10 June 2020

Dear Convener,

WRITTEN UPDATE ON SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Further to my letters of 24th April and 28th May and my evidence to the committee on 21st May about measures to support the cultural sector during the current emergency, I am pleased to update you on the latest developments since then as set out in the attached written update which includes those aspects that you raised in your letter of 1st June.

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WRITTEN UPDATE ON SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 FROM CABINET SECRETARY FOR THE ECONOMY, FAIR WORK AND CULTURE IN JUNE 2020

INTRODUCTION

This update addresses the issues the Committee expressed interest in on 1st June, notably

- a break-down of the Scottish Government’s sector-specific initiatives within the culture portfolio,
- the work that is being done to support cultural stakeholders to become operational again in line with physical distancing requirements, including the development and publication of relevant sector-specific guidance and
- the timetable, or sequencing, in which you expect different cultural venues to be reopened (such as cinemas, museums, theatres, live music venues etc.) and the factors that will determine when and how this can occur.

1 A BREAK-DOWN OF THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S SECTOR-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES WITHIN THE CULTURE PORTFOLIO

Creative Scotland established the Bridging Bursaries - Arts & Creative and Screen - and the repurposed Open Project Fund quickly in response to Covid19.

A CREATIVE SCOTLAND’S BRIDGING BURSARIES

As at 8th June, the two Bridging Bursaries schemes had made payments of £4.26m to over 2,270 individuals in the creative and screen sectors.

As at 8th June, Creative Scotland had received 2,018 applications to the Arts and Creative Bursary, 1,637 had been approved and £2.92m had been paid. In addition as at 8th June, Creative Scotland had received 812 applications to the Screen Bursary, 652 had been approved and more than £1.34m had been paid.

Creative Scotland published the outcomes of Phase 1 of the Arts and Creative Bursary on 20th May. Phase 1 took place from 30th March to 2nd April

Key information includes:

- 865 people (81% of those requesting support) received bursaries of between £500-£2,500.
- £1.55m has been awarded, this was a combination of existing funding from The National Lottery and Grant in Aid (Scottish Government).
- Decisions were made purely on eligibility. This was not a competitive process. Those requesting funds were either eligible under the criteria of the funding programme or ineligible.
- Funds have been made to people in every local authority area in Scotland.
- Awards were made across all art forms with most funds awarded to those working in music, visual art and theatre.
- All awards from phase one have now been received by those requesting support.
Further information is available at the following link https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/bridging-bursary. After the Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary fund was paused on 2\textsuperscript{nd} April, Creative Scotland gained additional funding from Scottish Government and the Freelands Foundation (£1m each) and opened the fund for a second round of applications between 20\textsuperscript{th} April and 25\textsuperscript{th} April. These requests are currently being processed and will be reported on in June.

**Screen Scotland Bursary**

The Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary was open from 30\textsuperscript{th} March to 20\textsuperscript{th} May.

Screen Scotland are currently processing all requests and responding to all as soon as possible and within the four-week timeframe indicated.

Further information about this fund is available at the following link: https://www.screen.scot/funding-and-support/screen-scotland-funding/bridging-bursary-programme

**Open Fund – Sustaining Creative Development**

Creative Scotland repurposed the Open Project Fund in response to Covid19.

Further information on this fund is available at the following link: https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/open-fund-sustaining-creative-development

**Open Fund – 08/06/20**

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Organisations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Applications</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS Award Ask</td>
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<td>£2,151,910</td>
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The Open Fund applications are currently being assessed.

All award recipients of Creative Scotland’s funding are listed on their web presence one month in arrears and this will also be the case with recipients of the above funds.
The Creative, Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund (CTHEHF) provides support for small creative, tourism and hospitality companies who have experienced at least 50% loss of current or projected revenue as a result of COVID-19 and are experiencing hardship. Due to significant demand we have increased the fund from £20m to £30m. The fund is administered by our enterprise agencies, which are currently progressing applications. The fund is now closed.

The Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund (PERF) provides grants for businesses which:
- support Scotland’s productive capacity,
- are of local or national economic importance,
- impact the wider business community,
- are a supplier or potential supplier to NHS or other COVID-19 vital services,
- are a supplier to other essential businesses, or
- demonstrate a need to rapidly scale up or diversify due to COVID-19.

