



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

Thursday 27 June 2019

Session 5



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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
19th Meeting 2019, Session 5

CONVENER

*Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)

*Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP)

*Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con)

*Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green)

*Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD)

*Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Leonie Bell (Renfrewshire Council)

Gary Cameron (Creative Scotland)

David McDonald (DG Unlimited)

Stewart Murdoch (Leisure and Culture Dundee)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Stephen Herbert

LOCATION

The Robert Burns Room (CR1)

Scottish Parliament

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

Thursday 27 June 2019

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:01]

Arts Funding

The Convener (Joan McAlpine): Good morning, and welcome to the 19th meeting in 2019 of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee. I remind members and the public to turn off mobile phones. Any members who use electronic devices to access committee papers should ensure that the devices are turned to silent, please.

We have received apologies from Tavish Scott MSP, who has announced this week that he is standing down as a member of the Scottish Parliament. Tavish has, of course, been widely recognised as a champion of his Shetland Islands constituency, which he has represented since 1999, and for his role as a minister in the Labour-Lib Dem coalition. We have certainly benefited from his constituency knowledge of fishing matters in particular in our Brexit inquiries. On behalf of all members of the committee, I thank Tavish for his contribution to the committee and wish him well in the future.

Agenda item 1 is an evidence session on the committee's arts funding inquiry. I welcome our panel of witnesses: Leonie Bell, strategic lead, Paisley partnership, Renfrewshire Council; Gary Cameron, head of place, partnerships and communities, Creative Scotland; David McDonald, arts development director, DG Unlimited; and Stewart Murdoch, director, Leisure and Culture Dundee. I thank you all for coming to the meeting.

The overarching theme of today's session is the very important role that the local authorities have in culture and their relationship with it. All the witnesses will have different perspectives, of course. Will you briefly explain your organisations' roles?

Gary Cameron (Creative Scotland): Good morning. I am head of place, partnerships and communities at Creative Scotland, which is the national organisation that supports the arts, screen and creative industries. My specific role is to lead our engagement with local authorities. I oversee the place partnership programme, which operates across 12 areas in Scotland. We work very closely with community groups and voluntary groups. We attend funding fairs and community events, and

provide advice and guidance on how to apply directly to Creative Scotland and how to develop a project or seek funding from elsewhere.

Prior to joining Creative Scotland, I worked in local government for around 10 years as an arts officer and then an arts official. I will reflect on our perspective from the national level and my experience at the local level.

Leonie Bell (Renfrewshire Council): I am in a relatively new role at Renfrewshire Council. I am strategic lead at the Paisley partnership, which was very much born of the United Kingdom city of culture bidding process. Paisley did not win that, but that bid is still deemed a success in that it has given us as a local authority an understanding of how important culture is to the future of Paisley and wider Renfrewshire. My job is to position culture strategically within a council context and to develop wider local community partnerships, national partnerships and international partnerships.

Stewart Murdoch (Leisure and Culture Dundee): I have been on the Leisure and Culture Dundee management team since the body was set up. Previously, I was the director for communities and parks, and I am now in the role of leisure and culture. In 2011-12, Dundee City Council set up the first Scottish charitable incorporated organisation, which is an arm's-length external organisation that delivers our leisure, arts and cultural provision in the city. I have a twin role: I am part of the council's management team and I advise the council on policy relating to leisure, arts and culture, and I am also the managing director of the ALEO Leisure and Culture Dundee.

David McDonald (DG Unlimited): I am the arts development director of DG Unlimited, which is a small organisation with three part-time freelance staff. We are a membership organisation that works with and provides a voice for the cultural sector in Dumfries and Galloway. We seek to create Scotland's leading rural arts network by supporting creative practitioners and organisations to help themselves and each other, providing a collective voice, celebrating and nurturing talent and growing the next generation of artists. We have a network of more than 440 members. Our membership predominantly consists of practitioners and cultural administrators and we have a small minority who are supporters of the arts. We were established in 2012 and we are a legacy of Creative Scotland's place partnership programme.

The Convener: Could you say a little more about the way that your organisation operates, which I understand is quite unique in Scotland?

David McDonald: It is always a grand claim to say that something is unique, but we are a little different, and we hope that we bring something different to the cultural ecology of Dumfries and Galloway. We are the result of what could be called a perfect storm back in 2011, when the Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association, which at the time was the only regularly funded organisation south of the central belt in Scotland, ceased trading. That coincided with a period of restructuring in the local authority, when there was no one at strategic management level making decisions on arts development. At the time, Creative Scotland was launching its place partnership programme across Scotland, and Dumfries and Galloway was in the first cohort of that. In the strategic hiatus, Creative Scotland started to engage in conversations with the local authority.

Through funding from LEADER, the council and Creative Scotland, an intensive engagement process took place with the cultural sector, which led to a report called “Fresh Start for the Arts”. One of the recommendations from that was the establishment of an organisation that we now know as DG Unlimited, or DGU. We are a membership organisation, so our board comes from our membership. We have a service-level agreement with the local authority. In effect, we provide advice and guidance on arts development for the local authority and we support it in the delivery of the regional arts fund. The organisation is a way for the local authority to capture the voice of the sector in decision making on arts and culture in the region.

The Convener: That is interesting, given that one of the themes of our inquiry is how we can do more to support practitioners and cultural freelancers. Obviously, the approach to supporting culture across Scotland has been variable. Different areas have different approaches and different funding for the arts. Is that variety and the fact that some areas spend a lot less than others a result of arts funding not being a statutory requirement for local authorities?

David McDonald: Absolutely. We now have a national outcome for creativity and culture. That is really welcome, but there is a worry that it might be too late. There are some local authorities that have had to make difficult decisions on their budgets, and it has sometimes been the arts budget that has been cut. We must look at the contribution that the arts makes across wider society—it has an impact on social renewal, individuals, communities, cohesion, community development, learning, confidence and health, and it has a preventative role in relation to criminal justice and healthcare. Perhaps we need to find a way to make the case stronger.

To some extent, Creative Scotland has lost its powers of research. As a sector, we would benefit from more strategic positioning papers on culture and the arts and their impact and reach across wider society, but if our national body for the arts is unable to lead on the research function, I wonder who else might do that.

The Convener: Does anyone else want to comment on the impact of arts funding not being a statutory requirement?

Stewart Murdoch: I have always said that arts funding is statutory rather than mandatory. The distinction is that, as a local authority, we could not do it if it was not statutory, but it is not mandatory.

The issue for us is that, given the ring fencing for education, in particular, and for other aspects of Scottish Government policy as it impacts locally, what is left for investment in the arts and culture and quality-of-life expenditure has definitely been under pressure for the past five years. The local data in Dundee for the past five years is horrible to look at—and that is in a city that really values the arts. Interestingly, there has never been any dispute about the impact of expenditure on the arts. Although research is definitely needed, in our case it is purely the mechanism of budget setting that militates against funding for the arts. That is the case in a city that has put culture-led regeneration right at the centre of its strategic policies. Members all know about the V&A Dundee and the investment in Dundee.

I am fortunate to work in a place that really values the arts at community, neighbourhood and cross-party level, but that does not protect it. My argument would be that, if there is to be ring fencing—I do not know whether there should be, but there is—there should be funding for the arts within that ring as part of the wider portfolio of Scottish Government outcomes, but there is not. We are outside the ring, which is why we are disadvantaged.

Leonie Bell: My view is similar to Stewart Murdoch’s. The word “adequate” appears in current documents, but what does adequate provision of libraries and of culture mean? There are bigger questions that we need to ask ourselves about the broader role that culture and creativity have in enabling us to be the sort of country that we want to be and to have the sort of communities and places that we want to have. Like Dundee, Paisley is defining its future through cultural regeneration. We are finding a framework for us to inhabit, which will allow us to lever in other funding, but we need to get our vision and our collective ambition right first. We are doing that locally, but we also need to do it at national level.

There are other issues with the ideas of “statutory” and “mandatory”. There will be people

who are listening to this who will not want me to go anywhere near definitions of culture so early on a sunny day, but there is the issue of how we define what it is that we are making mandatory, whose culture it is, where it happens and all those sorts of things, which are very real and serious questions for us. The more rules we put around it, the more we can freeze it. The question is more one of how we become a country where we do not think about how to be greener, how to respond to climate change and how to have a progressive education system and an inclusive economy, and the policies and strategies that go with that, without having culture at the heart of our approach. That is what we need to consider. We need to stop having siloed budgets and to start looking broadly, in an intersectional way, across the budgets that we have as we develop policy.

We need to start with the ambition, the strategy and the policy before we look at the budget mechanisms, otherwise we will just be moving bits of the same problems around within the existing system. We might need to start extending our view to a societal view when we think about culture, rather than just thinking about it within the context of the cultural sector, if that makes sense.

09:15

The Convener: Gary Cameron is aware that not every local authority has signed up to the place partnerships. Would making culture funding a statutory requirement change that?

Gary Cameron: I think that that would be helpful. I agree that there is a question of semantics in relation to the word “statutory”. The active consideration of culture and how it can contribute—the positive aspects that have been touched on in relation to the economy and to people’s lives and the way that culture can bring people together—is absent; it is not a statutory consideration. For example, Creative Scotland is not a statutory partner in community planning. In my opinion, it should be.

The extent to which culture is represented when different groups get together to consider the priorities for the region and develop the local outcomes improvement plans varies. Indeed, there is no statutory requirement for culture to be even considered as a potential priority.

The Convener: As part of our inquiry, we commissioned research from Drew Wylie Ltd on how things work in other parts of Europe. One thing that struck us from the research findings is that a structure and agreement are put in place between central and local government on how arts and culture are delivered. I know that Creative Scotland and the Government have been

exploring that approach. Would having a formal arrangement in place help?

Gary Cameron: I think that that could be helpful. We would need to develop a solution that was right for Scotland.

You are right to say that we have looked at the issue. When the Arts Council of Ireland visited, there was a session with different local authorities to explain the position in Ireland. We are also aware of the Swedish model.

I think that the first step would be to put in place the principle that local authorities are mandated to plan for culture and for them to articulate their priorities. That has been the first step taken in other countries, including in France, where there is a requirement for authorities to have a cultural strategy to show how they are considering culture. We would then consider how Creative Scotland and other national bodies could collaborate to help to deliver that.

