

CONSTITUTION, EUROPE, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

7th Meeting 2021, Session 6

7 October 2021

Pre-budget scrutiny: culture sector funding

1. As part of its pre-budget scrutiny work, over the past month the Committee has been looking at the continuing impact of COVID-19 on the culture sector and its longer-term future. This is the final evidence session as part of this inquiry.
2. Under agenda item 1, the Committee will take evidence from—
 - Angus Robertson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
 - David Seers, Head of Sponsorship and Funding
 - Bettina Sizeland, Deputy Director for Culture and Major Events
3. A summary of previous evidence heard, and written submissions received to the Committee through the call for views “Funding for Culture” can be found in the SPICe briefing provided in **Annexe A**.
4. On Friday 24 September the Committee held a focus group with grass-roots organisations to hear about their experiences during the pandemic and suggestions for improving support to the culture sector. A note from the focus group will follow.

Committee Clerks
October 2021

**Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
Culture Pre-budget Scrutiny
7 October 2021**

BACKGROUND

The Committee has undertaken pre-budget scrutiny work on the creative and heritage sectors. The final evidence session in this work will be evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture.

The Committee has had three previous evidence sessions on this inquiry, and links to these are detailed below—

- 9 September, BECTU & Musicians' Union
[Official Report](#)
[SPICe paper: Overall Budget, Strategy and Outcomes](#)
- 16 September, Stove Network, Traditional Music & Song Association of Scotland, Music Venue Trust, The Stand Comedy Club
[Official Report](#)
[SPICe paper: Impact of the pandemic and the medium and long term challenges and opportunities \(from p10 of the pdf\).](#)
- 23 September. Panel 1: Federation of Scottish Theatre, Making Music, Museums Galleries Scotland, and PACT. Panel 2: Creative Scotland and Screen Scotland.
[Official Report](#)
[SPICe Paper: Creative Scotland \(from p30 of pdf\)](#)

The Committee also had an open call for views. Responses [can be found online](#) and a paper foregrounding the themes of the submissions was included in [papers for the meeting of 23 September \(from p46 of the pdf\)](#).

The Committee undertook informal evidence gathering on Friday 24 September with a number of culture organisations from across Scotland. A paper summarising that activity will follow.

The focus of this paper is to draw together themes from the Committee's evidence-taking in the first three evidence sessions and the submissions it has received, within the context of pre-budget scrutiny.

STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

Budget process

The Finance and Public Administration Committee issued [guidance for subject committees](#) on 25 June. This guidance builds on the work of the Budget Review Group, which

reported in 2017. The review recommended the following framework for budget scrutiny should include:

- A full year approach: a broader process in which committees have the flexibility to incorporate budget scrutiny including public engagement into their work prior to the publication of firm and detailed spending proposals.
- A Continuous cycle: scrutiny should be continuous with an emphasis on developing an understanding of the impact of budgetary decisions over a number of years including budgetary trends.
- Output / outcome focused: scrutiny should also be evaluative with an emphasis on what budgets have achieved and aim to achieve over the long term, including scrutiny of equalities outcomes.
- Fiscal responsibility: scrutiny should have a long-term outlook and focus more on prioritisation, addressing fiscal constraints and the impact of increasing demand for public services.
- Interdependent: scrutiny should focus more on the interdependent nature of many of the policies which the budget is seeking to deliver.

The guidance states—

“Parliamentary committees should seek to influence the Budget when priorities are being set through constructive dialogue with Ministers, public bodies and other stakeholders. This dialogue should continue throughout the year using an outcomes-based approach.”

An outcomes-based approach is one that brings together financial and performance information. The Scottish Government’s budget document also seeks to link spending decisions to outcomes. The [2021-22 budget stated](#)—

“The Scottish Budget is underpinned by Scotland’s National Performance Framework. This sets out a vision for a more successful country, where all of Scotland has the opportunity to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Alongside this vision, the Scottish Budget delivers against our eleven national outcomes [in the NPF]” (p9)

A Culture Strategy for Scotland

[A Culture Strategy for Scotland](#) (“the Strategy”) was published in February 2020. The Strategy is structured with a vision, three ambitions, and six guiding principles. Below are the three ambitions and brief descriptions.

- *Strengthening Culture*
Supporting the creation of culture.
- *Transforming Through Culture*
Realising the benefits of cultural activity across society (and government structures) to support “wellbeing and cultural, social, economic and environmental prosperity”.

- *Empowering Through Culture*
Celebrating culture more broadly “as part of every community; essential to our lives and wellbeing”

Underneath each of the ambitions, the strategy listed a number of policy actions.

A number of submissions highlighted the Culture Strategy for Scotland as being a useful document on which to base the recovery from the pandemic. For example, Museums Galleries Scotland’s submission stated—

“The principles established by the Scottish Government’s Culture Strategy remain relevant and important – including the centrality of culture to our national wellbeing and prosperity; the celebration of diversity; the right to participate in the cultural life of the community; and the importance of place.”

