

Glasgow Life

Planned budget increases

Glasgow Life's mission is "to inspire every citizen and visitor to become engaged and active in a city globally renowned for culture and sport. The organisation's purpose is to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of Glaswegians and visitors through culture and sport; support the city's visitor economy and enhance the city's reputation as a great place to live, work, learn and visit through the delivery of local and international events and the management of worldclass collections; and to generate funds (through culture and sport programmes) in order to re-invest in the charitable activities which support our vision. Glasgow Life leads on a number of city strategies these are: Glasgow's Tourism and Visitor Plan, UNESCO City of Music, Glasgow's Events Strategy, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, Glasgow's Cultural Strategy, Vision for Glasgow Libraries and Glasgow's Community Learning and Development Plan.

The Scottish Government's Culture Budget, the Culture Strategy and Action Plan, the strategic priorities of Creative Scotland and local culture strategies and action plans are not as effectively aligned as they could be given the scale of the challenges facing the cultural sector. This creates an unhelpful level of dissonance and a lack of coherence at strategic policy level which undermines efforts to improve the capacity and sustainability of the cultural sector. This lack of full integration makes it difficult to align national expenditure with outputs specified in the Action Plan. The Action Plan would benefit from developing clear Specific, Measurable, Realistic and Timebound objectives. At the moment objectives lack timelines and specificity. This means it will be difficult to measure outcomes, hold multiple stakeholders to account and drive the transformational change required to sustain a rich and vibrant sector. Influencing how mainstream health, education and social care budgets, for example, can be used to support culture is likely to remain extremely unlikely without this strategic coherence and specific commitments.

In addition the Scottish Government should accelerate progress implementing commitments outlined in previous manifesto and policy statements, such as Multi-year funding and % for arts funding schemes. Without direct Scottish Government action these initiatives will not proceed.

More specifically integration between the Strategy and Action Plan and Budget would enable the development of the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee as three distinct and distinctive regional cultural hubs, multiplying outcomes locally, regionally and nationally. This approach would allow each area to develop complementarity rather than competition enhancing Scotland's distinct and distinctive national cultural brand.

We strongly believe that a more equitable funding relationship would help

complement national funding directed to Edinburgh and Dundee.

Glasgow - given the scale of its support and development of nationally and internationally significant cultural infrastructure, programming and content - would welcome direct investment for this portfolio around key areas. These are Museums, Events and Festivals. Each of these features deliver at scale against the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, the National Culture Strategy and wider social and economic outcomes.

For example, Glasgow Life Museums continues to deliver significantly more for significantly less direct support from Scottish government cultural funding, offering a high level of efficiency, reach and outcome at a considerably lower per-unit cost, with no direct financial support from Scottish government cultural funding. Similarly, Glasgow's programme of national and international events and festivals complements Edinburgh-based festivals which are in receipt of Scottish Government Platform for Cultural Excellence partnership funding. However Glasgow's national and international events and festivals receive no funding from this Scottish Government programme.

Finally, the Culture Strategy and Action Plan and Scottish Government's Culture Budget have little to say about capital expenditure available to support the maintenance and development of cultural infrastructure. Organisations often have limited flexibility regarding capital expenditure, in terms of funding sources available, but also because of the pressure placed by revenue costs

Culture Strategy Action Plan

The Culture Strategy Action Plan provides some welcome additional clarity around how the Scottish Government will ensure it "operationalises" its vision for culture in Scotland. Additional resources are also extremely welcome.

However, as previously highlighted, Scottish Government Culture funding does not align coherently with and enable the delivery of local Culture Strategies, particularly with regard to the development of distinct and distinctive local provision and priorities. The Strategy and Action Plan lack a clear narrative and recognition of the role of Local Government with regard to funding local cultural provision, but also its role in facilitating the development of a supportive "eco-system" via other relevant strategies such as economic development, just transition, community renewal and area planning. The Scottish Government Culture Budget should be open to organisations working within local Culture Strategies and Action Plan priorities which align with the National Culture Strategy and Action Plan.