If we can get to that point and have closer and more formal arrangements between local and national Government, that could be very helpful.

Leonie Bell: As David McDonald said, it is about using what we already have. We have an outcome for culture, which is positive, but it could be that we are not doing enough around it. We have the national performance framework. I do not think that anybody would argue with anything that is in it, and it clearly sets out how to be a better Scotland across a number of cross-cutting areas. Renfrewshire Council bears that in mind, but as far as I am aware, there is not necessarily a structure for how we report on it. We are very interested in culture and what it can bring to us as a local authority, but it seems to be more a matter of local government bearing those outcomes in mind—it cannot be expected to deliver fully across them all.

Perhaps there is a bit of work to do with the outcome and how to develop the relationships or the framework around it, rather than creating another system—another set of agreements and structures. At the moment, there is quite a burden of such systems in local government and certainly in the wider cultural sector. Nobody wants to add to that, so we would look at what we have already got. The NPF outcome is a positive thing, but let us make more of it. That would get us what we want in terms of long-term strategic outcome-focused working across policy and sectors, which would be good.

Stewart Murdoch: The one thing that Dundee has done is maintain a cultural strategy—it is available online; perhaps I should have sent it to you—since Government guidance about putting in place such strategies was published. That has helped us.

We report our cultural strategy to the Dundee partnership, which is the local community and planning partnership for the city. For more than 15 years, we have been reporting to the community planning partnership on the strategic decisions and our action plan. There is no security for that, which is why it is not common across Scotland. However, it has been really helpful to have that focus, which is reported to the council and its strategic partners.

On Gary Cameron's point about the position of Creative Scotland, we would really welcome that. We have always had Creative Scotland as an adviser and partner, but to have the organisation as a statutory partner would be helpful.

David McDonald: Dumfries and Galloway Council is in the process of creating a cultural strategy and we are part of the project team. We bring the voice of the region's creative sector into that process. That will kick off in a couple of weeks' time.

More broadly, I wonder whether there is a way to look at things completely differently. Creative Scotland is in a really difficult position, partly because of the legislation that formed it. Maybe it is trying to be all things to all people in considering public benefit and artistic excellence, and I wonder whether this is the time to explore something as part of this process. There are various funding avenues and interests in culture broadly, not just the national arts body or local authorities. Should local authorities focus on their citizens and visitors to the region and allow Creative Scotland to look at the international export of our talent and growing excellence at home? Is there a different lens through which to look at the funding of culture?

The Convener: Is Stuart McMillan's supplementary question on that topic?

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): Yes. Mr Cameron mentioned that he wants Creative Scotland to be a statutory consultee. Does Creative Scotland have the capacity to be a statutory consultee across all 32 local authority areas?

Gary Cameron: Yes. That would be a challenge, and it would require us to think about how we work, but that is very important. We should consider how we can develop that capacity.

The Convener: That is bold. Good.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I suppose that there are two ways to approach the matter. In spring this year, a parliamentary question about the amount that local authorities spend on culture was answered: in Scotland, there was a 2.7 per cent reduction from 2016-17 to

2017-18. The reduction would be bigger in real terms—I have only the net figures. There are variations among the local authorities, but those that spend more do not spend a significant amount more. I think that if we had the real-terms figures, we would see that the increases would be very small, or there would be reductions.

We have already talked a bit about the pressures on local government funding and provision of culture not being statutory, such that it does not get the level of protection that other areas get. A solution would be to increase the amount of money that goes to local authorities, or they could be given them more power to raise more revenue themselves. That could be done through the tourism tax, if local authorities decide to take it up—the committee has already looked at that. There is also a debate about the workplace parking levy, so other areas of funding are opening up for local authorities. Is it intended that any of that money would go to culture? Would culture be a priority?

Another way to approach the matter has been talked about: we could consider a culture strategy and putting in place a structure that emphasises the importance of culture so that local authorities would have no choice but to invest in it.

How might we resolve some of the larger funding issues and the amount of money that goes to local authorities? Is it about trying to increase the amount of money, or is it about how local authorities distribute the money that they have?

Will you comment on the draft culture strategy? That process has gone on for a wee while now, and we are not clear about when the strategy will be published. Do you think that the strategy will be able to address some of those issues and provide direction or commitment to the arts and an expectation that there needs to be delivery in that policy area?

I have asked quite a lot of questions.

The Convener: I am looking at Leonie Bell because of her previous role.

Leonie Bell: Okay. I did not say in my introduction about my job that I have experience as head of culture strategy in the Scottish Government and as director of arts at Creative Scotland. Therefore, I have lots of reference points and experiences that I can bring to the discussion. I will go backwards in answering the questions, if that is okay.

With the draft culture strategy, we wanted to encourage a society-wide national debate about the importance of culture to our future as a country, and I think that it has done that. I have to be honest: it was complicated. Things become complicated when we start to think about things

societally, rather than within the structure of a sector, but we need to keep pursuing the draft culture strategy in that way.

To put it briefly, if society is flourishing, the culture sector flourishes, too. I refer to what the convener said earlier: if, for example, a universal basic income were to be introduced in Scotland, that would make a really big difference to artists and creative freelancers. The answers are not just within the sector; the issue is broader.

I do not know when the draft culture strategy is coming out, as I have not been involved with it for six months. However, I think that taking time over it is okay. It might be frustrating, but I do not think that the work that was done on it at national level will be undone. It might be okay to pause with the strategy because of the important work that the committee is doing. I know that Creative Scotland is also out and about having lots of conversations about the role of funding—not just the mechanisms of funding but what public funding means as a strategic lever.

We have to hope that the culture strategy will carry forward some of the committee's work, along with other work. I have already said that we cannot become the greener, fairer, more progressive and open-to-the-world country with an inclusive economy that we want to be unless we place culture and creativity at the heart of things. If that is the ideological aim, we have to think about the structures through which we can work towards that aim, and make a bold move on that.

Everything is very siloed, and the more fiscal and financial pressure we are under, the more siloed we become, because people retreat into their own territories. We all do that; it is human nature. We have to have a collective society-wide ambition to carry people forward.

As the committee has done, when I was doing strategy work, we spent a lot of time looking for answers internationally. Some amazing things happen around the world, but some amazing things happen in the UK—in Scotland and our close UK neighbours. However, we come back to Scotland's quite peculiar devolved position on some things and we hit a bit of a barrier around welfare, tax levers and so on. We have to try to find our way forward.

There are definitely things to learn from other places. Germany, for example, does a really simple thing within its welfare system. For people who are applying for public funding as artists, the application process gives them job-seeking points. They are not penalised—they retain their welfare payments. Scotland cannot do that because it is still a UK Government power.

We looked at how people budget and the values and principles that they apply to their budgeting

processes. Finland is an interesting example. I think that we might all expect to see in Finland a high culture budget, nationally and locally, but actually it is not high. I cannot remember the exact figure—forgive me for not having the data with me—but it is not as high as we expected, compared with other Scandinavian neighbours. However, if you look beneath the surface a little bit, you see that culture sits in all Finnish Government budgets—it is in the environment and climate change budget, it is in the early years budget and so on. It is not just about how Finland budgets: it is also about how people think about the communities and the country that they are supporting and developing. That is where we need to put our long-term energy, although it might not fix the immediate problems. That is where the strategy was trying to go.

The other questions that Claire Baker asked are really complicated. There was a question about how to get councils to raise more money. ALEOs were brought in as a means of doing that. Some of it works; some of it is quite challenging for us.

The tourism tax could work for some places, but it would not currently work for Paisley. One day, it might, but we are not there yet. I have a feeling that with the heat around the tourism tax in Edinburgh, there will be a lot of people after bits of the money that is raised through that. Again, how do we do what Gary Cameron suggested? I know that you were talking about pies and cakes at the last meeting. To go back to the food metaphor, we are still on the menu, but we need to be at the high-level strategic table as well, so that we are, at the earliest point, informing the decisions that are being made and the policies that are being developed. We can then ensure that if a tourism tax comes in, embedded in it is an ability to support culture in the place where it is raised.

We need to work out what levers we have at national Government and local government levels, and how we can bring them together to get more money. Nobody on the panel thinks that there will be more money coming soon, but getting more money into the culture budget overall would be a good ambition for us to work towards, because it is such an efficient way of getting so much more for this country. I agree about making the case for culture, but we make it to the same people time and again and we have to start making that case to different people.

I am sorry. That was quite a long answer, but there were a lot of complicated questions to answer.

Stewart Murdoch: I will have a go at answering. At the heart of the matter is how the cake is cut. The debate that Leonie Bell refers to about embedding culture across public sector delivery as opposed to having a discrete ring-

fenced budget for culture is really interesting. In Dundee, the percentage of local authority expenditure on culture is less than 3 per cent, yet it is our silver bullet. More was invested by the Government through the pupil equity fund in one year than was invested in culture.

09:30

If the Government took a decision to go in this direction, it could do it and has done it. At the tail end of austerity, we all face financial pressures and, in a local authority where money is ring fenced for priority areas on which political direction is focused, culture has to be protected either by being embedded across other areas or by ring fencing.

Not enough is being invested in culture. If we ask people in the street how much of their taxation—the public pound—is spent on culture, they are pretty shocked when they hear that it is less than 3 per cent. In Dundee, which has the V&A, Dundee Rep and Scottish Dance Theatre Ltd, and other leisure and culture facilities, people in the city assume that it is maybe 10 per cent. It is only a third of that.

The level of investment, as currently counted and visible, is quite small. If I was confident that by reinvesting that amount across other areas, there would be a return to the development of artists, artistic production and the creative and cultural sector, I would be relaxed about that. However, I am less relaxed that the Finnish model is embedded, that people believe in and are committed to it, and that it is transversal and delivers. In my experience, the money that goes into other sectors because of the pressures that they are under, which Leonie Bell referred to, tends to be siphoned into whatever they see as their first priority, so cultural investment tends to drop off.

