Dear Fiona

During the autumn, members of the Education and Culture Committee undertook a series of sessions looking at the spending decisions made and outcomes delivered by 5 public bodies within our remit, including Creative Scotland.

Members agreed this work would feed into the Committee budget report and in addition they would consider producing a series of letters to the Scottish Government drawing attention to issues heard in evidence and seeking comment.

The Committee scrutiny had the stated purpose of allowing us to:

- Understand the added value each body provides;
- Question the progress each is making on their key strategic objectives;
- Understand how transparent each is in evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of their work;
- Question how each contributes to the Scottish Government’s National performance Framework; and
- Potentially consider whether their funding levels and key strategic objectives are appropriate.

Each body was invited to provide oral evidence and, in advance, respond to a series of written questions which sought information on their key objectives and measures.

Written comment from key stakeholders and others was invited and assisted in our examination of each body.
The remainder of this letter covers matters we wish to bring to the attention of the Scottish Government, who provide the bulk of funding to each body. In so doing, we have highlighted where we consider the Scottish Government as the sponsors of these bodies could have views.

For information, we will in our legacy report to our successor Committee be recommending this work is repeated with each body on an annual basis. This will allow the Committee to build, through annual scrutiny, a better understanding of the operation of each body and to follow through on information received and activities undertaken from year to year.

In relation to Creative Scotland we heard from senior management on 15 September 2015 in relation to its 10 year plan published in 2014 and annual plan.

In addition to a written submission from Creative Scotland and comment from stakeholders we also considered published audit reports. The responses to the questions asked, all written submissions, the official report of our meeting and a subsequent exchange of correspondence with Creative Scotland seeking clarification of certain matters are all available here on our web site.

Having considered all the material the Committee would welcome the views of the Scottish Government in relation to the following areas, in each case question(s) are asked at the end of the section.

**Assessing outcomes**

We heard Creative Scotland has five key ambitions that provide a focus for its work. These are set out in its 10-year plan, which includes pointers for what success will look like. One of its ambitions is for the creative sector in Scotland to be recognised for its high quality output.

We were particularly interested in how Creative Scotland measures the quality of the projects that it funds and, therefore, how it will achieve its ambition for excellence in the creative sector.

Creative Scotland told us that, as well as collating the evidence on the deliverables and tangible outcomes from the first year of its 10-year plan, it was in the process of developing an artistic and creative assessment framework, which it will use to inform judgements. It is currently piloting the new framework with a small number of organisations.

**How does the Scottish Government currently assess whether Creative Scotland, through its support for the arts in Scotland, is providing value for money and in what way are its outcomes currently monitored?**
Collaborative working

Creative Scotland’s 10-year plan recognises that its ability to work effectively with its partners is important to achieving success. One of its targets is to have strong partnerships in place between public agencies, education, artists, creative people and organisations to develop talent and skills.

With reference to the work of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee (“EET Committee”), we asked Creative Scotland for an update on its work in developing joint working arrangements with Scottish Enterprise. The EET Committee had reported that a lack of co-operation between the two bodies had created a barrier to supporting the TV and film sectors in Scotland. We understand that a partnership agreement has now been agreed that seeks to ensure Creative Scotland and Scottish Enterprise are strongly connected, while recognising the lead co-ordination role of Creative Scotland in relation to the creative industries.

How does the Scottish Government monitor the effectiveness of joint working between its agencies and how will it ensure that the lack of co-ordination shown in the case of Creative Scotland and Scottish Enterprise is not repeated or replicated elsewhere?

Opportunity to promote Scottish screen in the new BBC charter

Linked to the above, one of Creative Scotland’s functions is to act as an advocate for the creative industries in Scotland. This involves working with others to raise the profile of the sector and championing the work of individuals and organisations across Scotland.

We have also received evidence for our work on the renewal of the BBC charter as to how significant opportunities should arise to develop and grow locally-based talent in Scotland, particularly within the independent production sector. We were surprised this potential opportunity was not brought to our attention and indeed are left wondering about the degree of contact and support given to this sector.

What involvement has the Scottish Government had with Creative Scotland in developing its position on the BBC charter and what, if any, support does the Scottish Government consider could be provided to support television production in Scotland?

Grant funding

There was concern raised with us in evidence that the Scottish Government’s decision to fund the Scottish Youth Theatre (“SYT”) had “undermined” the ability of Creative Scotland to manage its funding strategy. Creative Scotland told us the Framework Document that sets out individual roles and responsibilities was being revised to reflect best practice and central government guidance. It also explained
that Government’s funding of SYT was part of a package of public and private
funding aimed at engaging more of Scotland’s young people in culture and the arts.

Also, we received a number of written submissions that criticised Creative Scotland
for not providing adequate support to the Scottish traditional music and arts sectors.

Could the Scottish Government indicate the strategic thinking around the
provision of central funding packages being available through bodies other
than Creative Scotland?

Could the Scottish Government indicate how it aligns the funding packages it
holds centrally with the strategic objectives of Creative Scotland and can more
be done to highlight the co-ordination of this work in future to avoid the type of
criticisms we heard?

Given this work is undertaken as part of our work in scrutinising the Scottish
Government budget it would be helpful to receive a response to the questions by
Thursday 14 January 2016.

Yours sincerely

STEWART MAXWELL MSP
CONVENER