One would expect that the strategic aims of the Culture Strategy would be reflected in the strategies and plans of the organisations the Scottish Government funds. One would also expect that these strategic aims would influence the spending decisions of those organisations.

Creative Scotland’s New Strategic Framework

In 2019 Creative Scotland undertook a strategic and funding. Details of the new strategic and funding approach are set out in the [2021-22 Annual Plan](#). The refreshed strategic framework is intended to guide Creative Scotland’s work in “2021/22 and beyond”. The strategic framework’s vision, or “What we want to see” is—

- People and organisations working in art and creativity are supported to make work of quality and ambition that enriches life in Scotland for everyone.
- More people from all parts of society access, participate in and value a range of artistic and creative activities.
- Art and creativity are recognised by people at home and abroad as a central part of our nation.

There is a clear read-across from the Culture Strategy’s ambitions to the bullets listed above.

The revised funding approach, including an updated approach to how individuals can access grants through the Open Fund, has been discussed in previous papers. There is currently little detail on the overall approach. It will be phased in through this and the next financial year with full implementation in 2023-24. RFOs are expected to be offered another year of funding in in 2022-23. Creative Scotland’s Annual Plan stated, “over the summer months, we will share further information on the proposed approach to support organisations, working towards confirming details on the process by October 2021.”

Our Place in Time

[Our Place in Time](#) is the first Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland, launched in March 2014. It seeks to situate the historic environment as part of the everyday life of

individuals and communities. It aims to “ensure that the cultural, social, environmental and economic value of our heritage continues to make a major contribution to the nation’s wellbeing.”

Going Further: The National Strategy for Scotland’s Museums and Galleries

Museums Galleries Scotland published [Going Further: The National Strategy for Scotland’s Museums and Galleries](#) in March 2012. Its vision is—

“Scotland’s museums and galleries will be ambitious, dynamic and sustainable enterprises: connecting people, places and collections; inspiring, delighting and creating public value.”

Outcomes

The [National Performance Framework](#) sets out the overall purpose and aims the Scottish Government has for Scotland. Beneath this are a number of National Outcomes, and below those outcomes are indicators which are intended to measure progress in meeting the National Outcomes. The National Outcome for Culture is:

We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.

Underneath the Culture National Outcome, the Scottish Government [lists four indicators](#).

- Attendance at cultural events or places of culture
- Participation in a cultural activity
- Growth in the cultural economy
- People working in arts and culture

The Vision set out in the strategy is similar to the National Outcome. The Vision is—

“Scotland is a place where culture is valued, protected and nurtured. Culture is woven through everyday life, shapes and is shaped by society, and its transformative potential is experienced by everyone. Scotland’s rich cultural heritage and creativity of today is inspired by people and place, enlivens every community and is celebrated around the world.”

The [National Partnership for Culture](#) was tasked with setting up a “measuring change group” to inform progress towards realising the national outcome for culture and the delivery of the culture strategy.

As well as setting out the Creative Scotland’s refreshed strategic framework, its Annual Plan for this year stated that it would be developing an updated set of key performance indicators this financial year, which will be reported on for the activities in 2022-23.

While there is a specific Culture outcome, the creative sectors are likely to also contribute to other National Outcomes, such as education, communities and international. The

Committee has heard evidence about the value of cultural participation to health outcomes for individuals. For example, Lucy Casot from MGS said—

“There are also many examples of projects that have been programmed by museums and galleries—and, indeed, by other cultural organisations—to support autism and a range of different health issues. We know that those work—the research shows as much—and it would be great if we could start to mainstream some of the projects instead of seeing them just as opportunities to be funded in the short term.” ([23 September 2021](#), Col 7)

The Scottish Government’s [policy statement on the creative industries, published in 2019](#), noted the economic value of the sector and also “the role of creativity in health and wellbeing, ... building resilient communities and social transformations.” In this vein, the First Minister’s foreword to the Culture Strategy argues that the strategy has the potential to contribute to a range of outcomes. She said—

“The strategy is underpinned by actions to support the sector, build new partnerships and help communities develop and celebrate their own culture. It also challenges the public sector to think about how culture can make Scotland a country which is fairer, greener, more inclusive, more innovative and more creative. And it makes clear that culture is a cross-government priority – one which all ministerial portfolios in the Scottish Government contribute towards.”

Alison Reeves from Making Music highlighted choirs which were specifically aimed at supporting people with dementia or with lung problems. She continued—

“Monitoring that issue across our sector would be difficult but not impossible, which is why we are always asking for music to be considered under national outcomes other than just the culture outcome. If it were to be considered under, say, the communities outcome, we could start to see some monitoring of the impact of music making on health across the country” ([23 September 2021](#), Col 8)

Paul McManus from BECTU also commented on the indicators in the NPF. He said—

“A great many of our members see the value that is placed on culture and just wish that a similar value would be placed on their involvement in culture in Scotland and what they get out of it. They feel somewhat disconnected from those metrics, which always seem to be about what society gets out of culture and the impact of culture on the economy and the wellbeing of the Scottish people. They feel that they are not part of that equation. The ironic thing is that the vast majority of those people, certainly in the live arts, do it because they love it, not because they want to make a living out of it, which, after all, is impossible. As a result, they have always felt that the emphasis has not been weighted sufficiently towards the experience of working in culture.” ([9 September](#), Col 39)