For example, education could choose to invest more in its cultural partners through the pupil equity fund or mainstream funding, but it is focused on the attainment and achievement agenda, which drives the education sector back to what it is primarily judged against. People are being judged against measures that we, on the panel, would probably question as to whether they are right.

Claire Baker: Linked to that are the national outcomes, which have been referred to. Are the performance indicators that we have for local authorities the right ones? From what I have heard this morning, perhaps they are not. I do not know how effective they are at driving the work of local authorities.

Leonie Bell and Stewart Murdoch have both made arguments for recognition of culture in other

budgets, which I think is partly what Fiona Hyslop is trying to do with the culture strategy, although we do not know when it will appear. I am concerned that we are quite far away from the stage at which it will become a reality or be meaningful, which is a message that we have heard from other panels. We have heard about pockets of activity—for example, some national health service funding going to a particular project—but we seem to be quite far away from having more substantial amounts of money being spent by various departments on culture.

Will you comment briefly on whether the national outcome performance indicators are strong enough and whether they need to be improved?

Leonie Bell: They are good and they are strong enough, but it is about what we do with them.

I have been in local government only for a few months, so if I get this wrong, I apologise to colleagues. As far as I understand it, local government is aware of the national outcomes across all areas, and of the indicators that sit under them. The community and local planning groups that are set up around them are the means that we use. The national outcomes cannot be delivered without massively mobilising local government, and local government action will be the main mechanism by which the outcomes are achieved.

What currently does not exist, I think, is a formal structure for local government to report on that, so there is no way to get a complete aggregated view of what is being achieved against national outcomes and performance indicators. A national big-picture view is important, but I am not yet sure how that can be done. There is probably something still to be done through work with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and others.

At Renfrewshire Council, we pay a lot of attention to the cultural aspect, because we set great store by that. Like Dundee City Council and a few other councils are, we are being hugely ambitious with culture for Paisley and wider Renfrewshire, but there is no structure to support that. We will do it because we have already identified culture as a strategic priority. If councils have not done that, it is probably because they just cannot report on culture. The situation at the moment is not formalised and structured; it is just about what councils choose to do. Is that right?

Stewart Murdoch: The situation is broadly similar in Dundee. Culture used to be one of the strategic themes of the Dundee partnership. The advice from Government—which was sound—was that we should have fewer themes. Therefore, the economy, children's services and community

safety came to the fore as strategic themes, and culture became a cross-cutting theme, as did the environment. We can argue that both of those are really important.

The way that the cake is cut and divided among the strategic and the transversal is challenging; I think that culture has been downgraded. In my experience in recent years, the reporting on the cultural sector's impact on national outcomes—not just the specific culture outcome, but outcomes across the board—has become lower in profile. The committee and the Government could make more demands in that regard, which I would welcome.

At local level, it is interesting that the funded organisations, whether they are funded by Creative Scotland or through the partnership funding with the local authority ALEO, all report on the national outcomes. Dundee Rep, Dundee Contemporary Arts and the library service are mindful of the national outcomes and report on them. They use those outcomes as a frame of reference against which they judge their performance locally.

David McDonald: I wonder whether the current performance indicators for the outcome match the ambition of the draft culture strategy for Scotland. Obviously, I am horizon scanning—none of us knows exactly what that will look like—but the ambition that is described in the draft is about seeking a step change in how society values and views culture and its transformational power, whereas the current indicators are more empirical. They measure stats and numbers, which are of value and are useful, but I wonder whether that can get into the real texture and meaning of culture and the impact that it can have across wider society.

As you will know, the south of Scotland economic partnership has been carrying out a consultation ahead of the new economic agency being formed next April. Feedback that has come back through that process has said that the agency will be open to using different ways of measuring the contribution of arts and culture to the economy. What that might look like is yet to be determined, but in the conversation that has been part of that process, there has been recognition that culture has other things to offer to society.

Claire Baker: All the witnesses who are here this morning are officers, but how important is political leadership? How important is it that you have a councillor who understands the importance of culture? Some councils have champions who understand the importance of culture and can argue for it. You might have strategies in place, but those might all be officer led when, ultimately, it is a political decision. You might not want to comment on that.

Leonie Bell: I can comment.

The Convener: I think that Gary Cameron wants to come in.

Gary Cameron: From my experience, leadership is important, and it is important that it is not just one individual. Culture should have a voice in the local authority committee structure so that the issues are given due discussion and consideration. For example, some local authorities have culture and sport sub-committees.

In respect of officers, it is equally important that there is a discussion with those who are not engaged in cultural activities, whether they work in health, planning or whatever. In addition to creating structures that allow that to happen, it is about having that discussion and changing ways of working. I know that colleagues who are here work extensively to engage colleagues from other departments. It is important that that activity takes place politically and at officer level.

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Your organisations have all been recipients of funding from the place programme. What are your experiences of that? Does the programme work as you anticipated? Have there been difficulties? Are there ways in which it could be improved? What are your views on it, going forward?

Stewart Murdoch: Dundee was one of the early recipients of that funding, as was Dumfries and Galloway. I would say that the place programme is almost unquestionably one of the most flexible, helpful and developmental funding programmes that I have been associated with. I would give it straight As: our experience was excellent.

We formed a partnership when Dundee was bidding to become the UK capital of culture. As you know, we did not become UK capital of culture, but the legacy of that bid was a strong base from which to move forward through a revised and refreshed cultural strategy. We had no obvious funding mechanism for delivering that: the place partnership became that mechanism. I hate to think what would have been the legacy of the failed bid in Dundee if we had not had that source of funding.

The place partnership provided significant investment that allowed the University of Dundee to sustain a level of funding and a secondment, and it allowed Abertay University to have a secondment and some funding. With Dundee City Council and Leisure and Culture Dundee, four partners matched the £250,000—Gary Cameron will keep me right on the figures—that was put up by Creative Scotland. Therefore, we immediately doubled the funding, and we doubled it again through the programmes that were delivered. That

has delivered a cultural strategy for us over the past four years.

Where I am going with this is that the place programme funding was great, but when it stops, it is a hard landing. We have worked really hard to maintain the partners' commitment to the place partnership. Dundee City Council is under financial pressures, the leisure and culture trust has run a deficit for the past two years, and the universities are under financial pressures. They are saying, "If we're not getting anything back from the Government, why should we put in our bit?" We have managed to persuade them to stick with the level of investment that they put in during the place partnership for another three years, but there is a real question about incentivising investment in culture-led regeneration.

Leonie Bell: Our position is similar but different, in that Renfrewshire Council is just starting out in this. We have had the agreement with Creative Scotland for a while, but it has taken us a bit of time to get it right. It became part of the UK city of culture bid process. Like Dundee, Paisley did not become the UK city of culture, but that has not stopped us. The place partnership has been extremely important. From what we call our big legacy money, we have put in £200,000, which has been matched by Creative Scotland.

It is interesting to follow the committee's work, because there is a great deal of national and local chat, but when you get down to local level, you get local chat, as well. Local government faces real challenges. The place partnership is enabling us to work not just in Paisley, but within neighbourhoods and communities in towns and villages across Renfrewshire. That work is run by Renfrewshire Leisure, which is the ALEO that is responsible for leisure and culture in the area.

Another important thing that sits within the overarching place partnership programme is VACMA—the visual artist and craft maker awards—which have been run for a number of years. It is not the biggest funding pot within Creative Scotland by any stretch of the imagination, but it is extremely important. It makes awards of between £500 and £1,500 and involves Creative Scotland and the local authority acting in partnership. It is a swift, efficient and transparent funding process that gets money directly into the hands of makers and artists who live in the area, some of whom are not visible to the big national funding programmes, which they cannot get into. Such specific low-level but detailed work is very important for us in Renfrewshire, because it means that we can work comprehensively across the whole local authority area. We can learn from Creative Scotland as we do that, just as it learns from us.

However, I echo Stewart Murdoch's points about ring-fenced funds. There is a national trend towards use of ring-fenced funds—they are everywhere, whether we are talking about education or culture. They can be great and exciting, but they can also be extremely short term. That leaves people thinking, "What do we do now?" The match funding matters: it involves all the partners bringing things to the table. We might need to think about the second phase of the place partnerships and what happens in the final year of place partnership funding. Overall, it is a really good programme, but it needs to evolve somewhat.

David McDonald: I echo what Leonie Bell and Stewart Murdoch said. For us, the place partnership programme came at a critical time, strategically speaking. It gave council officers the evidence that they needed to take to committee in order to secure the strategic arts budget. The fact that that was secured at the same level until last year, when there was a small cut, has been a big success. The process itself has been extremely flexible and open.

09:45

The place partnership programme is one of the most significant initiatives to come out of the national body for the arts for quite some time. It is really exciting, because it creates a different type of conversation with the local authorities. The issue is getting that conversation right. The programme enabled us to lock in some local authority money. If the conversation is not right, the local authority could use that as an excuse not to fund the arts, because other money would be coming in.

Phase 2 is really important, because—as Stewart Murdoch said—there is a sudden stop. Gary Cameron made a bold statement about staff. We absolutely can have the capacity to have those relationships across the country, but I wonder whether Creative Scotland has that capacity. The place partnership programme creates a different relationship in which Creative Scotland can establish a network of partners, and those partners working locally can help Creative Scotland to achieve its ambitions for the country.

Alexander Stewart: You have identified that there is real potential, but not every local authority has got involved. In previous evidence sessions, we heard that there has been criticism of Creative Scotland for not being sufficiently resourced or having sufficient capacity to support all local authorities. It would be good to get a view on that, as that has been a genuine criticism of Creative Scotland. We have heard that others who get that support see it as a real benefit, but it goes only so far. The link with Creative Scotland is needed to

make it all work. If support is not available or properly resourced, there are potential difficulties.

Gary Cameron: That is fair comment.

In response to Mr McMillan's question about reaching out across 32 local authority areas, I would add that the issue relates to being a statutory consultee for community planning. As a national organisation, we have a responsibility to work across all 32 areas, and I think that we do that. Beyond the place partnership programme, whether we are talking about targeted funds, the youth music initiative, cashback for creativity, the visual artist and craft makers awards or our open and regular funding, we can do more. Colleagues who have sat before the committee before have acknowledged that.

