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Convener Constitution, Europe, External Affairs &
Culture Committee

By email ceeac.committee@parliament.scot

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Dear Clare

I am responding to your letter of 7 February.

I am very grateful to the Committee for its ongoing work on culture funding and for the letter highlighting the Committee's particular areas of concern. The evidence gathered at the roundtable session you held with the sector on 12 January was very informative. We have now concluded our roundtables with the sector with sessions in Inverness on 12 January and Dumfries on 18 January. As I said in my evidence to your Committee on 19 January, we are working on a report on the roundtables, including our strategic response, which will go on to form part of our Culture Strategy Action Plan Refresh publication. I will ensure the Committee have sight of the roundtable report when it is ready.

I will use this letter to both address the concerns that you have raised in your letter and also provide the further information that I committed to during my evidence session.

Funding and governance of the 2024 World Athletics Indoor Championships

In December 2021, World Athletics announced that Glasgow would host the 2024 World Athletics Indoor Championships, following a competitive bid process. The Emirates Arena will stage the biggest indoor athletics championships in the world, five years on from holding the European Athletics Indoor Championships in 2019. Hosting this event reinforces Scotland's global reputation as the Perfect Stage for events.

In total the Scottish Government will provide £1.15 million of support for the event from my portfolio budget. EventScotland, VisitScotland's Events Directorate, will provide a further £350,000 of support. UK Sport have approved a UK Sport Lottery Award of up to £1.45 million and Glasgow City Council is also providing funding. This financial support is profiled across a number financial years, reflecting the long lead in time to prepare for an event of this size.

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The Scottish Government funding support for this event in 2023-24 is currently forecast to be £800,000, with further discussions ongoing to ensure that this profiling of support remains appropriate given progress with delivery.

In terms of governance, Glasgow Life are the lead delivery agency in partnership with UK Athletics. A Steering Group has been established alternately chaired by Glasgow Life Director of Culture, Tourism and Events and Chair of UK Athletics, membership comprises of senior representatives of funding partners. EventScotland represents the Scottish Government at these meetings. Independent membership is being considered further.

A Local Organising Committee has been established to plan, deliver and promote the events, led by the Championships Director (Glasgow Life), with representatives of the delivery team and Scottish Athletics.

The Scottish Government is providing support to help ensure that the event delivers impacts which align with the National Event Strategy¹ (which is currently being reviewed) and the National Performance Framework.² This includes maintaining Scotland's global reputation, international profile and engagement with other nations. In terms of impact on wider outcomes, the Championships offers opportunities to promote participation in sport and physical activity, and to help tackle inequalities that exist in this area.

Update from Historic Environment Scotland

The Historic Environment Scotland (HES) High Level Masonry inspection programme, continues to progress well. Tactile inspections have been carried out at twenty five sites across Scotland since last May, with a further thirteen due for completion by this Spring. HES has been able to reopen a number of sites and there is full or partial access to over eighty percent of the Properties in Care.

Whilst access restrictions have been in place at sites, HES has looked at additional ways to tell their story, including through the return of its events programme and the use of digital technology. HES will of course continue to assess the potential to reopen sites as soon as it is safe to do so.

Funding of culture sector

As I said during my evidence to your Committee I recognise that this is an incredibly worrying time for the culture sector. I am keen to continue to work with the sector to identify barriers to immediate and long-term recovery, and will continue to do everything within our powers and resources to help those most affected by current economic challenges.

As you will be aware the Budget Bill was passed on 21 February. During the stage 3 debate the Deputy First Minister announced that the Scottish Government will provide an uplift of £6.6 million for Creative Scotland for 2023-24 to ensure their accumulated lottery funding reserves can supplement rather than replace grant funding. This decision means that we are continuing to compensate Creative Scotland for a 6th year for generally reduced lottery funding and over six years we will have provided a total of £40 million.

¹ [Supporting Events in Scotland | VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitScotland.org)

² [National Performance Framework | National Performance Framework](https://www.nationalperformanceframework.gov.uk)

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We expect Creative Scotland to set out quickly for the culture sector how it will use these additional resources to support organisations and help protect culture sector jobs at this difficult time.

In terms of multi year funding. I understand the need to have some sense of the planning horizon. I remain keen to conclude some work on multiyear funding, even if economic uncertainty means that the figures for later years can be at most only indicative.