The Action Plan would benefit from the development of specific, measurable, realistic and achievable (SMART) objectives which would improve focus and accountability as well as evidence progress.

As previously stated the Scottish Government Culture Budget, the Scottish Government Culture Strategy and Action Plan, Creative Scotland strategic outcomes and local Culture Strategies and Action Plans need to much more closely and coherently aligned. This alignment also needs to be built around specific and measurable objectives with timescales, a focus on outcomes and monitoring which enables accountability .

The most significant 'other funding partner' of the culture sector in Scotland is Local Government. In light of the sustained fiscal pressures and the requirement to make substantial savings, local authorities are facing increasingly difficult decisions in relation to their spending priorities. This means there is a significant risk that councils will not prioritise spend on culture, but will prioritise other more 'essential' services further reducing the spend on culture nationally. Being clearer about the outcomes and impacts of the Culture Strategy Action Plan and how they contribute to wider issues facing local authorities would go some way to supporting the culture sector to make the case for local authority funding.

Regardless of these issues, sustainability requires investment. Given pressure on public sector finance, structural challenges affecting local government and ongoing dependence of local cultural infrastructure, programming and content on local government funding, it seems likely that the cultural sector's future is intimately linked with structural decisions around local government in Scotland.

In addition, collaboration between cultural organisations and other public sector agencies seems unlikely to happen at any meaningful scale without direct Scottish Government policy and funding intervention. There may scope to incentivise partnerships or link funding to collaboration much more explicitly and directly.

However, this may necessitate reductions in budget in other policy areas. Net Zero and Just Transition, Wellbeing Economy and Public Health have already been identified as key policy areas with scope to harness cultural participation to drive change and achieve outcomes. Top-slicing these budgets to create, or add to a national fund with equitable regional pots would move the Culture Strategy beyond rhetoric into tangible action.

Progress on innovative funding solutions

As in previous years, there appears to have been little progress regarding innovative funding solutions. There are limited funding sources available to cultural organisations. Public sector funding streams which support innovative local approaches, such as the Public Library Improvement Fund, are short-term, and small scale. Innovation funding by its nature is primarily time-bound. While this can enable new approaches to be tested it is insufficient to enable sustained and sustainable change. It places the onus on existing mainstream funders to pick-up additional

costs. In practical terms, this means local authorities, given they are the primary funders of local cultural services (namely libraries in this case of this particular fund).

Many independent grant-making trusts, which also fund the cultural sector, also focus on supporting innovation. This means many organisations find themselves in a continuous loop of re-invention of activities, or the development of new programmes, whilst struggling to fund mainstream revenue activities in particular. Although this has been a long-term issue for all community and voluntary organisations, cultural organisations have much more limited scope given there are few grant-making trusts which prioritise culture.

More broadly there is no evidence that supporting cultural provision or cultural activities features at any level in the spending decisions of public agencies or Government Departments. Cultural organisations have very little “real-world” traction with regard to fiscal decisions being made by priority areas such as health, education or social care bodies. This is despite the fact that there is a significant body of evidence regarding the contribution cultural participation and culture more widely can make towards delivering outcomes across these, and other, key policy areas .

Much of this body of evidence details contribution towards preventative approaches, particularly with regard to health. However, application of these approaches remains small-scale given that the delivery of public services continues to be weighted towards large-scale demand-led models. Achieving even relatively small shifts in complex systems of this nature and targeting expenditure towards preventative approaches has not been realised, despite being identified as a priority by the Christie Commission almost 15 years ago.

The Scottish Government needs to consider a much more directive approach to funding culture from other mainstream budgets if there is to be any realistic progress against this stated aim.

The other potential source of funding referenced relates to Visitor Levy income. Legislation enabling this is obviously now in place. However it seems likely that there will be a wide variance across Scotland regarding amounts raised and how it is spent. The amounts collected are also likely to be fairly limited.

