1 September 2020

Dear Convener

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

Further to my letters of 24th April, 28th May, 10th June, 3rd July on the new Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund, 10th July on the new UK Government funds, 6th August on the £185m fund and my evidence to the committee on 21st May about measures to support the cultural sector during the current emergency, I am pleased to provide the attached written update for August which addresses those aspects that you raised in your letter of 1st June and provides an update since my last letter to the committee. I highlight in particular the £59 million package of additional support announced on 28th August in section G. This brings the total culture, creative and heritage announcements arising from the UK Government consequentials to £81.47m. A further £10m had been allocated to the Performing Arts Venues Fund before the UK Government funding was announced. The remaining funds will be allocated to top-up pressure on funds already announced and for other proposals still being discussed with the sector.

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

It also provides an update on recent Scottish Government support for the culture sector.

Please note that this only summarises developments since the last written update and does not repeat the content of previous updates.

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

A CREATIVE SCOTLAND’S SUPPORT

Creative Scotland’s comprehensive monthly update to the Committee on 14th July includes progress on the Bridging Bursaries - Arts & Creative and Screen - and the repurposed Open Project Fund which were quickly established in response to Covid19. A copy of that letter is available at the following link: https://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/Inquiries/20200714_CreativeScotlandCovid19JulyUpdate.pdf. The July update also includes a link to the geographic breakdown of spend on the bursaries which will be of interest to members of the committee.

The 21st August update also provides an update on the Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund, the Grassroots Music Venues Sustainability Fund, the Digital Pivot Programme and Screen Scotland Funding including the Single Project Development funding routes and the Safe Working Guidance. A copy of that letter is available at the following link: https://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/Inquiries/20200821_CreativeScotlandCovid19AugustUpdate.pdf.

B CREATIVE, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY ENTERPRISES HARDSHIP FUND & PIVOTAL ENTERPRISE RESILIENCE FUND

As I set out in my update to the Committee on 6th August comprehensive Coronavirus (COVID-19) hardship and resilience funds statistics were published that day. Further information is available at the following link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-hardship-and-resilience-funds-
C MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

As a response to Covid19 Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), the development body for museums and galleries, established four funds to enable these organisations to deal with immediate needs. It was agreed that MGS would repurpose its usual grant programmes to ensure there was funding available for urgent recovery and resilience in the sector. In addition the Scottish Government has provided £4,483,000 in additional funding to Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) to help support museums and galleries critically affected by the Covid-19 outbreak.

The Scottish Government provided MGS with £400,000 towards establishing the £700,000 Urgent Response Fund to support museums and galleries critically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding is available to independent museums who are most acutely feeling the impact of COVID-19. As at 24\textsuperscript{th} August 2020 £408,260 has been awarded from this fund.

A further £55,00 was provided in capital funding for the £115,000 Digital Resilience Fund to support the purchase of equipment necessary to enable work from home and provision of digital access to museum collections and activity. This fund closed on 3\textsuperscript{rd} July. As at 20\textsuperscript{th} July 2020 £110,806 has been awarded from this fund.

A third fund, the COVID-19 Adaptation Fund, which was announced in June 2020 and which opened for applications on 6\textsuperscript{th} July, is making £330,000 available to support museums with the costs of opening back up in a way that ensures the safety and confidence of staff, volunteers and visitors while restrictions are still in place due to COVID-19. As of 24\textsuperscript{th} August £172,661 has been distributed through this fund.

On 25\textsuperscript{th} July a £4m Museum Resilience and Recovery Fund was announced, from the UK £97m consequential funding, to provide support around reopening and returning staff from furlough to the independent museum sector. For the first time MGS have funded core costs for museums and galleries and widened their funding reach to support non-Accredited museums.
Since my update on this topic on 10th June, the following guidance documents for safe working relevant to the cultural and creative sector have been published:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): events sector guidance (includes music events)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for creative studios and shared workspaces
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): tourism and hospitality sector guidance
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for museums, galleries and heritage attractions
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): film and television production guidance
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): cinemas and drive-in cinemas guidance
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for the performing arts and venues sector
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): public libraries guidance

**Performing arts and venues**

The Performing Arts and Venues guidance was published on 24th August and is accessible at the following link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-performing-arts-and-venues-sector/. It will be reviewed and updated regularly.

This sector-led guidance for the Performing Arts and Venues in Scotland is relevant for both professionals and non-professionals, and looks at rehearsals, pre-production and performance (with and without a live audience). It is overarching in nature; as each organisation or workplace is different, it is for individual organisations and practitioners to work with trade union, workforce or volunteer representatives to determine how best to apply any guidance in their particular circumstances.