Contributions to wider outcomes

I understand the important role that culture can play in the health and wellbeing of the Scottish people. As I highlighted in my evidence to your Committee, Scottish Ballet's National Centre for Dance Health is one such example, bringing together their impressive and important work in improving the health of people in Scotland including in relation to people with long Covid and those living with neurological conditions. However, I appreciate that in order for these education and health benefits we need the architecture in place.

As the Chief Executive of HES, Alex Paterson, mentioned during his recent Committee appearance, there can be no underestimating the contribution that the Historic Environment continues to make to the Scottish economy and its importance on our journey to net zero. Consequently as the Historic Environment impacts on so many areas of Scottish Government it is vital that Culture and Historic Environment are mainstreamed throughout the work of Scottish Government.

The work of Historic Environment Scotland is already aligned with wider Scottish Government policy, notably the National Planning Framework, Scotland's Climate Change Plan and the Heat in Buildings Strategy. The current review of Scotland's Strategy for the Historic Environment "Our Place in Time" will reflect that we all have a stake in the Historic Environment and will encourage collaboration and cross portfolio working to mainstream the Historic Environment throughout Scottish Government and Scottish society.

I recognise that, as highlighted by National Galleries Scotland, culture reaches across the grassroots, local, regional, national and international sectors. Our culture funding also recognises this as, despite the challenging financial situation, we continue to support across all these sectors, through initiatives such as Culture Collective, Youth Music Initiative, support to independent museums, funding of our national public bodies, and support to the Edinburgh International Culture Summit.

You will be aware that our Culture Strategy, published in February 2020, sets out our ambition to place culture as a central consideration across Government portfolios. Whilst the landscape has changed since the Culture Strategy's publication, we remain entirely committed to its guiding vision and ambitions. I have provided more detail below on how we will continue to deliver on these ambitions within the new context we are working in, via a set of refreshed actions. Please be assured this includes a renewed commitment to demonstrate and advocate for the social and economic value of culture.

Update on the Culture Strategy Action Plan refresh

I wrote to the Committee in December to explain that my officials are working with the sector and relevant public bodies to produce a refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan, which we will publish in spring of this year. Our publication will take into account the valuable

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roundtable discussions we have held over recent months and will set out the actions the Scottish Government will take in response to current and ongoing issues, as well as how we will deliver on the long-term ambitions and vision of the Culture Strategy. I can assure you that in developing the publication and our strategic approach, we are actively engaging with colleagues across Government, with Creative Scotland and other public bodies, and with stakeholders in the culture sector.

Grassroots music venues

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that there is a thriving music industry in Scotland, including grassroots music venues, which are key to supporting emerging Scottish talent. The Scottish Budget 2023-24 offers a strong non-domestic rates package which takes into account the forthcoming 2023 revaluation.

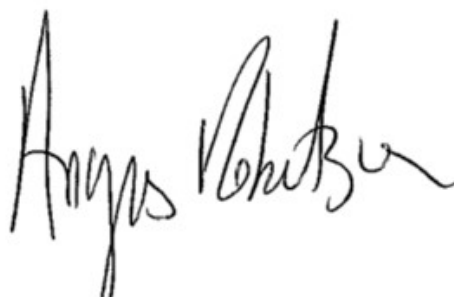
Responding to business' biggest ask on non-domestic rates, the poundage will be frozen at 49.8p in 2023-24, ensuring the lowest poundage in the UK for the fifth year in a row and saving ratepayers an estimated £308 million compared to an inflationary increase.

We will also support a package of reliefs worth an estimated £744 million, including a Revaluation Transitional Relief which aims to protect those properties seeing the most significant increases in rateable values. Increases in non-domestic rates liabilities due to the revaluation taking effect on 1 April 2023 will be capped at 12.5% (cash terms) for small properties, 25% for medium-sized properties and 37.5% for large properties (rateable values above £100,000) in 2023-24, rising in subsequent years. This relief is expected to support an estimated 84,000 properties with their gross rates bills in 2023-24.

In addition, the Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS) will be reformed whilst ensuring that it remains the most generous scheme of its kind in the UK, and that it continues to take 100,000 properties out of rates altogether. Eligibility for partial relief will be expanded and the relief will be made more progressive by introducing a taper. We will also introduce a Small Business Transitional Relief to ensure that properties losing or seeing a reduction in SBBS or Rural rates relief at revaluation do so in a phased manner.

Scottish Government officials have been in dialogue with the Music Venue Trust to discuss rates packages. The Scottish Government is happy to engage further with the Music Venue Trust if they so wish to discuss the challenges that grassroots music venues face during this cost crisis.

Yours sincerely



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