The Culture Strategy includes ‘aims’ underneath each of the ‘ambitions. These include—

- Value, trust and support creative people – for their unique and vital contribution to society and the economy. (Under *Strengthening Culture*) and

- Place culture as a central consideration across all policy areas, including: health and wellbeing, economy, education, reducing inequality and realising a greener and more innovative future. (Under *Transforming Through Culture*)

The Culture Strategy refers to the National Outcome, alongside specific outcomes identified in the strategy; see the actions on page 54 for a good example of this, or the section on the Vision (p9) which refers to the National Outcome in the context of the strategic profile and political commitment to culture. There is clearly synergy between the strategy and the NPF. However, the strategy is not always explicit on how it links to the National Outcome and how its work will improve the National Indicators. One might question whether the Scottish Government and its agencies' performance should be primarily measured against the NPF and its indicators or progress against the strategy.

OVERALL FUNDING

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government budget for 2021-22 set out its spending plans. There were some minor changes from the previous years' largely in capital funding. The 21-22 budget provided for anticipated further consequential as a result of the pandemic. At the time the budget passed Parliament, £20m of these were intended to support the expected reduction in HES' income.

The budgets for heritage and creative sectors were under the Economy, Fair Work and Culture in 2021-22. The relevant high-level ('level 2') spending plans are set out below.

Level 2 Spending Plans	£m
	2021-22 Budget
Culture and Major Events	174.7
Historic Environment Scotland	55.9
National Records of Scotland	63.3

Culture and Major Events

The table below show the level 3 spending plans under the 'Culture and Major Events' budget line.

Level 3: 2021-22 Culture and Major Events

£m

	Budget 2021-22				
	Resource	Non-cash	Capital	FTs	Total
Creative Scotland and Other Arts	62.93	0.22	-	-	63.15
Cultural Collections	58.16	9.30	8.20	-	75.66
Major Events	8.25	-	-	-	8.25
Advice and Policy	4.73	-	-	-	4.73
National Performing Companies	22.86	-	-	-	22.86
Total	156.94	9.52	8.20	-	174.66

Historic Environment Scotland

HES' budgets are heavily affected by the income HES is expected to generate. The table below sets out HES' budget in more detail (it does not include non-cash lines).

Level 4

£m

	2021-22	
	Resource	Capital
HES-Running Costs	88.30	-
HES Direct Capital	-	6.00
Less Income	-41.40	-
Total	46.90	6.00

The total running costs of HES are expected to be £88.3m in 2021-22, which is less than the expected £97.1m in the 2020-21 budget. Income is shown as negative in the table above. The expected income in 2020-21 was £63.3m, although clearly the outturn will be considerably lower. While the budget shows that the Scottish Government's support to HES is planned to total £55.9m in 2021-22, it was anticipated that a further £20m of support would be provided through Covid-19-related consequentials.