It is not just about Creative Scotland; it is also about how we work collaboratively. We need to develop that way of working. The committee has heard today about positive examples from the place partnership programme. The principle is that there is a partnership: Creative Scotland is not implying that it knows what is best for the locality; that comes from the locality. That is a challenging way of working. The committee has heard about positive examples today, but I am sure that each project would tell you about the difficulties in bringing people together, which has been challenging in parts of Scotland.

We can do more, and I am sure that we will think about different ways of working as we work through our organisational development. The principle of working in partnership with local partners has to be central.

Alexander Stewart: We have talked about councils having a culture champion who is a politician, and having an individual in a council with that capacity is critical. It is also about ensuring that the players in the partnership can bring something to the table. You have talked about big players in communities who make a massive impact and have the opportunity to develop potential and bring things forward. If that capacity does not exist, it must be very difficult to break through. It must be very difficult if those people are not sitting at the table and bringing resources and a support mechanism. Maybe that is why some local authorities have found achieving their goal to be a challenge.

Stewart Murdoch: The question that we are heading towards is where the leadership for culture resides. Having worked in other parts of Scotland, I am absolutely aware that we have been very fortunate in Dundee in having had consensus political leadership for decades, over a number of administrations. We have also had consistent support at the chief executive and senior officer levels. From my contact with

colleagues in other parts of Scotland, I know that, if that support is not there, it is very difficult to kick-start things.

On Creative Scotland's presence, I refer to our experience of working with sportscotland, which has a regional presence. I hope that Gary Cameron and his colleagues will forgive me for suggesting this, but there could be some sense of regional presence, although maybe not in every local authority area. In effect, we have had that in Dundee, but not because of a conscious structural decision. We have had good links with Creative Scotland because of the people who live in Dundee and the people we have worked with. That has been powerful, and if the approach could be extended, even to the point of having a regional presence, as sportscotland is doing through its sports partnerships, that would help.

The Convener: You are not the first person to say that in the inquiry, particularly when we were out and about—people asked why Creative Scotland does not have a regional presence. It is definitely a strong theme that is coming through.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): A lot of the discussion has been about local authorities, because of the £560 million that went into the sector in 2017-18. Local authorities are obviously fundamental to culture.

However, I want to look at the huge disparity in cultural funding across Scottish local authorities. In 2017-18, there was an overall 2.75 per cent decrease in funding. What that masks, if we look at the figures for the 32 authorities, is that although West Lothian's spending decreased by a shocking 19.8 per cent, Stirling's went up by 11.72 per cent, or more than £10 million. Drilling down into the figures, I noticed that seven councils had above-inflation increases and 25 had below-inflation increases. On a per capita basis, Glasgow's spending is three times that of Edinburgh, which has the lowest per capita spending in Scotland. Spending in Clackmannanshire is 50 per cent higher per capita than in Edinburgh. Maybe Edinburgh can attract funding from private and other sources.

We are talking about perhaps embedding culture in local government in Scotland, or possibly ring fencing. However, what baseline would we start from? In some local authorities, the baseline would be quite low, while in others it would be significant. We might therefore have an uneven level of development. If cultural funding were to be ring fenced, councillors would stick within that. By the way, councillors do not like ring fencing—they are against it, full stop. How do we restore a balance across Scotland, given the hugely varying picture that I described?

Leonie Bell: It is interesting that you asked about restoring a balance. I am not sure that there has ever been a balance. We really need to think about what it is that we want for the whole country. It is quite tricky to think about the issue in relation to local authority boundaries, because not every organisation lives entirely within a local authority's boundaries. The table that we have all seen is fascinating. Specific stories underpin each entry. The reason why Glasgow is so high and Edinburgh is so low is because of national funding that goes directly to national institutions. We could have a whole session just looking at the dynamics in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Glasgow has responsibility for organisations that operate nationally but are not funded as such—the Kelvingrove museum, for example. There is not just funding from Creative Scotland or local authorities; there are also the directly funded national organisations—the performance companies and those that hold collections.

The picture is really complex, and I do not know how we get to a position of balance. If we are talking about a finite budget, we do not want to slice it more and more, because we would end up funding small amounts to fail—we would not be funding anybody enough to really thrive and evolve in the way that we want. I do not think that anyone wants to rewind 70 years of investment that has gone into certain places either. We have infrastructure set-up and phenomenal expertise in certain places.

If that is the context in which we work, how can we be more equitable across the geography of Scotland, bearing in mind that the picture within that is complex and dynamic? Even in a city such as Edinburgh, you will have conversations with a festival and city centre focus, but urban neighbourhoods on the periphery of the city centre feel that they do not get their fair share. It will be the same in all the major cities—I am sure that Dundee is the same. In Renfrewshire, that happens between Paisley and the other towns and villages. There are layers and layers of complexity—it is not as simple as just national funding to the local authority area. Do you know what I mean?

Kenneth Gibson: Yes, but I am interested in how we find a baseline. How can we have minimum cultural provision, if you like—

Leonie Bell: At the moment, it is described as “adequate” provision. In relation to libraries, the question is how you provide an adequate library service for an area. There is a lot of room for interpretation in that.

However, I wonder whether this is about adequate provision or whether it is about the conversations that have come through our draft culture strategy—they were certainly a powerful

part of the 2005 cultural commission. Those were to do with the concept of rights and entitlements—what a citizen or resident of this country expects to have culturally—and the UN sustainable development goals, for example.

Kenneth Gibson: Stewart Murdoch talked about the pupil equity fund, for which the allocation is £120 million. Creative Scotland gets £90 million. Some of the PEF—perhaps with encouragement from Government—has been spent on science, technology, engineering and mathematics. You are a director of leisure and culture, Mr Murdoch. You lobby headteachers, for example, to invest in drama or music teachers, musical instruments or other creative arts. Does some of the PEF in deprived areas go into cultural pursuits?

Stewart Murdoch: Yes, of course it does. There is lobbying for that. I meet all my primary and secondary school headteacher colleagues. However, I think that the message that they get is directed much more towards conventional educational attainment, rather than the whole confidence-based, quality-of-life and self-esteem building learning that participation in arts, music, drama and culture can create for young people. It may change, but, to date, the level of investment that has come through the Scottish attainment challenge fund, or PEF, that has been reinvested in the culture sector is very small as a percentage.

Kenneth Gibson: Is that in Dundee or across Scotland?

Stewart Murdoch: I can speak only for Dundee. I do not think that there is any sense of negativity towards what arts and culture can do; it is more about the perceived priority of the teaching professions, the headteachers and those who are judging them on where they should invest that money and where they will get returns. That may change over time.

It is an interesting example of when Government makes a strategic investment in one area that has, as Leonie Bell said, the potential to be cross-cutting or transversal. However, unless that comes with guidance, support or a mechanism to make sure that it happens, it will not flow into other creative practices—it will replicate what we know, because that is what we teach and what we are being judged against.

Kenneth Gibson: That is interesting.

Creative Scotland's submission mentions what individual artists earn. It says:

“Within Scotland ... 80% of artists earn less than £10,000 per annum through their artistic output, two thirds earn less than £5,000 and only 2% ... generate earnings over £20,000”.

In 2017, the median wage in Scotland was £28,354.

How many people define themselves as artists? You must have an idea, otherwise you could not generate those figures. How do we define people as artists? What about someone who earns only a few bob a year as an artist, and who works as a teacher, a bus driver or whatever?

Gary Cameron: That is a very complex question. Professor Richard Demarco has said that everyone is an artist. People such as Richard Demarco would not want to define what an artist is.

Clearly, the figures are stark, and they have been discussed at length. It is a question for Creative Scotland. How opportunities are afforded to artists to allow them to deliver creative practice, work and engage with communities is the big question for us as a country.

Leonie Bell pointed to examples in other countries, including Germany. I believe that, in Ireland, official status is attached to specific qualifications. Perhaps she knows more of the detail on that, but I think that that is a more progressive way of thinking about how artists can position themselves as a profession.

More broadly, we are all creative; we are all artists in our own way. However, there is a way for us to think about how we give the artist role a clearer status.

Kenneth Gibson: Creative Scotland commissioned a report that says that

“a minimum of £23m of EU funding had been invested in Scotland’s creative sectors”

over the decade up to 2016. It continues:

“The proposed UK Shared Prosperity fund ... will be needed to support development ... This will be particularly felt by rural areas of Scotland where EU funding has been critical.”

Nothing is happening on that. The fund was supposed to be consulted on at the end of last year, but it is in effect in paralysis—a bit like the whole Brexit issue. What is the gearing effect of that £23 million? What additional funding does it leverage in? Are there any contingencies in place in Creative Scotland? Are you working with the Scottish Government to put contingencies in place should that source of funding be cut off without a replacement?

10:00

Gary Cameron: We have responded to the call for opinions on that and made the case that any future funds should, as a minimum, prioritise culture to the same level as at present. David McDonald made the point that LEADER funding was included in the match funding for the place partnership in his area, and that is the case with

other place partnerships. LEADER is an important source of support.

Beyond the funding, the issue is about connectedness to the world and building partnerships and relationships. It is about important opportunities for artists in Scotland to export their talent and build relationships. Equally, it is about opportunities to bring artists to Scotland to help to create the vibrant and truly international cultural life that we want. Beyond the funding, it is about relationships and how Scotland connects with the rest of the world.

Kenneth Gibson: On those relationships and connections, Creative Scotland states:

“This will be particularly felt by rural areas of Scotland where EU funding has been critical.”

What kind of artistic projects would be threatened if there was no such funding and what areas would be impacted?

Gary Cameron: LEADER funding, on which there has been a specific emphasis, has supported capital developments for cultural projects and the place partnerships and initiatives. It is evident that there will be a gap, so those projects and initiatives will have to be supported in a different way. You used the word “threatened”. We just have to think differently about how to support them. Our key point is that the resource that currently comes in that way should be replaced, whether that is through new mechanisms or by thinking differently about existing resources.

