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CULTURE SECTOR REVIEW

4th March 2025

Dear Clare,

Thank you for your letter following the Committee Budget 2025-26 evidence session on 16 January about the review of how the culture sector is supported in Scotland, including the independent Review of Creative Scotland. I have set out a brief update below and would like to thank the Committee for its continued commitment and valued work in this important area.

Firstly, I am sorry to report that last week Dame Sue Bruce unfortunately had to withdraw from Chairing the independent Review of Creative Scotland on health grounds. The process for appointing a successor to chair the independent Review is already underway and I will keep you updated on the new appointment. Whilst I recognise the delay will be frustrating, I hope you will join me in wishing Dame Sue the best as she focuses on recovery.

Sector-wide survey update

The sector-wide survey seeking views on current service provision and future culture sector needs has been well received with over 750 responses. These responses are currently being analysed with a view to publication in Spring this year. The survey is only one part of the engagement process, and the results will be considered alongside the extant body of evidence available from extensive past and ongoing engagement with the sector, which will include the substantial evidence and recommendations provided by the CEACC Committee.

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Sector Support Programme

The review of how the culture sector is supported will not take the form of a traditional review but will adopt an action-orientated approach to develop thinking from the outset and demonstrate a range of new practices on the ground at pace.

This ongoing programme of work will initially focus on two key areas: the delivery of a Culture and Heritage Capacity Fund and the further investigation and development of innovative funding solutions as well as non-financial support for the sector based on existing and developing evidence of impact.

The Culture and Heritage Capacity fund will be the key vehicle for ongoing evaluation of sector support delivery and its relative impact in the first instance; seeking to monitor and learn from funded activity, modifying interventions in an iterative manner whilst evaluating impact at key stages and sharing learning widely.

This £4 million fund will aim to provide tailored support, funding and guidance to help organisations build capacity and resilience in recognition of the significant challenges faced by heritage and culture organisations across Scotland. The development of a strategic approach to positive change; creating 21st century models for organisations that are collaborative, resilient and deliver for Scotland's communities, will be central to the Culture and Heritage Capacity Fund. The Scottish Government is currently in the early stages of scoping the remit and potential delivery mechanisms of the fund in liaison with expert partners and details will be set out in due course, including a timeline.

As part of this programme, the Scottish Government will investigate and develop options to support innovative funding solutions for the sector. This will include the investigation of additional and alternative funding streams such as, the percentage for the arts scheme and/or alternative mechanisms; corporate social sponsorship and philanthropy in Scotland, whilst making the most of opportunities to work with partners on wider sector support initiatives.

Learning from the first year of the Sector Support Programme will inform how the Scottish Government works to optimise funding approaches and support the sector going forward. The factual evidence from this learning may therefore, inform elements of the Creative Scotland Review around effective approaches to supporting the sector going forward. Targeted engagement is planned throughout the sector support programme including with identified experts in specific areas of investigation, for example, private investment, business support, sector organisations with practical experience of various funding models, as well as key sector bodies such as, Creative Scotland and Culture Counts.

Next steps

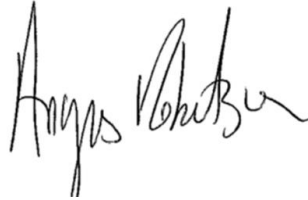
As mentioned above, the report setting out the findings of the sector-wide survey will be published in Spring 2025 and the Scottish Government will offer open sessions to present those findings to the sector and interested parties.

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I will write again as soon as I have news regarding the new appointment to lead the Review of Creative Scotland. In the meantime I would like to thank you again for all of your valued work in this area. I very much appreciate the detailed evidence and thoughtful reflection that the committee provides which continues to inform the Scottish Government's ongoing development work in support of the sector.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angus Robertson'.

Angus Robertson

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