**Libraries**

Safer workplace guidance for public libraries was published on 14th July, and was developed with stakeholders from the public libraries sector and trade unions. Libraries have been able to reopen since 15th July and it is for individual local authorities to determine when and how to reinstate different library services.


**Screen**

We have been continuing work to facilitate the opening of parts of the film and TV sector in Scotland. We have endorsed industry-led guidance for Working Safely during COVID-19 in Film and High-end TV Drama Production and published supplementary information to make
clear any Scotland-specific requirements. In relation to the resumption of production activity, an exemption from self-isolation in Scotland for those coming from abroad to work in film and high-end TV production came into force on 10th July and an exemption to the two metre physical distancing rule for film and high-end TV production and broadcast production staff working on productions in Scotland took effect from 30th July. Further broadcast guidance relating to filming in close cohorts has been developed and published by industry.

All this has been done to allow resumption in a way that puts people’s health and safety first while enabling activity as soon as possible.

The package of support for the culture and heritage sectors announced on 28th August includes £3.5 million for independent cinemas in Scotland. Creative Scotland are establishing the details of the funds and how they can be accessed and more information will be made available this week for independent cinemas.
We have published a route-map setting out a four phase approach to easing lockdown restrictions while still suppressing Covid-19. We are in Phase 3.

All re-opening should only happen when the appropriate guidance covering that activity or setting has been implemented.

The 9th July update confirmed that as of 15th July museums, galleries, monuments, libraries, various other visitor attractions, cinemas (including drive-ins and venues screening films) could reopen with physical distancing and other measures including, for example, ticketing in advance in place.

Remaining highlights of Phase 3 reopening include:

- Certain outdoor events are permitted from 24th August, subject to specific requirements.
- Indoor activities such as bingo and casinos are permitted to recommence from 24th August.
- Dance studios are permitted to reopen from 31st August on a non-contact basis for those aged 12 plus.
- An indicative date of 14th September has been given for reopening of certain indoor live events, theatres and live music (but not nightclubs) and certain outdoor live events.

All of these changes depend on the continued suppression of the virus. If at any stage there appears to be a risk of its resurgence, our path out of lockdown will be halted and we may even have to go backwards.

The next formal three week review, as required by law, is on 10th September.

**Historic Environment Scotland Reopening**

The first of ticketed sites to reopen to the public demonstrate the valuable role of heritage in Scotland’s recovery. Tickets for Edinburgh Castle and Stirling Castle were sold out and 97% of tickets available for Urquhart Castle were sold for their opening weekend.

Blackness Castle reopened on 17th August, followed by Inchcolm Abbey, Huntly Castle and Melrose Abbey on 19th August, and Elgin Cathedral and Caerlaverock Castle on 21st August.

Doune Castle, Dunstaffnage Castle and Linlithgow Palace reopened the following week on 26th August, followed by Skara Brae, Tantallon Castle and Glasgow Cathedral on 28th August.

HES is planning to reopen a further 10 ticketed sites in September, and this will be reviewed and assessed in line with Scottish Government guidance nearer the time.
Museums

The Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) website contains informative operational guidance for museums during Covid-19 including information on funding, business continuity, care for collections and accreditation. Further information is available at the following link: https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/

Museums were permitted to begin opening from 15th July. MGS’s marketing campaign is boosting awareness of which museums are open on their website.
4 OTHER SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE CULTURE & HERITAGE SECTORS

Our recovery will be an opportunity to do things differently - and crucially, to rebuild our economy with wellbeing and fair work at its heart.

Our total package for businesses is over £2.3bn – more than the consequentials we received from the UK Government.

As part of this the Scottish Government has introduced the following measures recently to support those working in the culture and heritage sectors:

A Edinburgh Fringe Festival Support

I announced a funding package for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society on 12th June as part of a Scottish Government commitment to support cultural, social and economic recovery (https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-fringe-society/).

The Fringe Society will receive a £1 million interest-free loan from the Scottish Government, repayable over 6 years. It will also benefit from a £149,000 Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund grant and a £100,000 grant from City of Edinburgh Council.

The loan money will be used to mitigate the significant losses incurred by the Fringe as a result of this year’s festival not going ahead and to support the thousands of Fringe artists, companies and venues whose livelihoods have been affected.

The Fringe is estimated to be worth around £200 million to the wider Scottish and UK economy. Thousands of artists and cultural entrepreneurs across the UK rely on the Fringe annually as a key milestone for employment.

B National Partnership for Culture

I announced a new group formed to deliver Scotland’s culture strategy which met for the first time on 24th June (https://www.gov.scot/news/national-partnership-for-culture/).