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): The discussion has been interesting. The point was made that Creative Scotland needs to have a regional presence—the committee has heard that when we have been out and about. For example, when we had an outreach workshop recently at the fantastic Fire Station Creative venue in Dunfermline, the point was consistently made that people’s perception is that Creative Scotland’s focus is on the central belt. I understand that priority has been given to research into culture in Scotland’s cities, which just adds to that perception. As the MSP for Cowdenbeath, I am here to represent my constituents and I need to be assured about the mindset of the organisation and of the people who are involved more widely in Scotland in facilitating and promoting cultural activity and allocating spending to it. That mindset is key, because everything flows from it. Do you share the concerns that have been expressed to us? What do we do to ensure that everyone in Scotland gets a shot?

Gary Cameron: I come from a rural community, so I am not too proud of my carbon footprint, but we are physically present as much as possible. We attend funding events so that we can talk to as

many people as possible in one sitting. Where possible, we attend various network meetings. My team and other teams get out there.

Stewart Murdoch touched on the wider question about regional presence. For me, it is about how we work. Resource is a challenge for Creative Scotland, so it is difficult for us to be physically present in all 32 local authority areas. It would be even more difficult to zoom in on the different towns and places in those areas, each of which has a case for Creative Scotland involvement. To go back to my earlier point, we need to continue with our partnerships and develop them further while thinking about how we can be accessible and physically present as much as possible.

Annabelle Ewing: I am sorry—I accept that you do not want to spend a lot of money to just tick a box as a result of having a wee office or something. That is not the point that I was trying to make. My point was that the spend on cultural activities leads to a perception that Creative Scotland is really focused on the central belt and cities and that is it, and that that is where all the money goes. An example that feeds that narrative is that the research that is currently being prioritised is about what more can be done in cities, where the majority of the investment is already made in any event. How can the committee assure people who have raised that concern with us that that is not the case?

Leonie Bell: I have experience of working in Creative Scotland and in a place that is not Glasgow or Edinburgh but is close to the central belt. The responsibility sits with all of us, and networks are really important. What we have developed through the place partnerships is like a network, but there is no formality around it. I thought about that when I was listening to the conversation about the place partnership programme. Epicentres of really good practice that we could maybe learn from are developing in towns, villages and cities. There are really active and brilliant networks. A creative learning network operates throughout Scotland under the creative learning plan, which is supported by Creative Scotland, Education Scotland and others. There used to be cultural connectors. Such things were really important, and they almost did the work of all of us. They represented national and local interests and created a forum that did not rely on one set of officers and one organisation. I wonder whether we need to think a little about that, as well.

We could also look at new partnership models, shared posts and secondments, for example. I have benefited from working in lots of different organisations in the national and local contexts. One job was a secondment. That experience was really valuable, as I learn only from genuinely

experiencing different perspectives from working nationally or locally.

There are other things that we can do as well as thinking about how Creative Scotland's regional outlook can be enhanced. I think that everybody would totally agree that Creative Scotland wants to be national. To be honest, sometimes people in that organisation see the world through the funding programmes because of the dominance of those programmes and the work that they do. That is right, because those things are the most important things that the organisation does. The word "outlook" is important. How does a person step back from that and ensure that their outlook is broad enough and that they are able to see what is not in the funding programmes as well as what is? We all need to help with that by working with Creative Scotland in order to try to get the bigger view within it.

Sometimes the attitude that people should just work locally pervades local working. People do not invest in their colleagues and staff teams to pursue national networks and conversations. Local authorities need to have a wee think about that. People need to work locally and think nationally and internationally, and work nationally and think locally and internationally. We all want that, and we all need to do that.

David McDonald: I agree with what was said about networks. There is an opportunity for Creative Scotland to make more use of the networks that exist. We are a network of 440-plus artists and arts organisations in Dumfries and Galloway, and there are other networks. The Stove Network is a really big network, and Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival has a promoters network. We convene a partners group of representatives of all those bodies. There is therefore a lot of intelligence and resource. By having a closer relationship with Creative Scotland, we would be able to help each other.

There was a perception when the regular funding decisions were made, and there was local chat about getting only X per cent of the budget, but the flipside was a 100 per cent success rate in that two organisations applied and they were both successful. We did a piece of work around that conversation to try to figure out what was behind that. People who have established relationships with Creative Scotland felt really well supported and felt that it listened and that it would connect where it could. However, there was a perception, which predominantly came from practitioners, that if there was not an established relationship with Creative Scotland, it was difficult to find a way in, perhaps because of the organisational structure and capacity.

The area is complex, but we have a richness across the country, and maybe we could help each other by working in a different way.

Stewart Murdoch: I would like to make two brief comments. I am not sure that Dundee is in the central belt, is it?

Annabelle Ewing: It is a city.

Stewart Murdoch: It is. As a city, we have a commitment to work very closely with Angus Council, Fife Council and Perth and Kinross Council, which are much more rural authorities. As Gary Cameron said, there has been regional collaboration between local authorities to look at how organisations in the cultural sector can work together to make sure that what they do is integrated, that there is a pathway for skills development and that programmes are co-ordinated as far as possible, to avoid audience division. Such collaboration has happened within the sector without any kind of instruction. It has happened because organisations in the sector want to collaborate and can see the benefits for cultural tourism, staff development and so on.

The regularly funded organisations are based in the cities, but they have a commitment to do outreach; they take their product out to the surrounding areas and they are very open. For Dundee, the travel-to-work area is quite large—people will commute into Dundee from 70 or 80 miles away, and audiences will commute in if the programme is good.

If we were to divide the funding right down, per capita, to every local authority, we would never sustain quality. It is a case of having good relationships between rural and urban areas. However, the perception will always exist that the cities and the central belt are getting a bigger slice of the cake.

Annabelle Ewing: Thank you very much for your comments. The issue is one that we should all reflect on, as Leonie Bell said; we all have a responsibility in this area.

At the workshop in Dunfermline, many of the organisations that were represented—which included public bodies, such as Fife College, and private sector bodies—recognised that they needed to work together better on a pan-Fife basis and to organise themselves more effectively in relation to the Fife brand. Each area would have to take responsibility for that.

However, I take the point that was made about quality and that it is not necessarily good to subdivide the funding. Leonie Bell talked about the need for a venture to thrive rather than to just get a bit of money and tick a box without being able to thrive in the future. I still think that work can be

done, though. It is a question of mindset—we all need to have a slightly different mindset.

There is another area of questioning that I would like to cover. What impact have you seen thus far on cities and surrounding areas from the city region deals? Last week, we heard from the Federation of Scottish Theatre, which told us that Pitlochry Festival Theatre had secured substantial funding under the Tay cities region deal. That is obviously good news, and it would be good to hear what is happening in other parts of Scotland.

Leonie Bell: Stewart Murdoch and I both have city region deals for our areas, although Stewart will be much better able to speak about the Tay cities deal, of which culture is a part. We are part of the Glasgow city region city deal, but culture does not feature in that in the way that it does in the Tay cities deal; it does not really feature in the Edinburgh and south-east Scotland city region deal, either. I understand that, largely speaking, Pitlochry Festival Theatre has benefited from the release of capital money.

Where the Glasgow city region city deal is relevant to us is on tourism. Growing tourism is a collective ambition of the city deal for the wider area. More groups are coming together, and operational and strategic thinking is being done about the role of culture within tourism. For Glasgow and Paisley and Renfrewshire, cultural tourism is a massive growth area, and it has been one of Paisley's main areas of focus.

The issue is not just how much money the deals unlock—you are right to say that significant amounts of capital can be involved. We will see what happens with the next iteration of the deals. Perhaps we all need to make a greater play when it comes to the role that culture has in those deals. The city deals are another opportunity. The issue is about money and ways of working, but it is also about the perception of culture within what are economic interventions. From a cultural perspective, we need to step up to the economic mark and say that we need to be part of the city deals for a variety of reasons. That is happening with the Tay cities deal.

Annabelle Ewing: You said that culture is not a direct part of some of the city region deals, in the way that it is with the Tay cities deal. Why is that? Why is culture not part of all the city region deals?

10:15

Stewart Murdoch: I cannot speak for any of the others, but the Tay cities deal is very much about cultural tourism—it has to have that economic impact. It is not about cultural development or art as development but is linked absolutely to ensuring that the investment that Perth and Kinross Council and Dundee City Council in

particular have put into culture and regeneration is fully exploited and developed.

As I am sure you have heard from others, the challenge is the timescale for implementation and the flow-through of the money. The £350 million that was announced was celebrated and people are really excited about it. What was not profiled was that it is a 15-year programme. There is an expectation that the £350 million will be there now, so managing that and working out how much will flow out and when is a huge challenge for those who are closer to the programme than I am. Make no mistake, though: it is fantastic to have that money. It has energised artists, the governance bodies of arts organisations and the collaboration between the local authorities in the Tay cities deal.

Leonie Bell: There are really exciting cultural opportunities within the city deal, even if they are not explicitly set out. In our area, a new bridge will connect communities across the Clyde for the first time, giving access to public transport to a community that has not had it before. We need to think about the bounty of direct and indirect opportunities of initiatives such as the city deal.

Annabelle Ewing: That is some good news, then.

Leonie Bell: You asked about city research and I do not think that any of us answered you. I think that you were referring to the core cities cultural inquiry. Is that the research that you meant?

Annabelle Ewing: Yes.

Leonie Bell: Creative Scotland was a research partner in that, and I was a wee bit involved in it when I was in Government. It is unfortunate if it has created the perception that cities are Creative Scotland's sole interest. My understanding, having been in central and then local government, and having been involved in the inquiry, is that it was a UK-wide thing. It provided an interesting opportunity to learn from what cities such as Manchester and Birmingham are doing about such things as tax levies, which we were talking about. It also presented the interesting idea of the cultural city compact, which is kind of what we are talking about here. The compact is about where leadership and ownership sit, and how we create a framework where we bring national agencies and communities together.

Under Creative Scotland's facilitation, we held an inquiry session in Perth. We were not there as a city—we were there totally championing the towns and villages. A colleague from Perth who was there said that we are not necessarily talking just about cities. Scotland is slightly different from England, and we are talking about epicentres from where culture is being used as a catalyst for change, and to support community empowerment and all the other good things that are around in

public policy discourse at the moment. Although the inquiry's name includes the word "cities", it has the potential to have greater influence in some of the areas that the committee has been talking about.