“Culture” is often identified as a key feature driving the decisions of tourists to visit specific cities, regions or nations. The relationship between cultural provision and these decisions is highlighted across a number of recent visitor surveys locally, regionally and nationally. In addition destination marketing collateral strongly promotes local cultural provision as a unique selling point. However decisions around how Visitor Levy revenue is actually spent are subject to consultation amongst local tourism and hospitality stakeholders. It seems likely that there will be a wide range of pressures on how any revenue collected should be spent locally.

Specific local support to pass any revenue on to support local cultural provision may well be limited given the scale of demand, particularly around local built environment and physical infrastructure demands. It remains to be seen how much traction culture has in this context.

Finally, the context influencing private sector and philanthropic support of culture has become more complex. The operating environment underpinning commercial sponsorship of the arts, for example, has, in the last year, continued to witness controversy around wider environmental, economic, social and political issues - particularly fossil fuels and allegations around the ethics of investment policies. It seems likely that corporate sponsorship and philanthropic donations to the arts will continue to be subject to a high level of scrutiny given the effectiveness of recent campaigns. Although controversies regarding the origins of private funding of public arts and culture are nothing new, they have scope to become increasingly polarised given the more generally fractious tenor of public debate. This may act as a disincentive for commercial organisations considering sponsorship relationships with cultural bodies.

Creative Scotland's Multi—Year Funding Programme

Creative Scotland's Multi-Year Funding Programme is extremely welcome and enables improved strategic decision making particularly in relation to planning and sustainability. However, the issue remains the scale of demand versus available resource. Sectoral confidence is linked very explicitly to the scale of available resource.

The Scottish Government has also only committed Creative Scotland funding until March 2025. This makes it difficult for organisations applying for Multi-Year Funding to plan. It also makes it challenging for Creative Scotland to make fully strategic decisions regarding funding applications.

For example applications have been submitted to Creative Scotland for 3 year funding and applicants have been advised that decisions will be made in October. This does not align to the Scottish Government's budget process which will not confirm its budget for 2025/26 until December 2024. There is a risk that funding decisions for the next 3 years will be made on the basis of the budget available to Creative Scotland in October which is estimated at £40m (against around £87.5m of bids submitted for Multi-Year Funding).

In addition there could be greater clarity regarding the relationship between Creative Scotland's funding streams, the Scottish Government's Culture and local Cultural Strategies and action plans. Again, there is a lack of coordination between the Scottish Government's Cultural Budget, the Scottish Government's Culture Strategy and Action Plan, local area Culture Strategies and Creative Scotland's operating outcomes. Greater coherence across all of these features would be welcome.

Fair work

The understanding of the guidance being used to assess the implementation of Fair Work First standards within the cultural sector remains challenging as funders look for different examples of evidence to the guidance. Examples of the inconsistencies have been highlighted to funders to try to demonstrate how consistency would support access across the sector, both in terms of applying for funding and releasing funds. Trade unions in different parts of the sector and in different geographies are also sharing their own interpretation of the guidance with those who receive funding. As trade union agreement is needed to publish a joint statement on Fair Work First, one of the evidence criteria, having different interpretations of the guidance is both challenging and not helpful.

It would be helpful if acknowledgement could be given to the many ways that employers can demonstrate implementation of FWF principles other than the very specific outcomes required in the guidance. Additional guidance on the intent behind the implementation of the FWF principles and how procurement operates within a specific framework to implement the same principles would be helpful to aid conversations with trade unions.

Implementation of the Real Living Wage across all staff continues to be challenging, with the focus on payment to modern apprentices. While a temporary exemption was made available for local authorities, this is temporary and does not address the longer term ability to pay a higher rate to training roles without reducing the number of roles or increasing the funding available . ' There is a risk that there will be a reduction on the number of MAs with the unintended consequence in creating inequalities in the sector by removing opportunities to build a more diverse workforce though supported employment opportunities.