Creative Scotland

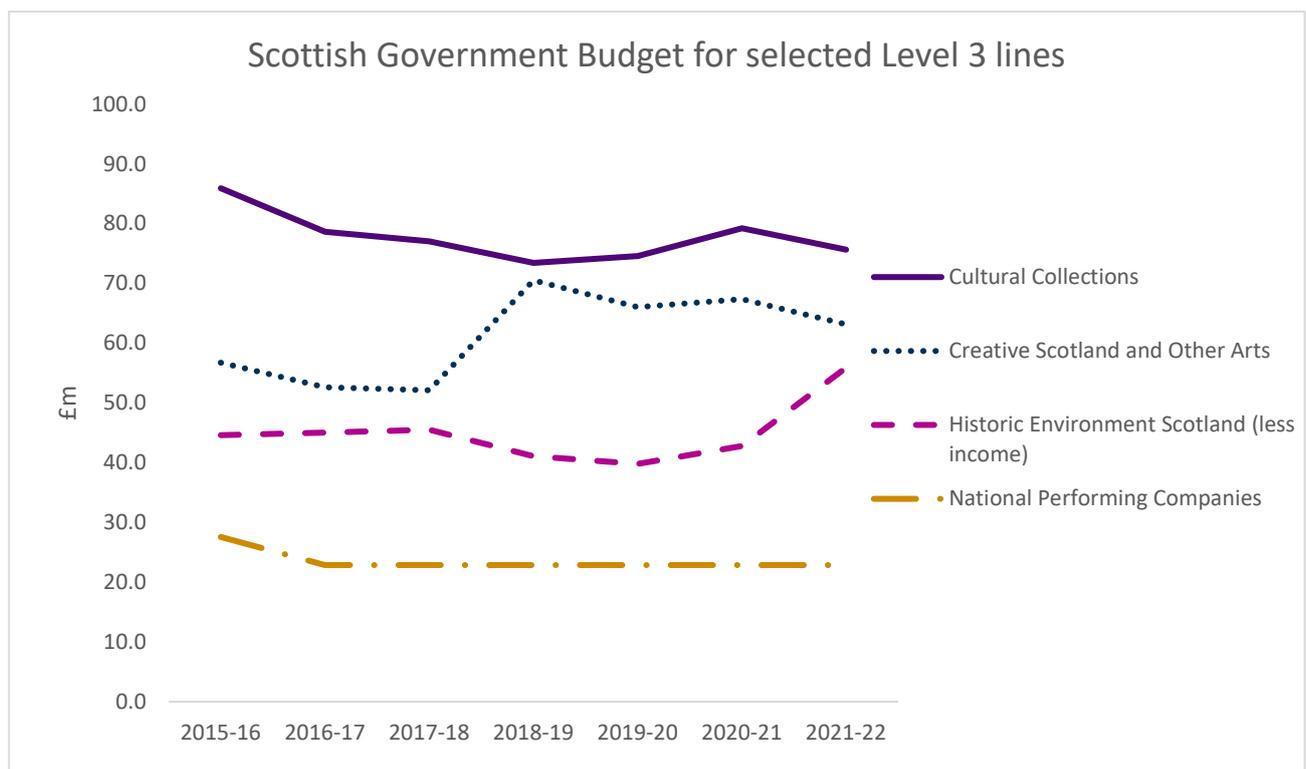
The Creative Scotland budget is presented in the Scottish Government budget with two lines. 'Creative Scotland' and 'Other Arts'. The former is the core funding for Creative Scotland. Other Arts line has increased in the past several years. It includes ring fenced funding for Creative Scotland including Screen Scotland, Youth Music Initiative, Expo and Festivals, as well as providing for revenue funding for V&A Dundee, Sistema Scotland and other smaller cultural opportunities and priorities. In addition, it is to maintain support for

the Regular Funded programme as a result of a trend of decreasing lottery income up to 2020.

Level 4	£m
	2021-22
Creative Scotland	32.58
Other Arts	30.35
Total Resource	62.93

Changes over time

The chart below shows the cash budget allocations for a selection of culture budget lines (both revenue and capital). As with the figures above, the chart does not include in-year allocations, such as the emergency response to Covid.



The obvious shift in this chart is in Creative Scotland’s budget between 2017-18 and 2018-19. This was due to an increase in Creative Scotland’s ‘Other Arts’ line, which increased by £18.4m in that year. This was explained by the Scottish Government at the time—

“Increased investment in screen announced in Programme for Government; increased support for Sistema Scotland and maintaining funding for Youth Music Initiative, both in Year of Young People. Also includes additional funding to enable Creative Scotland to maintain its support for the Regular Funded programme in the light of significantly decreasing lottery income.” (Notes accompanying figures of Level 4 data, 2018-19 Budget.)

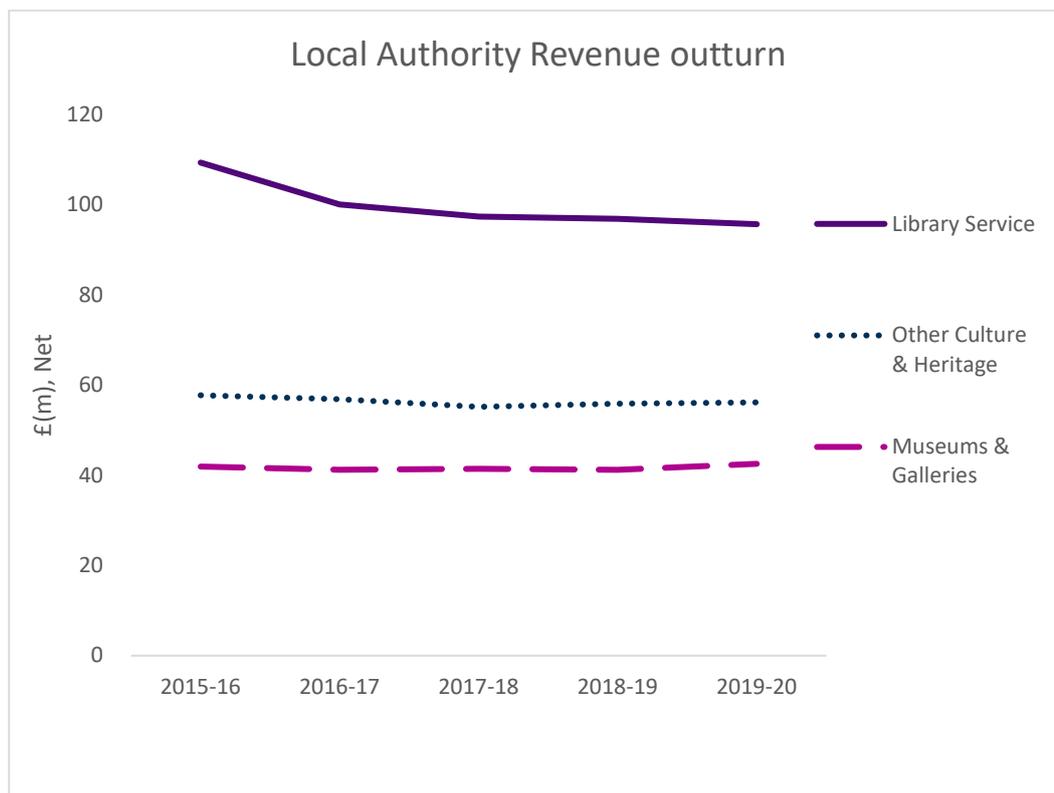
Other variations, year on year, can broadly be accounted for by staff/pension costs or changes in capital or financial transactions' lines. HES' funding increase this year is largely due to falling expected income.

