



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Angus Robertson
Cabinet Secretary, Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
Scottish Government

23 January 2025

Dear Cabinet Secretary

Culture Sector Review

Further to your evidence to the Committee last week in relation to the Budget 2025-26 the Committee agreed to provide you with further comments concerning the planned review of the culture sector including the independent review of Creative Scotland.

In our pre-budget report the Committee welcomed the planned review, recognising that it comes at an important juncture and should be valuable in supporting the effective distribution and investment of additional funding for the culture sector.

As we noted in that report the Committee has undertaken a significant amount of work on funding and support for the culture sector. The review would benefit from taking into consideration this substantial evidence and the Committee's recommendations. This should include our previous work on innovative funding solutions. We remain of the view that there is a need for much greater urgency to making progress in this area.

In our pre-budget report we also recognised there will be a need to consult widely with stakeholders in the culture sector, and that the review should engage with those involved in delivering community-based cultural activities as well as larger established cultural organisations. We therefore welcome the publication of the short survey¹ seeking views on how culture and the arts are currently supported in Scotland and seeking thoughts on areas for change. We also welcome that responses will inform the scope of a planned review of culture sector support in Scotland by the Scottish Government.

Our SPICe paper indicated that officials at the Scottish Government have confirmed that there would be two reviews. One of the wider culture sector to be carried out by the Scottish Government and a related independent review of Creative Scotland. The Committee would welcome clarity about how these reviews will

¹ <https://forms.office.com/e/AhrX3BBtfp>

interact. Furthermore, it would be useful to have clarity in relation to the timing and scope of the wider review into the culture sector – for example, to what extent the review will examine the other directly funded organisations.

Creative Scotland Review

The Committee welcomes the Scottish Government’s adoption of our recommendation that the review of Creative Scotland be undertaken independently.

In your letter to us dated 4th September 2024 you stated that the review of Creative Scotland is “related to the need to ensure that the remit and functions of CS remain relevant given the body was established in 2010 and the ever changing cultural landscape.” You added that the review would be of interest to the Committee given our current work on funding for culture and scrutiny of the budgets for 2025/2026 and our recent work in relation to Rein.

In our pre-budget report the Committee highlighted our significant concerns regarding Creative Scotland’s handling of the funding for Rein once the funding decision had been publicly challenged. The Committee’s view is that much of the controversy surrounding the application could have been avoided by Creative Scotland being more open and transparent around how it handled the funding decision.

More generally the Committee has heard concerns from stakeholders in our pre-budget scrutiny work this session that Creative Scotland’s funding process “was very difficult to complete.”² Creative Scotland highlighted their new Funding Management System, which will provide a streamlined online application process. They indicated that the intention was for the new system to provide greater transparency and consistency in the funding process by publishing an account of all funding provided.

Creative Scotland told us in oral evidence on 9th January 2025 that with “regard to the review, the Scottish Government has helpfully been clear that it is a review of purpose, not process.” They added that our “understanding is that the review will focus primarily on the support to the culture sector and that the Creative Scotland element will focus on Creative Scotland’s purpose”. The Committee asked whether this meant the remit would not include how it operates and Creative Scotland told us “that is correct”.³

² [pre-budget-scrutiny-report.pdf](#)

³ [Official Report](#)

The Committee's view is that the scope of the independent review of Creative Scotland should not be limited to its purpose and should also consider operational issues including effective governance and the transparency of the funding process.

The Committee would welcome a response prior to the scope of the review of the culture sector and the independent review of Creative Scotland being finalised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clare Adamson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Clare Adamson MSP
Convener**