Annabelle Ewing: That is helpful. Again, it goes back to perception and language.

Leonie Bell: Yes. We should always be working to change perception if it is negative.

Claire Baker: Stewart Murdoch talked about the situation in Dundee. There used to be a debate about Dundee's tax base being quite low, and that people from north-east Fife and other areas around Dundee were coming into the city and getting all its advantages without contributing to the tax base. I do not know whether other cities have the same issue. Clackmannanshire Council has had huge cuts to its culture budget, but it is a tiny council that has big financial challenges. Because Clackmannan is cutting back on its cultural offer, which is a really concerning development, people in Clackmannan will go elsewhere, as it is a small area. It is the idea that although people are moving about the area, the local authority has responsibility for providing culture for everyone. It is not just people in Dundee or Paisley that those local authorities are providing culture to but people who are coming into the city. Has that been overtaken by city deals and other partnership models?

Stewart Murdoch: I am not sure. If we look at the way in which the boundaries of local government work and the citizens who use local government services, we see that the two are out of alignment. About 30 or 40 per cent—maybe even more—of the users of the Olympia leisure centre, for example, come from the periphery of Dundee. We are providing services in a city that serves a city region. That is the nature of the beast. The boundaries are very tightly drawn. The issue below that is that no one will have an appetite for going back into the boundaries. Should we not be looking more equitably at the funding? To some extent, Creative Scotland's regularly funded organisation funding does that. The beneficiaries of funding for theatre in Dundee, which attracts people from a fairly large catchment area, are those who live in north-east Fife, Angus and further afield.

The abiding challenge for the local authority relates to the costs of the services that it provides—the funding that it gets does not always reflect those costs. For a small city such as Dundee, it is a challenge to sustain regional services when they are funded from a small and, in fact, impoverished tax base.

Stuart McMillan: I have a couple of quick questions. Gary Cameron said that Creative

Scotland works collaboratively but that it needs to learn to do more. Leonie Bell highlighted that all of us—including politicians—need to work more to engage with Creative Scotland. That struck me, because it indicates that, since 2010, Creative Scotland has not been engaging with all of Scotland and has potentially focused most of its attention on the larger cities. I am keen to get your thoughts on that.

Gary Cameron: I can speak about the place partnerships, which are about building capacity. They are a way of working that allows us not to be passive and to simply say that we did not receive applications from certain areas. Stuart McMillan will be familiar with the Inverclyde place partnership, through which we have worked closely with Inverclyde Council to develop the Beacon arts centre through RIG Arts and the Galoshans festival. We have worked in 16 parts of Scotland to build capacity and we have been proactive in doing that.

When we talk about doing more, that refers to the phase 2 work that has been mentioned. Our creative learning networks exist across Scotland. We are having conversations in different parts of Scotland on how we can work across the country more effectively. We have commissioned research that seeks to look beneath the figures that have been presented to the committee in relation to local authorities. We are proactively asking all the local authorities, “What are your expectations of Creative Scotland and how can we work collaboratively with you?” That will be a difficult process. We do not have the resource base to provide what each of the 32 local authorities would ideally like us to do, but we are being proactive and we are continuing to consider how we can work more collaboratively.

Leonie Bell: I will reflect on my time in Creative Scotland. I was struck by Stuart McMillan’s point that, since 2010, Creative Scotland has not engaged with areas other than the major cities, because I honestly do not think that that is true. If that is the perception, we need to think hard about it, and I am sure that Creative Scotland is doing so, because it is doing a lot of deep thinking about what the organisation is, what role it plays in the public sector in Scotland and its values and priorities.

The reality is that, as a result of more than 70 years of arts funding, the majority of the infrastructure is in certain places. We need a debate about how to keep the existing infrastructure and build on the expertise that has been created. The Edinburgh festivals are part of that. We want to keep them going, given what they do for Scotland in terms of our world relations and our position. I accept that the festivals could do more locally, but that is now part of their strategic

thinking. We also have Glasgow, which is a powerhouse for production and development across the arts, the screen sector and the creative industries. We need to keep all that going.

We all know that Creative Scotland has had massive challenges in its formation and in getting to grips with the breadth of its responsibility across the arts, the screen sector and the creative industries. We are now seeing much more traction on screen. There is an identity in that regard and Creative Scotland is really going for it. Maybe when things settle, it will be time to think again about the role of the arts and what Creative Scotland does for the arts sector, because there certainly have been impressive developments in screen.

If the issue is that the funding programmes have been responding to existing infrastructure issues, we need to consider how to go forward from that. That is probably where the questions arise about how towns and villages get the chance to develop their infrastructure. That goes back to the point about whether it is okay for a local authority such as Clackmannanshire Council to reduce the budget because people can access culture in other places. We want people in Scotland to be able to access the epicentres such as Edinburgh and Glasgow and to have access on their doorsteps. People want local libraries. We want culture to be running through the curriculum, so that every kid going into a nursery, primary or secondary school has a cultural experience. Our nurseries and schools are also cultural buildings. Those are the terms in which we have to think about it.

There are specialists in Creative Scotland who work really hard; sometimes they are trying very hard to do everything that I think that the committee wants to do, but in doing that they face challenges that are largely to do with demand for funded programmes. That then creates the perception that Stuart McMillan mentioned. The issue that we probably need to keep coming back to is how we collectively get Creative Scotland into a place where it can have more space to do all the things that we want it to do. At the moment, it does an awful lot of saying no to people. Nobody wants to do that when their job is to distribute funding—everybody working there wants culture to thrive across Scotland. However, I think that they have probably been responding to existing infrastructure issues.

Gary Cameron: I have an additional point that is related to, but different from, funding. The landscape on how we collaborate locally is changing. We have touched on local authority budgets being under pressure. On the ground, that often means that the roles—the arts development officers or cultural co-ordinators—that have

historically been in place across Scotland are no longer there or have changed radically.

I have been in one of those roles, and they are really important. They are the conduit between artists and community representatives. They are connectors; they help things to happen. They are also the link to Creative Scotland. There is a patchwork of posts—the picture across Scotland is not uniform.

Our ability to have on-the-ground expertise and to work with communities and artists locally where there is no arts development officer is more challenging than it was 10 years ago, although we have DG Unlimited, which is fulfilling aspects of that role really well.

Stuart McMillan: Those replies were very helpful.

On place partnerships, it is very easy to say that a quarter of a million pounds has been put in and that there is match funding, but how are the outcomes analysed?

Gary Cameron: Some work has been independently evaluated, including by Education Scotland. We have a structure that requires local partners to report back.

Because of the fund's flexibility and the differences in the activities and things that are done across the regions, there is no uniform prescribed set of outcomes. Therefore, we ask each group to reflect on and evidence the impact that it has had. In some cases, that may be feedback from artists; in other cases, it may be quantitative information.

The place partnership programme is a development fund. There is no hard-and-fast rule that groups should achieve X, Y and Z by year 1, but we are conscious of ensuring that there is a positive set of outcomes. The outcomes vary across the partnerships.

Stuart McMillan: Local authorities should be carrying out their own research. However, when Creative Scotland carries out research and publishes the analysis, does it send that to all the place partnerships, so that they can potentially learn from one another?

Gary Cameron: Yes, that information is published on our website and circulated around all place partnerships and all 32 local authorities. It is our intention to hold a meeting to bring together all those who are interested to learn about the research.

During the year, we hold two or three sessions—we had one in Dumfries and Galloway—where we bring together representatives from place partnerships across Scotland to learn. Recently, we had a cohort from

the Moray place partnership visit Dumfries and Galloway. We are trying as hard as we can to facilitate that exchange of knowledge across Scotland. It is challenging—even travel budgets are under huge scrutiny now—but we are trying to promote learning.

Stuart McMillan: That is helpful.

Annabelle Ewing asked about city deals. All the different projects are a hugely important opportunity for all Scotland. My focus is on the Glasgow city region deal, particularly in relation to Inverclyde. How will the arts and culture benefit from the spend? In Glasgow, £1.13 billion will be spent—that is not a small amount of money. How will more people on the ground be engaged and get involved? In what way will there be a better economic and social return for the Inverclyde community?

10:30

Gary Cameron: In broad terms, the city region deals—or any significant investment in culture—can bring an economic return. We need to make sure that the investment is particularly relevant to the region. It is not a case of replicating a model from Edinburgh or Glasgow; it is necessary to think about the particular needs of the Inverclyde community.

With the city region deals, the issue is leadership, and the same principle applies in the context of culture. That involves looking at how culture and the arts are considered as part of the economic development of the region. An understanding needs to be developed of the fact that, although they might not be the primary driver, they can have a positive economic, social and cultural impact.

Leonie Bell: I would make a similar point, but I would also say that there could be specific returns for the greater Glasgow area in our areas of interest. There is a lot of investment going into manufacturing and innovation in manufacturing, and creativity is part of that. In Paisley and wider Renfrewshire, we stand on the shoulders of innovators going back hundreds of years.

For us, there is also the issue of perception. One of the step changes that I am working towards is that of radically changing the image and reputation of Paisley, which, for too long, has been beset by narratives of poverty and post-industrial decline. A key way in which we are challenging that is not just to address the systemic poverty and the inequality that comes from that in some of the communities in Renfrewshire, but to use culture and creativity in those communities and to use the potential in those communities and in our town centre, with its glorious civic buildings, to tell

different stories and to allow different stories to be told.

As well as the issue of perception, there is the issue of jobs. The city region deal will create jobs in Renfrewshire and, I am sure, in Inverclyde. Among the symbolic interventions is the bridge over the Clyde, which will bring communities together. That will have cultural repercussions. It is important that we think about how we can bring communities together through such activity.

Another step change that I am working towards is the development of creativity as a new dimension of the economy. The city deal creates fertile territory for us to develop creativity in that way and to be at the cutting edge of innovation. There is a relationship between that and the funded cultural sector, which covers how creativity and the arts are understood at school through to what young people study. That fits in with creativity in economic development. Over time, public funding of the culture sector enables us to have communities with people who have the innovative skills that will enable them to be at the cutting edge of the things that the city deal and our area are trying to do. There is a relationship between those things if we get our approach right.