The National Performing Companies have, collectively, had a flat-cash settlement for the past 6 budgets.

A number of changes in budgets have been in response to falls in income or short-term requirements for capital. The only major shift in funding responding to a strategic goal in the past seven years has been the increase to support screen. Iain Munro highlighted the establishment of Screen Scotland as a success story and identified a number of factors that have contributed to this success—

- overt and direct political will and backing;
- having the right people with the right knowledge and expertise and expert focus in place;
- a “modest financial enhancement” of “an additional £8.5 million from the Scottish Government, on top of the £10 million that Creative Scotland contributes”; and
- favourable global market conditions.
([23 September 2021](#), Cols 28-29)

The chart below shows the revenue (ie does not include capital) outturn of Net local government spending on culture in Scotland. This data is drawn from the Local Government Finance Statistics.



A letter from the Accounts Commission, dated 10 September, to the Committee said in relation to local authority funding of culture—

“The increased financial constraints created by Covid-19 are likely to create a further risk to recovery should culture services face further cuts. This will adversely affect councils’ ability to provide services that people and communities rely on. Cultural services are important in supporting wellbeing and mental health. As such, they should be considered as an essential part of recovery from Covid-19.”

Multi-year funding

Witnesses and submissions identified a range of benefits of longer-term funding including, less wastage on annual application processes, greater stability for workers, and the ability for organisations to collaborate and think more strategically.

John McVay from PACT told the Committee—

“There has been too much short-term funding for culture and the arts under successive Administrations across the UK. We are the fastest growing part of the UK economy, so we should have long-term support and planning that allows people to become more innovative, to take broader investment decisions and to plan for growth, rather than having to run short-term projects.” ([23 September 2021](#), Col 20)

Previous SPICe papers have noted that following on from the announcement of the UK Government that it would undertake a spending review this autumn, there may be an expectation that the Scottish Government also undertake a spending review. This would be the first spending review by a Scottish Government in ten years.

Leading up to any spending review, the 2017 [Budget Review Group’s report](#) envisaged the Scottish Government to publishing a framework document setting out the economic and political context, the criteria which will govern the assessment of budgets and the process and timetable for review. An agreement between the Finance Committee and the Scottish Government anticipates time for Committees to be able to undertake “constructive dialogue with Ministers, public bodies, and stakeholders once the Framework is published in order to influence the outcome of the Spending Review”.

The most recent [correspondence, dated 21 September](#), from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy to the Finance and Public Administration Committee, said in relation to the spending review—

“I also welcome your interest in our plans and timetable for consulting on a resource spending review framework ahead of publishing multi-year spending plans, and will revert to you shortly with further detail.”

The Programme for Government stated “we will also invest in much-needed stability for the cultural organisations that we provide regular funding for, by agreeing 3-year funding settlements, to allow them to plan for a sustainable recovery.” (p107) SPICe understands that the details of this will be decided during the budget process.¹ It is not clear how or

¹ Personal communication with the Scottish Government.

whether decisions on the commitment for 3-year funding settlements will link to the process supporting a spending review.

Capital

In evidence the Committee has heard, capital investment in infrastructure has been linked to ensuring the longer term sustainability of the sectors and in meeting climate goals.

As noted previously, Alison Reeves from Music Matters highlighted the vital need for community spaces which are large enough and well ventilated to support the return of non-professional groups.

Lucy Casot from MGS said—

“There is a desire from the museums to make changes. They make sensible changes for all sorts of reasons. They might be reducing their running costs by insulating their buildings properly, for instance. Although a lot of our museums, galleries and historic buildings are great in relation to embodied carbon—and it is really important that those buildings are looked after—there are some particular challenges around adapting them to meet all our obligations. Funding will absolutely be required to come through to support museums and galleries to meet those obligations, as it will be required across the cultural estate.” ([23 September 2021](#), Col 15)

Iain Munro told the Committee—

“Capital is one of, I think, five areas in which enhanced resources are required in order to adapt and change as part of that renewal as we look towards the future. It is needed for Covid compliance measures at venues and for climate change measures, for example, but it is also needed to support the ambitions to enable local communities to have the spaces and opportunities that they want and need, so that they have the best local cultural offer that not only satisfies them but becomes vital to individual wellbeing in communities across Scotland.” ([23 September 2021](#), Col 15)

In the current financial year, the Scottish Government’s capital budget for Creative Scotland was nil. In Cultural Collections, it totalled £8.2m (this included funds for acquisitions); and HES was allocated £6m in capital funds.