Due to significant demand, we doubled the PERF to £90m and have further increased it to £120m. The fund has now closed.

We have sought to provide significant support to creative, tourism and hospitality businesses across Scotland during this unprecedented period. This is support that is not available elsewhere in the UK. We are fully aware these sectors are suffering significantly, however, and ongoing restrictions will be especially difficult for some businesses which rely on seasonal revenue, such as the tourism industry. Having listened to businesses affected by the seasonal nature of demand and given the ongoing restrictions, our enterprise agencies are urgently revisiting applications from those businesses to the CTHEHF who were initially not awarded grant support as their application cash-flows did not show them to be financially vulnerable within the requested three month cash-flow window.

These businesses will be proactively and individually contacted and invited to submit updated cash-flow statements. I hope this demonstrates we are listening and are working hard to ensure we get support to those businesses in need based upon individual circumstances.

Each enterprise agency administers the PERF and CTHEHF in its respective area. The performance data are compiled by Scottish Enterprise on behalf of all three agencies. As applications are still being processed the fund’s performance data are incomplete. I have asked the Chief Executive of Scottish Enterprise to write to you this month as soon as the data you have requested can be reported. Once all applications have been appraised and funding distributed, the intention is to publish information relating to the demand for our other business support funds, including volume and value of applications.

Our targeted support funds to the creative, tourism and hospitality sector, along with support to SMEs who are vulnerable but vital to their local economies, and the newly self-employed have resulted in awards totalling £104m as of 2nd June; that is grant offers to over 2500 businesses and 4160 self-employed people to date. And as I announced on 2nd June, small B&Bs, who were ineligible for other support due to not having a business bank account, will be able to apply for a share of £3 million of funding which has been re-purposed from the Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund. This funding for small B&Bs will be administered by local authorities and applications are expected to open on 15th June.
The Scottish Government is keen to build confidence and create the right environment for supporting safer work as we continue to live with COVID-19.

We have initiated a broad collaborative process to develop sectoral guidance which will underpin that managed transition and provide clarity and confidence to industry, employees and local communities, protect public health and concurrently optimise economic recovery. Aligned with that we are reviewing and enhancing testing and enforcement arrangements, and ensuring that the guidance is coherent and connected, recognising for example transport and other inter-dependencies.

We are working with the UK Government to align our approach and guidance, where possible and on the basis of scientific evidence on the levels of infection in Scotland. The guidance we produce is intended to work alongside UK Government guidance and aims to assist employers, businesses and their workforce ensure a safe working environment.

There are a number of different strands of work on guidance relevant to the different sectors as set out below.

**Events sector**

This guidance will set high level principles and risk considerations for event organisers, recognising the sector’s diversity with a range of small, medium and large businesses involved in organising events and the supply chain. This guidance is designed to be applicable to a range of types of event including cultural, community, sporting and business activities. We are liaising with the UK Government on the guidance it is developing for events. As with other guidance the Scottish Government is preparing, the events sectoral guidance will be prepared in partnership with the industry, its supply chain, trade unions and regulators. It will be informed by medical advice. In addition to ensuring a safe workplace, the guidance is expected to set out considerations in relation communications and other measures that will ensure that attendees at events are safe and understand any steps they must take to reduce the risk of transmission when at an event.

More generally, an Event Industry Advisory Group (EAG) has been established to provide representation for the sector in the national response and recovery planning effort required to address the devastating impact of the pandemic on the events sector in Scotland. Advisory Group activity will be aligned with the wider Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group national recovery planning framework (Respond, Reset, Restart, Recovery), in the context of Scotland’s national events strategy, Scotland the Perfect Stage. EAG is chaired by Peter Duthie, Chief Executive of the Scottish Event Campus & SSE Hydro, with secretariat support provided by EventScotland.
Creative industries: focus on creative studios and shared workspaces

This guidance will set out expectations and responsibilities for providers and users of creative studios and shared productions spaces. It will emphasise the importance of undertaking a robust and ongoing risk assessment and to keep all risk mitigation measures under regular review so that studio facilities continue to feel and be safe. We are working with studio providers and studio users, creative practitioners and trade unions from across the creative sector to ensure that this guidance is evidence-based, fair and ethical, clear and realistic.