The city region deal provides many opportunities, and tourism and events are a big part of that. Many tourists go to Glasgow to look at the sights there. We have an opportunity to share one another's treasures. The communication around that is important, too.

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): I am interested in the thread that came out of Annabelle Ewing's questions about the economic impact of the city region deals. Obviously, the economic impact of culture in Scotland should not be underestimated, but in the evidence that we have heard so far, as you would expect, it has been put to us that many artists would advocate the funding of art for art's sake as a perfectly valid use of public money, and they would be right.

However, in more mundane processes than the city region deals—in councils' annual budget setting processes—do you find yourselves having to justify the cultural spend based on economic impact more than you would like to? Is there a wider understanding in councils, particularly at senior management level or elected representative level, that looking beyond the economic impact is an appropriate way to make budget decisions on culture spend?

Stewart Murdoch: From a local authority perspective, economic impact is certainly considered. In an effort to defend the budget that is invested in culture, we got Ekosgen to look at the economic impact of the cultural strategy for the financial year 2017-18. It did a very interesting

study on the economic impact of that in Dundee, which we could make available to the committee if that would be of interest. It carried out independent research on what the economic impact was of investment by Dundee City Council and Creative Scotland, and charitable investment, in the delivery of a cultural strategy in the city. We were surprised to find out how impactful that investment was.

We had not anticipated the benefits for people's welfare. I am not sure whether that has come up in any of the committee's research. The research looked at the whole-of-life benefits, including the benefits to the health service and to older people from their engagement in the arts, and put an economic measure against that, which I had not seen before. That has helped to make the case for investment, but it does not protect that investment from the current financial pressures that the local authority is under. I do not think that those benefits are not understood or valued but, when you are trying to balance a local authority's budget, you have to decide where to draw the line.

David McDonald: We cannot avoid measuring the economic impact, as we have to do with everything in society. We certainly do that in our conversations with Dumfries and Galloway Council and we measure the additional money that is levered in. Interestingly, someone is building a hotel on the Crichton campus specifically because of the cultural offer in the Dumfries and Galloway region. We are a few years away from this but, as part of the change in the campus, there is potential for a music venue, which we do not have in the region. That shows that, from a business or economic perspective, someone has identified the opportunities that culture creates.

The local authority in Dumfries and Galloway invests heavily in major events and festivals and it requires the festivals to report back on the economic impact of the money that it has invested. The council has increased the target for this year—forgive me, but I cannot remember the numbers, although I could get them for the committee if you need them. The economic impact is part of the picture but, to go back to what I said earlier, there is the potential to measure the impact of culture on our society in other ways and not only using empirical data.

Leonie Bell: The reality for a lot of people and local authorities is that they have to justify the investment in the terms that Ross Greer set out. If it is all right, I will jump back to the impending culture strategy and to another opportunity that it gives us. To get all the benefits and outcomes that culture can bring across all the areas that we have talked about, whether it is economic or health inequalities or education, we have to use public funding. There is what we might call a mixed

funding economy around culture. We have to fund and support it in education and we have to support artists and organisations. Unless the overall sector is thriving and expert, it cannot do all those other things. It takes time, money and great care for practitioners to work in difficult contexts, such as some social or healthcare contexts. It is only from the foundation of a flourishing cultural sector that society can reap the rewards that culture gives in all those other areas.

That is what the bid afforded us in Paisley. We got traction politically and among officers and partners. I now report against six step changes covering things such as poverty and inequality, health and the economy, with wellbeing alongside that. No one of them is given greater importance, and at the heart of them is the development of cultural and creative communities across Paisley and Renfrewshire.

Culture is at the heart of things. If we get that right, we get the other benefits that come from it. We need to focus our thinking on that nationally, and there will be local benefits from that.

Ross Greer: The ALEO model is not particularly new to local authorities and it is certainly not exclusive to culture. What impact has the model had on cultural spend, particularly in an era when budgets are being squeezed, as we have discussed?. Has the model had any impact on expenditure, or is the difference just in delivery?

Stewart Murdoch: There is no question but that it has enabled the City of Dundee Council to make significant savings. When the ALEO was created, the areas that were transferred were 62 per cent funded by the local authority with the balance coming from generated income, which was largely from sport, with a small amount from cultural events. That has completely reversed. The funding model has gone from being 60:40 to being 40:60. The change can happen over three, four, five or six years, then it plateaus.

The biggest challenge that the ALEO model faces is that the aspiration for development is restricted. Development plans that are based on trying to create additional income-generating streams, which would require capital investment, have been put on hold to an extent because of the rates review. There is no benefit to the local authority or the ALEO. Frankly, the development of the model has been compromised because of the rates situation that applies, which does not apply to independent charitable arts organisations. There is a slight unevenness or weirdness in the funding of arts and cultural organisations, because some are affected by that and some are not. The definition of an ALEO is problematic. We are a Scottish charity that is regulated in the same way as other Scottish charities are. The board members view themselves as trustees of a

Scottish charity that is accountable to the local authority for its funding in the same way as other funded bodies are.

The model has brought more opportunities and challenges. Overall, I would say that the ALEO has allowed us to develop things in the past five or six years and it has potential to do more. Actually, I should be clear that I am talking about the SCIO model rather than the ALEO model.

Ross Greer: Gary Cameron has experience of dealing with a range of local authorities. Does what Stewart Murdoch said apply across the board, or have there been different experiences? How has the model and change in governance affected your relationship with local authorities?

Gary Cameron: It is not for me to reflect on the impact, but I can address the second point. Creative Scotland has good working relationships with ALEOs across Scotland. Those relationships are important and fruitful. It is also important that we maintain our relationship with the local authorities and that the relationship between the ALEOs and the local authorities is strong, which is the case, although we need to be mindful that it should continue.

We have discussed how culture can be embedded in different budgets. If an ALEO does not have a strong, holistic and considered relationship with the local authority, there is a risk that it could sit in isolation. There are good relationships now, but we have to be mindful of the need for continued collaboration.

Ross Greer: I have a final question on data on national funding of arts organisations across the country. Is there enough publicly available data, particularly for people working at local level, so that you are aware of what is being funded nationally in the areas where you operate? Are there gaps in the data or areas where greater depth would be helpful?

Leonie Bell: There is a lot of data, but it is not always shared, which I suppose is what you are getting at. Some organisations that are funded by Creative Scotland and others spend a disproportionate amount of their time gathering data to share with their funders. The situation probably leans too much that way, from organisations' perspective, and they have a valid point. Some organisations are tiny, with two or three part-time staff, but have to gather huge amounts of information. However, that might feel okay for them if they were aware of the benefit that comes from it and what the bigger picture is.

I know that Creative Scotland is interested in what it does with the intelligence that it holds and how it shares it so that we all benefit from it. However, it is not only Creative Scotland that holds data. Universities hold data, but it is really

hard to access research articles on the issue. The Government also holds a lot of data, which it does not always share, and local government holds data, which we also perhaps do not share. We need to think about that, because you do not get the full picture when you look at just one organisation's data.

We have an organisation in Paisley called PACE Theatre Company Ltd, which is one of the most significant youth theatre organisations in the country and has phenomenal participation levels, but it has never applied to Creative Scotland—although that is not a bad thing. Through the town centre regeneration fund, we are about to support PACE to create a new home in Paisley. It will not feature in any of Creative Scotland's data, but it is an important player in youth theatre locally and nationally. We need to watch what story we are telling through the data, although I agree that there could be more sharing and bringing together of the data that certain parties hold. It is about much more than just Creative Scotland data.

10:45

The Convener: Our research from Drew Wylie Ltd suggested that observatories are a way to go in terms of gathering data together, and that the observatory model has worked well in other countries. Is that a good idea, or would it simply create another level of bureaucracy?

Leonie Bell: We looked at that a little in considering the culture strategy, as a group of academics who are expert in cultural policy worked with us. I do not know where that issue is at the moment, but observatories are quite interesting, because they bring together academia, policy and practitioners. However, we need to ensure that we bring all of them together and that the view is not just an academic one; it must also be practitioner, organisation and policy led.

In Paisley, we have set up a research centre in the University of the West of Scotland, which is the local university, to demonstrate the change that we are making through our approach and investment. That is because we understand that we need to be able to tell the story in the way that David McDonald has set out. It is about a quantitative, qualitative and very long-term approach, and about how we take a long-term view. I suppose that organisations such as Sistema Scotland are doing that with the Glasgow Centre for Population Health. I wonder whether there is scope for a network observatory that has a very long-term view, keeps Scotland at the cutting edge of international research in cultural policy, and is not just inward looking but is external looking. That would be worth looking at.

The Convener: Would that be a way of pulling together all the scattered data?

Leonie Bell: It could be.

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): Good morning. I have a few questions.

First, I want to go back to the ALEO issue, which is interesting. The Barclay review shone a light on the ALEO model—I was struck by how wide the use of ALEOs is becoming. That wide use probably spurred the review's concerns, because some local authorities were using them as a means of setting up coffee shops, dance studios and Zumba classes, for example. There was the idea that if we were trying to encourage people to take the initiative locally and compete on that level, there was no level playing field. Given that the conversation is about funding—whether it comes from central Government or local government—does the Government have other levers available to it, such as the tax regime or other forms of incentive, to facilitate the growth of culture, and that do not involve directly injecting cash into specific projects or organisations? What levers are at the Government's disposal that it could use better?

Leonie Bell: I think that there are such levers. We looked at that issue in developing the culture strategy. We looked at things and had conversations about them. I will give a couple of examples.

We considered VAT on renovating existing buildings, which is not paid on new developments. There are many reasons why people would want to renovate existing buildings. Paisley is setting itself apart by investing in its heritage in a contemporary way, but 20 per cent VAT is paid on that. In a way, it is cheaper to build a new building, but that does not always involve caring for the cultural and heritage infrastructure, and there are environmental challenges. Such things probably could be looked at more.