Linking expenditure to outcomes

A significant question for the Scottish Government is how spending decisions across the previous parliamentary session have led to better outcomes in the cultural sectors. Overall spending is one aspect to this; another is the profile of spending. In other words, had budgets and spending decisions up to the pandemic been different, would Scotland have been more creative, and could our vibrant and diverse cultures have been expressed and enjoyed more widely?

The development of a new culture strategy, the impact and aftermath of the pandemic and a potential spending review, create new challenges to ensure that budget decisions are best directed to supporting outcomes.

IS THERE A CONTINUING NEED FOR EMERGENCY FUNDING?

The Committee's work has considered medium and long-term issues about the future of the cultural sectors. A key theme of the evidence the Committee has heard is the extent to which the sector is still in an emergency and will require ongoing emergency support.

Barry Dallman from the Musicians' Union said—

“If we want to support the sector, we cannot take the view that, now that things are opening and people can work again, it is all fine and back to normal, because it is not. If we do not provide immediate short-term financial support, particularly for freelancers, we will see continued hardship and people continually leaving the sector.” ([9 September 2021](#), col 29)

The risk for organisations and workers when the UK Government's covid support schemes end has been raised by a number of witnesses. For example, Fiona Campbell from Traditional Music & Song Association of Scotland said—

“The idea of transitional support for organisations and artists is key. The end of the furlough scheme has been mentioned; the self-employed income support scheme is finishing, too. The next six months will be key to trying to keep people in the workforce, whether that is through an organisation or whether they are self-employed.” ([16 September 2021](#) cols 14-15)

Fiona Sturgeon Shea from the Federation of Scottish Theatre told the Committee on 23 September that her sector is still in the midst of crisis and the emergency funding has been a “lifeline”. She said that a key concern is having the ability to plan for the future and that there will be a need for continued funding to provide security for planning runs and restarting activities. ([23 September 2021](#), col 20)

Alison Reeves from Music Matters set out some of the challenges for the non-professional community groups. She said that her members are struggling with the additional work and costs associated with restarting community music groups. She also said that she hoped for an increased demand for community music making after the pandemic as people picked up their instruments again during periods of lockdown. ([23 September 2021](#), cols 20-21)

Lucy Casot from Museums Galleries Scotland noted that organisations that are reliant on footfall and tourism will experience a “long tail” to the crisis. She said that specific emergency MGS has distributed ran out in June. She also said that venues would need to adapt and invest and will require additional funding to see them through. Ms Casot, along with a number of witnesses, have expressed concerns about the depleted cash reserves for organisations, making the sector vulnerable. ([23 September 2021](#), col 21)

The Royal Society of Edinburgh's submission to the Committee stated—

“The ongoing public health emergency has had a detrimental effect on the Scottish cultural sector across the board. It is important to note that while the public health crisis might soon be over, the state of emergency generated in the cultural sector is likely to continue past the next funding year. Culture sector organisations will need to continue to adapt to an evolving landscape, including updated guidance for opening venues with social distancing and enhanced safety measures, changes in

the nature of audiences and in audience appetite. There is also a compounded impact from related hard-hit industries such as tourism. Faced with such challenges, the RSE is of the view that the level of funding that the Scottish Government will allocate to culture in the Budget for 2022-23 should reflect the importance of culture and heritage to society. Scottish Government funding remains vital to ensure the resilience of organisations as they recover and adapt to this new situation.”

Iain Munro identified a confluence of issues of concern which create a risk that major parts of the sectors that Creative Scotland work with collapse. Of particular concern to Mr Munro were—