The National Partnership for Culture (NPC) is made up of 14 experts from across Scotland’s culture sector and is chaired by Joanna Baker CBE, a former Edinburgh International Festival Managing Director.


C Performing Arts Venues Fund

Since my last letter to the committee on 3rd July on this dedicated £10 million fund to support Performing Arts Venues I have increased it to £12.5m.

When first announced the Scottish Government was the first government in the UK to provide direct support to performing arts venues.
Created as part of the Scottish Government’s £185m Business Support Fund, the Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund is for Regularly Funded Organisations and non-Regularly Funded Organisations and aims to:

- remove the threat of insolvency prior to the end of March 2021
- allow for specialist / core staff to return from furlough or avoid redundancy to work on future sustainability plans
- increase the opportunities for commissioning and employment of freelance artists and creative practitioners.

The Scottish Government’s £12.5 million Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund is run by Creative Scotland and was specifically designed to deliver relief funding to the many performing arts venues across Scotland which are also registered charities and for whom public funding is already a significant contributor to their ongoing viability. It is also aimed at addressing critical needs, including the commissioning of creative freelancers. It has also been developed in consultation with the Federation of Scottish Theatre.

Within a week of opening on 30th July, the Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund (PAVRF) has already supported twenty regularly funded venues across Scotland. Those venues have received a total of £7.5m from the first strand of the fund. Applications for non-regularly funded venues to access the remaining £5m closed on 27th August and decisions will be taken by 24th September.

Full details on the fund, including fund guidance and funding submissions, can be found at the following link: https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/performing-arts-venues-relief-fund.

D Grassroots Music Venues Stabilisation Fund

On 10th July the Scottish Government announced £2.2 million support for grassroots music venues. Thus fund – the Grassroots Music Venues Stabilisation Fund - was developed by Creative Scotland, Music Venue Trust and the Scottish Government. It is currently open to application. Further information is available at https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/grassroots-music-venues-stabilisation-fund

E Events

I recently announced a funding package of £10 million to help the events sector recover from the pandemic. We can now confirm we have announced the first funding scheme using the events funding, a £6 million Events Industry Support Fund which will be administered by VisitScotland. The fund will comprise of a one-off hardship grant of £10,000 to support businesses in the events industry, particularly those in the supply chain who have faced real hardship during lockdown.

The fund is designed to give immediate cashflow support to those companies who have faced real hardship during lockdown and have not received Scottish Government sponsored COVID related funding from other schemes, and which meet the eligibility criteria. To help with this process EventScotland released the fund guidelines for applications on 24th August - a week before the application process opened on 31st August.
Financial aid package agreed

On 16th August funding to protect jobs and assist the re-opening of iconic heritage sites closed during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was announced.

A support package worth £3.8 million is to be made available to the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) to aid the heritage organisation’s recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. The funding will secure nearly 200 critical jobs and will allow NTS to retain a broad range of expertise in countryside and ranger services in addition to curation and education.

The package will also support the reopening of 33 heritage sites this month, rather than the 27 the Trust originally planned.

£59 Million Support Package

On 28th August the First Minister announced further support for the culture, creative industries and heritage sectors as part of the £97 million of funding consequentials for these sectors. This £59 million support package includes support for artists, freelancers and organisations and includes:

- a new £15 million Culture Organisations and Venues Recovery Fund which will provide critical support to a range of businesses such as art galleries, studio facilities, comedy venues, large music venues, commercial theatres, orchestras, dance companies and nightclubs offering live music. It will help to reduce the threat of insolvency, protect jobs and create conditions for a more viable and sustainable future for the culture sector.
- £5 million to address the immediate financial hardship faced by creative freelancers.
- £5 million to support artists to continue developing new creative work that will make a significant contribution to Scotland’s recovery from COVID-19, which includes £1.5 million for the Culture Collective programme to support organisations employing freelance artists working in communities across Scotland.

The funding also includes £21.3 million for Historic Environment Scotland (HES) to protect jobs and support the reopening of properties in their care.

An additional £5.9 million will be made available to support heritage organisations through committed grants, and £270,000 for the New Lanark Trust will help secure the future of one of Scotland’s six World Heritage Sites.

The package also includes:

- £3.5 million for independent cinemas
- £3 million for youth arts including a funding boost for the Youth Music Initiative which will provide work for musicians.

Further information is available at [https://www.gov.scot/news/supporting-scottish-culture-and-heritage/](https://www.gov.scot/news/supporting-scottish-culture-and-heritage/). Details on these funds will shortly be provided by Creative Scotland.