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Convener Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
Scottish Parliament

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Dear Clare,

Pre-Budget scrutiny 2026-27: funding for culture

I would like to thank you and the Committee Members once again for the opportunity to give evidence in September 2025 as part of your pre-budget scrutiny on funding for culture. The detailed examination and careful reflection the Committee has given to the information gathered is evident in your report of 21 November 2025.

Financial Context

The Scottish Government faces a challenging financial position over the medium-term and delivery of the actions set out in the Fiscal Sustainability Delivery Plan and Public Service Reform Strategy will, therefore, be key. Set against a backdrop of constrained resources and a rising demand for public services, the draft budget for 2026-27 continues to fund the social contract that is at the heart of this Government's approach including our commitment to increased funding for culture.

The draft budget has been developed through effective engagement and negotiation across Parliament to build broad support and our focus remains aligning government spending with the delivery of our four priorities: eradicating child poverty, growing the economy, tackling the climate emergency, and ensuring high quality and sustainable public services.

Scottish Government funding for culture

The positive impact of recent increases to the Scottish Government's budget for culture has been broadly welcomed by the Committee and stakeholders as reflected in the Committee's recent report. An additional £20 million for culture in 2026-27 will bring the cumulative annual increase in the culture budget to £70 million when compared to the 2023-24 allocation.

However, the Scottish Government understands ongoing calls for careful consideration and transparency around how any additional funding could be used for greatest strategic impact, along with alternative approaches to generating funding, to best support the sector going forward.

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There is an ongoing need to ensure that available funding is used both to provide financial security to Scotland's organisations today and to balance that with the need to drive the strategic changes needed across the sector so that the future success of the sector is secured in a way that is sustainable.

Creative Scotland

That is why in the draft budget that was published on 13 January, the Scottish Government has earmarked an additional £20 million for direct delivery to the sector through the Creative Scotland Multi Year Funding programme, increasing financial stability for cultural organisations across the country.

The Scottish Government is aware that many of the [Independent Review of Creative Scotland](#) recommendations set out in the Angela Leitch's recent report speak to leadership for the sector on many of the issues raised by the Committee. I want to reassure the Committee that the Scottish Government's response to the Creative Scotland Review recommendations will take cognisance of the Committee's pre-budget scrutiny report.

Screen Scotland

Increasing investment in Screen Scotland by £800,000 will build on the successes of film and television production in Scotland in support of the Scottish Government's goal of £1 billion Gross Value Added by the sector to the Scottish economy by 2030.

Museum Futures Programme

The draft budget also prioritises support for innovation and sustainability through a second year of our pioneering Museum Futures Programme, with a further £4 million investment in 2026-27 to support the development of new ways of working across the sector.

Youth and community arts

Scotland's young people and communities will have increased opportunities to engage in culture through planned increases to the Youth Music Initiative (YMI – increased by £215,000) and Sistema Scotland (increased by £100,000) and through ongoing funding for our flagship community-led arts programmes, Culture Collective and Creative Communities.

Public Service Reform

The draft 2026-27 budget for culture builds on previous funding uplifts and seeks to continue to support the changes that will make a difference to how the sector is supported going forward. This includes our ongoing work with our public bodies to drive efficiencies, strengthen partnership working and increase income streams where applicable.

Historic Environment Scotland

The agreed revised Framework Document with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) provides the organisation with greater financial freedoms to manage its commercial income. As part of this agreement, HES is continuing to reduce its dependency on public funding towards its operational budget as its commercial income continues to grow. This is the second year of that agreement which sees a further £2 million reduction in resource funding providing HES in 2026/27 with £57.2 million as part of a five- year plan to reduce funding of HES by £10 million.

National Collections

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring our National Collections have the resources they need to meet to meet pay pressures and other inflationary issues, including

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through efficiency savings where possible so that any additional funding available in 2026-27 can be directed towards activities that will increase sustainability going forward. The Scottish Government also plans to provide increased funding to the V&A Dundee (an increase of £200,000) in recognition of the significant national and international activity needed to maintain its status as Scotland's premiere museum of design and to drive the innovation needed to become less reliant on public funding going forward. Significant capital investment of £11.65 million in 2026-27 leading to a total investment of £55.9 million over three years for a collaborative and visionary project – The Art Works. This will establish a National Collections Hub for National Galleries of Scotland and National Museums of Scotland, delivering significant socio-economic benefits as part of City of Edinburgh Council's Granton Regeneration.

National Performing Companies

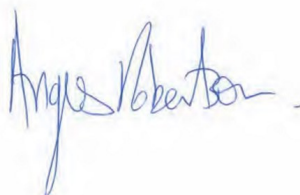
The Scottish Government has protected the budgets of our internationally acclaimed National Performing Companies at almost £25 million collectively, with a view to providing additional support in future years as part of the cultural funding uplift to the additional £100 million by 2028-29.

The Scottish Government has also recently pledged a further £20 million to the Dunard Centre which will provide a first class concert hall in Edinburgh and a new home for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. This is in addition to the £10 million already provided as part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. The draft budget also commits to providing an additional £1.25 million capital in 2026-27 for the redevelopment of the King's Theatre in Edinburgh, bringing the total SG funding package to £12.8 million over the lifetime of the project subject to further due diligence requirements.

Conclusion

The Scottish Government spending plans support many of the priorities raised in the Committee's report including supporting collaboration and partnership working with local authorities and other delivery partners; increasing the number of multi-year funded organisations through Creative Scotland; increasing opportunities across the country for cultural engagement; and working across Ministerial portfolios to ensure that culture continues to contribute to positive outcomes in tackling the climate crisis and supporting lifelong learning, for example.

I look forward to hearing the Committee's thoughts on the draft culture budget for 2026-27 and to hear their ideas on key priorities for the Spending Review period when I appear at Committee on 5th February.



Angus Robertson

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