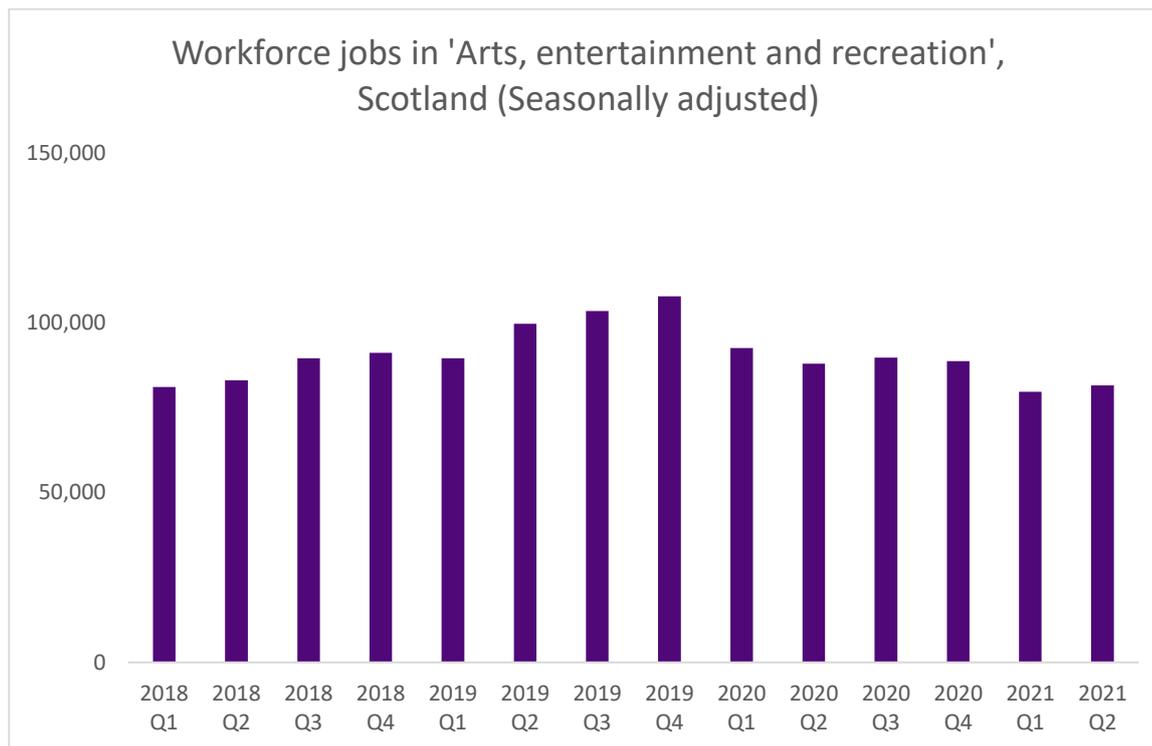
- The end of furlough;
- The repayment of business loans;
- Increasing inflation;
- The retreat of public and private funding (e.g. local government and philanthropy);
- Slow return of audiences; and
- The costs of the commitment to fair pay.

Mr Munro argued that to address these challenges include further stabilisation and support for change and adaptation across five areas. These were—

- Supporting organisations to think creatively about their business models;
- Supporting organisations to build existing and new connections with audiences;
- The role of digital
- Capital funding for Covid related adaptations or supporting climate goals.
- Supporting organisations to change their purposes or to manage their winding down and to protect the structurally important assets.
([23 September 2021](#), cols 31-32)

THE WORKFORCE AND FAIR WORK

The ONS’ workforce survey provides estimates of the number of jobs in the ‘Arts, entertainment and recreation’ sector. The chart below shows that the number of jobs in this hit a high in December 2019. There appears to have been a drop just prior to the pandemic between the final quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020. The most recent data is from June 2021; taking into account seasonal changes, the number of jobs has fallen around 12% since the first quarter of 2020 and 24% since the final quarter of 2019.



Source: Nomis

Paul McManus from BECTU told the Committee on 9 September that there is a risk of staff not returning to certain roles. He said—

“The [big] issue that the culture sector is facing is to do with encouraging staff to come back. The Playhouse was aiming to do a show on a Sunday and it was 90 staff short of the number that it would have needed if the performance had gone ahead.” ([Col 26](#))

At the same meeting, Barry Dallman from the Musicians’ Union told the Committee that, at a UK level, around a third of musicians were considering leaving the profession. He said—

“It is going to take some time before we see the real impact of the skills drain on the cultural landscape, given that it affects everyone, including, for example, people who provide instrumental lessons to children in schools as well as quality freelance orchestral players, as a result of which the country’s symphony and other orchestras cannot get the quality of players that they need. The knock-on effect is unknown, but it is there and real and we are going to experience it in years to come. It is just very hard to quantify at the moment.” ([Col 27](#))

Much of the covid-related emergency response of the Scottish Government and its agencies in the culture sectors has been aimed to maintain jobs and organisations in the sector. UK government schemes such as furlough and SEISS have also been important in supporting the sector.

The relationship between organisations and their staff or freelancers has been a recurring issue of the Committee’s work. A submission from Creative & Cultural Skills submission stated—

“Aligned with the Scottish Government’s principles of Fair Work, we identify a need for more readily accessible support and advice for creative and cultural businesses throughout Scotland, to help a wider, more diverse, more inclusive range of talent into our creative workforce.”

The extent to which publicly funded organisations have delivered fair work practices has been raised by witnesses. Paul McManus from the Musicians’ Union told the Committee—

“It is clear that we will have absolutely no chance of persuading commercial organisations that they have to adopt fair work principles if those principles are not being adopted by publicly funded organisations. When public money is being spent, we need to ensure that people who are engaged through publicly funded organisations or schemes are paid fairly and that the conditions are as they should be, with people having job security and the adoption of all the other principles of fair work. That will require increased resources.” ([9 September 2021](#), Col 30)

In September, Creative Scotland commissioned [a Fair Work Review](#). This work is intended to find out about awareness of Fair Work in the sector and any measures organisations may be undertaking in this area. It will also gather information on workforce, leadership or skills development training currently offered.