Performing arts and venues

We are working closely with performing arts companies, venues, funders, agencies, stakeholders and trade unions across Scotland, and with the UK Government, to ensure that the live performance sector has access to clear and accessible guidance that sets out core requirements, expectations and advice. We are in the process of establishing an advisory group with members from across the Scottish performing arts and venues sector and trade unions to advise and input to the development of the guidance and to work with us and our partners on wider issues facing the sector.

Museums, galleries and heritage attractions

This work is closely aligned with the work of the UK Government and on-going work in the museum and gallery sector carried out by the National Museums Directors Council (NMDC) We have established an advisory group with representatives from across the sector and from the trades unions. A sub group is working to ensure that the draft guidance covers all perspectives and any unique Scottish considerations.

Tourism and hospitality sector

The Scottish Government will publish high level guidance for the sector outlining core requirements for safe and compliant work places. The development of detailed guidelines for sub-sectors is industry-led with various strands of work covering a very diverse sector. This is being co-ordinated through a sub-group of the Scottish Emergency Response Group (STERG), comprising key industry bodies and operators across the sector, as well as COSLA. All guidance is being developed in partnership with unions and relevant regulatory bodies.

Libraries

We are currently developing safer workplace guidance for public libraries in Scotland. We are working with the Scottish Library and Information Council and others, including local authorities and other devolved administrations, to consider what guidance needs to be in place and what services can be re-instated with physical distancing measures in place once public health advice allows. Some services are already available online. When libraries are allowed to reopen, it will be for individual local authorities to determine when to reinstate different library services.
**Television and film industry**

Clearly, a major requirement of many film and TV production is to have large numbers of people in a single location. There are some productions that can be done with smaller numbers of people, and this has been shown to work when the most severe restrictions have been in place. However, productions with larger numbers of people on set is more typical, and it is one of the most challenging factors in restarting production.

We are working closely with Screen Scotland to ensure that the right guidance is in place to support the television and film industry. Screen Scotland have advised that a UK-wide, industry-led approach is the right way to do this. They are involved in developing this guidance with the industry to ensure that the situation in Scotland is reflected to allow production in Scotland to take place safely when it is appropriate to do so.

On 18 May, industry guidance to support TV production was published. This was co-produced by a number of industry bodies (STV, BBC, ITV, iTN, Sky, Channel 4, Viacom CBS, Coba (Association for Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services and PACT) and was issued for consultation to the industry before being published. Screen Scotland supported this approach, which reflects the sector’s long-standing and ongoing commitment to best practice in health and safety.

This guidance provides a framework to support safe TV production, and sets out a range of considerations that should be made when assessing risks related to COVID-19. Although it is framed in the context of the UK Government’s public health advice, the guidance notes that different advice may apply in Scotland. Where there are specific considerations that apply in Scotland, or where I feel that industry-wide guidance does not adequately provide the necessary safeguards, the Scottish Government will issue its own guidance.

This seems to me to be the appropriate way to do this. It allows TV production companies to make the right judgement about whether or not work can take place safely. Our current public health advice means that we are not yet at the point in Scotland where TV production can resume on a large-scale, but this guidance will help TV production companies to consider how they might prepare to begin work when they are able to do so.

Screen Scotland has also been involved in work to develop guidance on resuming safe film and high-end TV drama production, which is being led by the British Film Commission (BFC). This guidance was published on 1 June and is central to the work by the British Film Institute (BFI) led COVID-19 Task Force, of which Screen Scotland is part, on screen recovery initiatives. The published guidance has been developed to help the physical production industry to protect crew and cast by adopting a safe working environment and practices in light of COVID-19 related risks; and to be able to factor in to their current health and safety assessments how changes can be made in order to achieve this. The published guidance includes considerations for filmmakers at every level of budget, and is intended to be scalable, allowing each production to apply the guidance to their specific project’s needs. As with the TV production guidance, I think this is the right way to do this, and I will continue to look to Screen Scotland to make sure this guidance reflects the situation in Scotland to help restart production as soon as it is safe to do so.
**Historic environment**

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) have been liaising with their partners across the sector to share knowledge and experience in the development of guidance on reopening. HES is currently developing Minimum Operating Standards for its national estate which will be used to risk assess activity and sites and then to create implementation plans for specific sites. This will be informed by guidance being developed by SG. Once complete HES will share this information with the broader sector for reference.

