to the distinct opportunities and challenges within different localities.

The programme sits distinct from other funding in that the emphasis is collaborative planning and working (as opposed to an application-based approach), particularly within regions of Scotland where the infrastructure relating to the arts, screen and creative industries is comparatively underdeveloped. It stands as an important aspect of our development role across Scotland.

16 Local Authority areas across Scotland have been part of the Place Partnership Programme, and in many cases, a first step in understanding the requirements of the area was to undertake cultural mapping, to identify the challenges and opportunities of the area, and consultation to understand the needs of the creative sector and local communities. The outcomes of mapping and consultation, and each Place Partnership, vary according to the unique needs of each area.

Examples of Place Partnership projects:

- **Angus:** Development of the [Angus Cultural Strategy](#).
www.creativescotland.com/culture-and-heritage-boost-for-angus
- **Argyll & Bute:** Establishment of [CHARTS – Culture Heritage and Arts](#) - a formally constituted arts and heritage network.
www.chartsargyllandisles.org
- **Dumfries & Galloway:** Supporting the establishment of [DG Unlimited](#), a sector advice, support and advocacy body which is a key partner for Dumfries and Galloway Council.
- **Inverclyde:** The annual [Galoshans Festival](#): Celebrating Halloween coming home to Greenock, with community events, high quality installations, music and performance, the festival is now by managed by the Galoshans Consortium of partners including CVS Inverclyde, Inverclyde Council and cultural organisations.
- **North Ayrshire:** Islands Arts Co-ordinator – a post which supports ambition and development across Cumbrae and Arran, managed jointly by North Ayrshire Council and Creative Scotland, and supported by Arran Theatre and Arts Trust and Millport Town Hall, the post works with creative practitioners, artists and arts organisations across both islands.
- **Stirling:** establishment of [SceneStirling](#), a collaborative initiative by the city’s arts and cultural partners to showcase Stirling’s cultural and creative sector, develop creative networks, support opportunities for creative practitioners and create more visibility for arts and culture in Stirling.

Creative Scotland’s [Culture Collective](#) programme, supported by Scottish Government, is a network of 26 participatory arts projects, shaped by local communities alongside artists and creative organisations. From Shetland to Inverclyde, Aberdeen to Hawick, each unique project is designed and driven by the community in which it is rooted, playing an important part in shaping the future cultural life of Scotland. For the projects themselves, the Culture Collective provides a network: opportunities to share resources, learning and experiences. For the sector as a whole, the Culture Collective shines a light on the crucial importance of participatory arts projects for artists, for communities and for the future.

Many Culture Collective projects highlight the wider wellbeing potential of the arts, in bringing people together, tackling loneliness and isolation, and enabling people to embrace the joy and pleasure of creativity, whilst others have a focus on creative placemaking.

As the programme was designed to be flexible and respond to local need, and to deliver against the National Culture Strategy, Culture Collective, and the projects it supports offers a strong example of how to address unmet need, through place-

based and people-centred creative processes. The programme provides multi-faceted explorations, learning and examples of how to enable people to shape the future cultural life of their community.

Examples of Culture Collective projects:

- **Toonspeak:** [The Here We Are Culture Collective](#) project is based in Ward 17 (Springburn/Balornock/Barmulloch/Robroyston/Millerston), in the North of Glasgow, with a programme which has contributed to the wellbeing of members of the community, from children and young people to adults.
- **Alchemy Film & Arts:** Alchemy's Culture Collective project, [The Teviot, the Flag and the Rich, Rich Soil](#), aims to investigate the borders, boundaries and lines of Hawick, reframing the town's cultural identities as they relate to land, water, industry, territory, place and environment.

Blog post by Michael Pattinson: [Culture Collective | Up the Teviot: On Artists and Residencies in Hawick](#)

- **SEALL:** [Aiserigh](#) project is a collaboration between SEALL, ATLAS Arts and Fèisean nan Gàidheal, to work together with individuals, communities, businesses and organisations across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh to develop a range of ways to use culture as a powerful tool for creating strong and healthy communities for the future.

Blog post by Louis Barabbas: [Culture Collective | Louis Barabbas on keeping community spaces alive and thriving](#)

- **Open Road:** [Safe Harbour, Open Sea](#): this project, in partnership with Fittie Community Development Trust, aims to celebrate the history and heritage of the community, create a cultural programme for the community hall and explore the future of the coastal community.
- Further blog posts from Culture Collective: www.culturecollective.scot/blog

We would be happy to share a copy of the interim findings from our research and evaluation programme, undertaken by Queen Margaret University, to further demonstrate the impact of Culture Collective.

What does good 'place-based' cultural policy look like in practice?

Good 'place-based' cultural policy recognises the individual needs of people, communities, and places, recognises unique culture and heritage of individuals and communities, and responds to the ambition, need and challenges of each place. There is no 'one size fits all' approach, and processes or strategies which

work in one area, or with one community, are not necessarily directly replicable in others.

Policy and strategy development should be co-created – involving local people, local creative and cultural organisations, and groups, as well as third sector, private and public organisations, and local and national government. It is important that place-based cultural policy does not just exist in a silo, but embodies the Place Principle, and includes policy areas from health to planning. Place-based approaches should prioritise inclusion, ensuring that it is not only the loud voices which are heard, but that the culture and traditions of communities and places are valued alongside diverse voices and cultures, and proactively include marginalised groups.

While Creative Scotland is not a statutory partner in community or locality planning processes, unlike other national bodies e.g., sportscotland, the role that culture and creative practitioners can play in creating vibrant, diverse, and resilient places has been demonstrated through the many regeneration and development projects which are culture-led or centred around culture, which demonstrate that including culture from the very start in planning can help to rejuvenate places and communities. Many cultural organisations and creative practitioners are skilled at working with people and drawing out their ideas, so are invaluable in including communities in shaping their own futures.

TRACS: [The People's Parish](#) project aims to inspire and support creative neighbourhood projects in each of Scotland's 871 civil parishes, connecting local stories, traditions and cultural memory with the distinct local voices, culture and creativity of our places today. The People's Parish is part of the Culture Collective programme, which supports projects in nine different communities across Scotland.

We recommend the following reports on place-based working and creative placemaking:

[Working Better Together in Place | surf.scot](#)
[Embers | The Stove Network](#)

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