The investment in skills is another theme across many of the submissions and the witnesses that have appeared at Committee. While this is not a new issue, there is perhaps an added urgency in the context of concerns of the loss of skills as people may have left the sectors recently. Concerns about skills were raised from across the sectors. For example, Isabel Davis from Screen Scotland stated—

“[A] huge issue for the screen industry is training and skills. There is a need for long-term thinking from our strong community of local training providers in Scotland.” ([23 September 2021](#), Col 27)

DIGITAL

The pandemic saw a shift to more consumption of (and participation in) culture from the home on digital platforms. Barry Dallman from the Musicians’ Union stated—

“The digital activity that has come about because of the pandemic will probably be one of the few upsides and positives of it in that people are now much more familiar with using technology in that way. They are much more open to the idea of working remotely. For musicians and students in rural areas, in particular, who might not have local access to teachers of the quality that they need or musical activity that they can see physically in person, a greater emphasis on the digital side of things can help to join the dots a little more.” ([9 September 2021](#), Col 35)

Digital working has potentially opened up audiences or participation in terms of geography and cost. However, this requires a level of access to broadband and therefore might risk constraining participation and access in other ways.

The pivot to digital has created challenges in respect of providing a high-quality product and to monetise that product. Mike Jones from the Stand shared the success and challenges experienced by his organisation. He said—

“During lockdown, we missed that real live experience, but we tried to recreate that sense of community through a [series of livestreamed shows] beamed directly from the Edinburgh club on a Saturday night. ... We had a total of 200,000 individual donations, which was a key part of our ability to survive financially and showed us that we had a very strong brand and a whole bunch of people out there who felt that connectedness with us as an event producer.” ([16 September 2021](#), col 5)

The Royal Society of Edinburgh’s submission suggested a specific intervention that the Scottish Government or its agencies could make—

“Investing in digital provision, the Scottish Government should also support organisations address challenges related to intellectual property as well as the availability of digital platforms, as there are not many benign platforms available to host cultural productions. Inspiration could come from the UNESCO report in this area where several case studies are presented where dedicated national publicly-funded platforms were created to ensure profits and rights remain with the organisations that create the content.”

PLACE: CULTURE FOR AND OF COMMUNITIES

The guiding principles of the Scottish Government’s Culture Strategy includes the important of ‘place’ and makes reference to Article 27 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights—

“Everyone has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

Matt Baker of the Stove Network told the Committee that the state’s intervention in culture and the arts should have two strands, “participating and making your own culture; and viewing top-notch culture.” ([16 September 2021](#), col 14). He argued that more resource focus is required to support the first of those strands.

The Committee has heard that grassroots activity depends on capacity being in place locally. Alison Reeves from Making Music told the Committee on 23 September, that non-professional music groups rely on professional musicians to lead the groups and spaces in which to perform and rehearse. ([Col 6 and Col 12](#))

Iain Munro from Creative Scotland described its Creative Communities programme. He said—

“We are connecting all those different communities—communities of artists as well as the local population—so that they can learn, share and exchange their experiences, which will inform other programmes and projects. The creative communities programme is not explicitly just about community regeneration in local areas, but that is a key component of what will be achieved. More can be done in that area, because we have seen the importance of local communities feeling that they have a democratic cultural voice that informs what happens in their areas. That is more important than ever. It is about channelling that by working with the local community and with local artists and cultural institutions to unlock an area’s potential. However, what that ends up being and looking like will be bespoke to individual communities.” ([23 September 2021](#), Col 38)

Local Authorities are important players in delivering cultural services and facilitating local organisations and individuals in the creation of and participation in cultural events. Lucy Casot from MGS explored how this might relate to a rights-based approach to culture. She said—

“If we can think strategically now about what we are trying to achieve with the sector, taking into account what the specific challenges are and the fact that things are probably different in the Highlands and Islands than they are in the city of Glasgow, we can see that a one-size-fits-all solution might not be easy to achieve. If we are clear that everyone should have access to the collections that are relevant to their area, that would be a principle to follow, and we could then explore with the sector the best way to achieve that. There has been a lot of really helpful signposting from the Scottish Government on creating that right to culture, but we think that the duty to report on how that is achieved in different parts of Scotland is worthy of further investigation.” ([23 September 2021](#), Col 14)

The Committee has heard that relatively small grants can make a big difference to locally-based organisations. Clara Cullen from the Music Venue Trust said—

“Our sector is incredibly resourceful; it can adapt very quickly, and it often does not need huge amounts of money to do that. We have seen it with the implementation of live streaming in grass-roots music venues. Small investments—microinvestments—can go a long way at the grass-roots level. That is what grassroots culture is all about.” ([16 September 2021](#), col 22)

At the same meeting, Matt Baker argued that a community-embedded art programme would be built from the bottom up, with the larger companies’ work sitting on that foundation. He also suggested that mapping out the infrastructure or resource that is already in use would be a useful exercise in developing a new model of a grass-roots culture creation. ([16 September 2021](#), col 8)

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28 September 2021

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The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP www.parliament.scot