HES Grants have surveyed all of their grantees to find out what support they require to resume projects and activity which has been temporarily paused. In response to this HES is forwarding relevant guidance to grantees as it becomes available. Most recently they have shared the Safe Return and Start guidance produced by the Construction Industry Coronavirus (CICV) Forum, which outlines how to safely resume construction work with appropriate physical distancing measures in place.
3 TIMETABLE, OR SEQUENCING, IN WHICH YOU EXPECT DIFFERENT CULTURAL VENUES TO BE REOPENED (SUCH AS CINEMAS, MUSEUMS, THEATRES, LIVE MUSIC VENUES ETC.) AND THE FACTORS THAT WILL DETERMINE WHEN AND HOW THIS CAN OCCUR

While it is not possible to give the timetable you request for the reopening of different cultural venues including cinemas, museums, theatres and live music venues it is possible to offer the following comments on the factors that will determine when and how this can occur.

Nature and timing of transition out of lockdown

The nature and timing of the transition out of lockdown will be directed in Scotland by the Scottish Government, using the principles set out in Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making - Scotland’s route map through and out of the crisis published on 21st May. This is commonly known as “The route map.” The route map follows the Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making published on 23 April, which set out the principles to underpin the approach. The route map is the key piece of work that indicates the order in which Ministers will carefully and gradually seek to change current restrictions, informed by evidence and analysis.

We are working with the UK Government to align our approach and guidance, where possible, and guidance documents will draw on themes in the UK Government’s Working Safely During Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The route map explains that we will use clear criteria to move between phases as we ease the restrictions that have been put in place. We are required to review the current lockdown restrictions every three weeks. On 28th May the First Minister announced our move into Phase 1 of that route map out of lockdown. That was based on evidence of transmission being controlled. This means lockdown is being modified slightly but it is not over.

Any emergence from lockdown has to be gradual and phased. The document sets out a four phase approach to easing lockdown restrictions while still suppressing Covid-19.

While the phases set out in the route map are illustrative only and the actual progress will be guided by evidence of the progress of the virus, the reopening of museums, galleries, libraries, cinemas and some heritage sites subject to physical distancing and hygiene measures is expected to take place in Phase 3. During this phase, live events are also expected to be permitted with restricted numbers and physical distancing restrictions. A further relaxation of live events in line with public health advice is also expected to take place in Phase 4.

The SG is very aware of the issue of public confidence in attending venues once restrictions are lifted. The guidance we are currently developing with the sector and with unions will go some way to address these concerns but this is clearly a complex issue which will require us to work closely with the sector, our partners and communities.

Creative Scotland will undertake research through 2020 to look at audience intentions to return to cultural activities, as well as monitoring the ongoing impact. This will seek to understand the demand to return to venues and events, and will explore the barriers and enablers to audiences returning. That will do much to help shape our thinking on how and when such venues can reopen.
**HES property operational policy during Covid-19**

Historic Environment Scotland’s Policy on the management and operation of their properties during the COVID-19 episode is focused on protecting their staff from harm, whilst gradually enabling safe public access to visitor-facing facilities and the delivery of HES functions in line with their Corporate Plan.

HES’s decision making is based on current advice from Government and applied to their particular operations. They recognise that the COVID-19 situation is dynamic and may require rapid response, including the re-introduction of stricter control measures should they be required.

HES have developed a six-stage response, from emergency response only to full operation, aligned with the phasing set out in the Scottish Government’s route map through and out of the crisis.

Many of the Properties in Care which are free to access will be the first to open up to the public. Opening of other sites HES anticipate being aligned to Phase 3 of the Scottish Government’s route map, provided they are able to open safely.

While HES’s resumption work will be driven by the Scottish Government’s phasing, the reopening of individual sites will be delivered in line with HES’s internal policy, standards and resource capacity. HES will prioritise the reopening of Properties in Care following a benefits-realised approach and what can be done with their available resources.

It is clear that operating constraints will be in place for some time, and HES will share their experience and learn from others where appropriate.

June 2020