

Written submission from Edinburgh City Council, 2 October 2026

Pre-budget scrutiny 2027-28

Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

- For the Committee's information, there has been no indication that the Edinburgh Visitor Levy has had a negative impact on visitor numbers. Indeed summer festivals have informally recorded strong performance. Most accommodation providers have said no visitors have commented on it and issues reported have been mainly about the providers themselves and how the reporting process has impacted them;
- No data is yet available as the first reporting period has only just started. This can be passed on to the committee when available if of interest;
- 35% of the net income is invested in Edinburgh's culture, heritage and events offering which has allowed us to invest in our own cultural estate as well as increase our financial support to the sector and also to ensure our residents and visitors have access to culture all year round in our city.
- Other immediate investments have been in community safety (working with Police Scotland) and city cleanliness.
- Regularly funded cultural organisations in the city made a strong case for greater funding from the Visitor Levy in the short term to aid immediate resilience. A 25% uplift was approved by City of Edinburgh Councillors.
- Following this, a wider review of both Council and VL funding will take place where we will look at the balance between differing cultural, social and economic objectives and how they apply to different organisations.
- In addition, £2.66m of VL funding is currently available for cultural partners to apply for via the Innovate fund and is to be spent before 31/3 2028.
- We also expect to open up the affordable and accessible culture fund (£1m in 27/28) for applications early next year. Small scale capital investment fund will also launch shortly to allow culture organisations to secure funding to make their buildings meet accessibility and/or deliver sustainability goals.
- We have begun to undertake work on the integration between Council, Creative Scotland, Visit Scotland, and Scottish Government culture funding, particularly for our festivals. At present, these are separate funding streams and both ourselves and the recipients believe there could be a range of benefits in greater integration. This work is ongoing at present.