I was laughed at in a meeting by someone who said that I was just trying to fund culture through the carrier bag charging scheme. I had not meant that we should do that, but that there were levers that were growing and changes that were occurring. I did not mean that culture should be funded by the carrier bag charging scheme, although a lot of good stuff in communities is being funded by it. It is a really good example of how we are responding to environmental change. The rewards of the scheme go back into communities, but culture is not one of its priority themes. Again, it is about getting around the table with the people who make decisions about the new opportunities. Those opportunities exist.

There are other levers. From experience of working in the civil service and trying hard to work

across departments, I know that a team of people is needed to do that and to work in a cross-cutting way. That approach must include officer, political and senior civil service levels to enable it to happen and to support it. We are talking about complex matters, but there is a big opportunity, if we get collective will and support from the bottom up and the top down.

I have given a couple of low-level examples. However, such things make a difference.

Stewart Murdoch: I will make a brief comment on the ALEO and SCIO models, which have been hugely productive for Dundee. Part of that is the culture shift that came from having a board of independent governors looking critically and engaging with staff at local level. They have brought to bear business, community, youth and minority ethnic perspectives—we had not previously been able to do that to that extent. The model quite clearly opened up funding routes. As a charity, Leisure and Culture Dundee could access funds that the local authority could not access.

I have a pie chart of the funding in front of me. Fees and charges, facility hire, sales of goods, online sales, contracting with third parties, partnerships and contracts with health and external funding from charities have all gone up. That cocktail has meant that we have doubled the funding from what was in place when the SCIO was created. We have doubled the percentage that comes from independent sources. If you look at those simple metrics, the SCIO has been a productive model for us.

Jamie Greene: Does anyone on the panel have concerns about the high levels of reliance on National Lottery funding? It accounts for a big chunk of Creative Scotland's budget; it also funds many smaller projects in different ways. It seems that, culturally, we have become very reliant on the lottery as a funding mechanism, but we cannot rely on it always being there or, indeed, on funding being available at current levels. I know that other countries have dealt with that issue in different ways. How could we future proof our approach, so that we do not rely just on lottery funding as a means of supporting culture and the arts?

Leonie Bell: That is a massive question. I think that we are all worried about that, but I do not know what the answer is. We are embedded in the current model, which is changing as we speak. However, some organisations are benefiting from the changes, such as Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd, which has a really good relationship with the People's Postcode Lottery. Across Renfrewshire, there are phenomenal long-term relationships with the Big Lottery Fund.

The situation is challenging, and I do not know what the answer is. I would be looking to other people who are expert in this area to help us to find ways through it. There must also be answers from the culture sector and local government.

Stewart Murdoch: We are concerned. I do not know what the answer is.

Jamie Greene: I should not paint the situation only as a negative one; there are positives, too. Leonie Bell mentioned the People's Postcode Lottery. The success of that lottery has enabled new forms of funding to go to places where other funding models did not go.

Leonie Bell: We echo the point that the fluctuations and changes in funding that people rely on for core funding, and to do incredibly important work that is of huge value, are worrying.

Jamie Greene: I have a completely different question about local government.

We have looked at some of the statistics on the cuts and reductions. The chart that I am looking at shows a fairly consistent reduction in funding across local authorities. That is partly to do with restructuring and how local authorities fit culture and arts into their structures. Committee paper 2 says:

"Another by-product of this reduced funding is that staff who are not qualified to support the arts are shoe-horned into arts posts as a result of council reorganisation".

In other words, if cultural and arts functions are being sucked into other bits of the council and being run by people who, in some cases, have no experience in the arts at all, that is clearly having a detrimental effect on councils' ability to run the services. What can local authorities do when they face the stark choice of having to make cuts and reorganise, which could include amalgamating posts?

Gary Cameron: Earlier, I touched on arts development officers and cultural co-ordinators. I said that those posts have an outward-looking remit that is not necessarily for delivering services in the council, but is for supporting artists to support the community. Clearly, local authorities—I have worked in one and now I work with them—have complex challenges, but I advocate having those roles.

We have touched on levering funding, but there is also the leverage that those roles bring by empowering people and supporting them to do things in their communities. We advocate in favour of those roles, because they are really important and can have a significantly positive impact. The need for that expertise and for having someone that people know they can talk to—and, selfishly, who Creative Scotland can work with—at local level is clear.

Leonie Bell: The situation that that quotation describes sounds horrible. Culture did not form part of Renfrewshire's ALEO until 2015; before then, it was a sub-department of the education department. The ALEO was established in 2003 to cover sport and leisure. The inclusion of culture in 2015 has enabled us to give cultural services visibility and an identity in the Renfrewshire context.

As Stewart Murdoch mentioned, there are challenges. We are trying hard to promote development of specialist staff and to get budget for that. We have just increased our arts development team in Renfrewshire Leisure, which had probably been underinvested in over the years. We are looking to invest in it because specialist support is extremely important. Curator, arts development officer and librarian are critical community roles. Those staff bring more than their expertise in curating collections and librarianship; they apply a specific set of skills in community and social settings. We need to advocate for what those roles bring. The ALEO has enabled us to have an identity and a visibility that we did not have pre-2015.

Stewart Murdoch: If the ALEO is not represented on the council's management team, the leader of the ALEO will not be at the table when the other chief officers have a discussion about budget setting or priorities, and they will not have influence. In the case of Dundee City Council and Glasgow City Council—I am not sure about the situation in other councils—the ALEO is considered. The leader of the ALEO is part of the council's management team, as well as running the ALEO. There is a visible tension, because the ALEO is independent. It is challenging to take part in those discussions and to separate oneself from that when it comes to the delivery end of the ALEO, but that dual role is important in the ALEO model. Without it, there would be no one in the local authority management team advocating for investment in culture.

The Convener: Could we start to wind up?

Jamie Greene: Sure. I just have one quick question for Mr Cameron.

I appreciate that you are here to talk about the place programme, but the chart in our briefing paper that struck me most shows funding from Creative Scotland for the regularly funded organisations for the 2018-21 period. At one end of the spectrum is the City of Edinburgh Council, in whose area the figure is £41 million, but 11 local authorities have a zero next to them. Is that because no organisations in those areas applied for that funding, or is it simply the case that no such funding has been awarded in those areas? That chart struck me as odd.

Gary Cameron: We did not receive any RFO applications from some local authorities. I agree that the graph looks stark, but I would like to make two points about it. First, regular funding is not the only opportunity for funding that we provide. We support activity across Scotland.

My second point is about the regional approach—and, in fact, the national approach—of lots of the organisations that we fund, which Stewart Murdoch touched on. I think that about 70 to 75 per cent of the organisations that we fund work throughout Scotland. That is not a substitute for local development work; I am simply making it clear that they do not necessarily deliver all their activity locally.

Leonie Bell: Renfrewshire Council is one of the authorities that has a zero on that chart, but we would say that we are really culturally active. The RFO analysis is not the only way of identifying what culture is happening across Scotland. There are stories that need to be told behind such graphs. It could be the aspiration of a couple of our organisations to get regular funding, but some of them want to run their businesses in other ways. A zero on the chart does not mean that no cultural activity is taking place in an area.

David McDonald: I have a small additional point to make. Seventy-five per cent of the funding of one of our regularly funded organisations in Dumfries and Galloway does not come from Creative Scotland. It is tricky to understand the situation just by looking at it through the specific lens of Creative Scotland funding. Funds such as the Big Lottery Fund and the National Lottery's heritage fund are all part of the picture when it comes to arts funding.

The Convener: I thank you all for coming to give evidence. It has been a long session, but you have done well.

10:59

Meeting suspended.

11:04

On resuming—

Scottish Government Reports

The Convener: The next item on our agenda is consideration of biannual reports from the Scottish Government on a range of European Union issues. I would like to obtain further information on a couple of issues.

First, it would be useful to get further information on the implications of Brexit for Scottish organisations that receive horizon 2020 funding, particularly because it is very clear from the letter that we have received that we really punch above our weight in getting those funds. We receive almost 12 per cent of the UK total, which is way above our population share. Obviously, there are many unanswered questions about a no-deal Brexit in particular, so we need more information.

Secondly, on the 2014-20 European social fund programme, it would be useful to get further information on the financial impact of the pre-suspension process and the in-principle agreement that has, I understand from the European Commission letter, been reached.

I do not know whether members have other observations.

Jamie Greene: My observation relates to the update from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education on the one-plus-two languages policy. I record my thanks for his response, but I would like a more helpful picture to be painted. The Deputy First Minister said in his response that

“70% of secondary schools are providing the full entitlement to learning the first additional language from S1 to the end of S3.”

I presume that that means that 30 per cent of secondary schools in Scotland are not providing the full entitlement, which they should be. Is that an improvement or a decrease? It would be nice to put that in the context of the past couple of years.

The Deputy First Minister went on to say:

“According to the 2018 teacher census there were 1,288 teachers with modern language as their main subject”.

It would be nice to give that some context and see whether the trend is going up or down, and to put those two things together and see whether that forms a picture of whether we are making progress. On its own, that snapshot does not paint a picture.

Stuart McMillan: It would be very useful to get a breakdown of how many of those teachers are EU nationals and whether the number of EU nationals who have come to work in our education system has increased or decreased.

The Convener: Okay. That is a useful question to include.

Kenneth Gibson: We have to keep pressing on whether contingencies have been put in place in respect of the shared prosperity fund, which does not seem to be in sight to any extent whatever.

The Convener: I know.

Kenneth Gibson: We are told that the Prime Minister promised on 5 December last year that the issue would go out to consultation before Christmas 2018. We are now at the end of June, and nothing has happened. There are real issues relating to the impact across a number of sectors—in particular, those with which the committee deals.

Annabelle Ewing: I absolutely agree with that. We need to try to get some clarity on that, because the situation is simply unacceptable for all the organisations that are worrying about the future. It is quite astonishing that the UK Government seems to have failed to make any progress at all on that issue. Maybe its doing a bit more of the day job might be useful.

The Convener: Sure.

Do members agree that we should write to the relevant ministers to raise all those issues, and ask specifically about languages? The shared prosperity fund is really an issue for UK ministers, of course, but perhaps there is an opportunity for the committee to write to them again to ask for an update. Do members agree that the deputy convener and I can sign off those letters?

Members indicated agreement.

11:08

Meeting continued in private until 11:27.

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Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

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