

Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee
Tuesday 29 September 2026
6th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

Prebudget Scrutiny

1. This is the first evidence session the Committee will undertake on the Scottish Government Budget 2027-28.
2. The Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee focused on culture during its budget scrutiny in each of the five years of Session 6. It sought to take a cumulative approach to budget scrutiny and a summary of its final report and the Government's response is included in the Annexe to this paper.

Introduction – Budget Process

3. The Scottish budget process was reformed in 2018 following recommendations made by the [Budget Process Review Group \(BPRG\) in its 2017 report](#).
4. The BPRG suggested that the Scottish Parliament move away from a short annual budget cycle towards a year-round, more strategic approach to budget scrutiny. This included the use of pre-budget scrutiny, to enable committees to examine the Scottish Government's spending plans and priorities and make recommendations ahead of final budget decisions.
5. The BPRG recommended that the budget be approached in the following way:
 - **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;
 - **Continuous cycle:** scrutiny should be continuous with an emphasis over a number of years including budgetary trends; on developing an understanding of the impact of budgetary decisions;
 - **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 longer term outlook and focus more on prioritisation and addressing fiscal constraints and increasing demand for public services; and
 - **Inter-dependent:** scrutiny should focus more on the inter-dependent nature of many of the policies which the Budget is seeking to deliver.

6. The Finance and Public Administration Committee's annual [budget guidance for subject committees](#) was issued 18 June 2026.
7. This year's budget guidance notes the delayed publication of two documents that usually inform Parliament's pre-budget scrutiny: the Scottish Government's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Scottish Fiscal Commission's (SFC's) Economic and Fiscal Forecasts, on which the MTFS is normally based.

Strategy

8. Sectoral and national strategies can provide a framework around which the Scottish Government develops policy and makes budget decisions. The BPRG suggested taking an output/outcome focused approach, as opposed to focusing only on inputs. Strategies often set out what outcomes the Government is seeking to achieve. Therefore members may wish to explore: whether the current priorities are the right ones; whether the strategic intent is clear and measurable; how the Scottish Government and its agencies shape their decision-making and budget setting around these longer-term aims and outcomes.
9. Scotland's current [Culture Strategy, published in 2020](#), is structured around three ambitions:
 - 'Strengthening Culture'
i.e. how policy can support the creation of culture through funding or in-kind support to the sector.
 - 'Transforming through culture'
i.e. recognising the value culture can have to supporting outcomes in other policy areas – for example in supporting health, education, and tourism.
 - 'Empowering Through Culture'
i.e. participation and supporting culture at community levels
10. In 2020, the Scottish Government established a [National Partnership for Culture \(NPC\)](#) to "provide a cross-sector, interdisciplinary voice [to] advise and influence Scottish Ministers on the delivery of the Culture Strategy for Scotland". The NPC's final report was published in 2022.
11. The Scottish Government published a [refreshed action plan](#) for the Culture Strategy in December 2023.
12. The Scottish Government published its first [international culture strategy](#) on 28 March 2024. The strategy aims to support Scotland's culture and creative sector to strengthen international connections, pursue opportunities and partnerships overseas, and contribute to Scotland's cultural, social and economic wellbeing through cultural activity.
13. There are also national strategies for [Museums and Galleries](#), the [Historic Environment](#), and [libraries](#).

14. The submission from the FST asked that the Scottish Government:

“Establish a sector-wide development plan, tying in infrastructure investment, support for touring, audience development, and workforce training with existing frameworks such as the Culture Strategy, and ensure this strategic direction actively underpins and informs decision-making across Creative Scotland, the National Performing Companies, local authorities, and other portfolios.”

15. SCAN’s submission made a similar request.

Outcomes

16. Under the previous National Performance Framework, there was an outcome for culture, “We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely” and under this outcome, were four indicators covering attendance and participation in culture, economic growth, and employment in the sector.

17. The Scottish Government is in the process of refreshing the NPF (for more information on this process, see a SPICe blog [What’s Changing in Scotland’s National Performance Framework and Why It Matters](#)).

18. The National Partnership for Culture’s final report (2022) argued that the measures under the previous NPF were “relatively narrow quantitative indicators, which are being used to measure a largely qualitative outcome”. The NPC recommended “a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, which seek to evidence tangible and meaningful change” cultural outcomes. It also said:

“The Scottish Government should commit to undertaking a meaningful evaluation of the Culture Strategy for Scotland and the extent to which the Strategy has produced change.

“The Culture Strategy did not set out a timeframe for the achievement of its aims and aspirations nor clear outcomes against which the impact or effectiveness of the Strategy can be assessed.”

19. It remains unclear how the Scottish Government intends to assess the success of the Culture Strategy 2020. Nevertheless, the broad areas of outcomes for culture and the arts can be inferred through its aims and the aims and outcomes of other sector-level strategies.

20. The Culture Strategy included a guiding principle of culture being valued intrinsically. It also highlights:

- Supporting a diverse sector and to support the cultural workforce
- Supporting joined up policy making and delivery; having “culture as a central consideration across all policy areas” and thereby realising outcomes across a number of areas, including: health and wellbeing; and “cultural, social, economic and environmental prosperity”

- Culture being part of every community; essential to our lives and wellbeing, the strategy also references a rights-based approach¹.

21. The International Culture Strategy explicitly set out three outcomes:

- An innovative, more sustainable and economically stronger culture and creative sector.
- An internationally connected and diverse culture and creative sector that contributes positively to people and communities.
- An enhanced international reputation for culture and creativity including Scotland's response to global challenges.

22. [Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy](#) includes 10 outcomes over three strands. These can be summarised:

- Connection:
Museums and galleries improve inclusion, health and wellbeing, lifelong learning, and community connection by engaging diverse audiences and supporting local cultural life.
- Resilience:
Museums and galleries strengthen their long-term sustainability through sound financial management, climate action, and collaboration within and beyond the sector.
- Workforce:
Museums and galleries develop a diverse and skilled workforce by promoting Fair Work, widening participation, and supporting workforce development and leadership.

23. Taken together, the three strategies highlighted above present a vision for the culture sectors as inclusive, sustainable and connected that contribute to social wellbeing, economic and environmental outcomes, support a skilled and diverse workforce, and strengthens Scotland's communities and international relationships.

Scottish Household Survey

24. The Scottish Household Survey asks questions on culture, including on attendance and participation in cultural events and activities. The questions ask whether the respondent has done ... in the past twelve months. The latest available data is from the 2023 SHS. Data from the 2025 SHS is due to be published in October.

¹ Particularly Article 27.1 of the [UDHR](#): 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.'

SHS: Cultural Attendance (%)

	2018	2019	2022	2023
Any (excluding cinema) in the past 12 months	74	74	65	69
Any (including cinema) in the past 12 months	81	81	74	76
Would like to attend cultural events/visit cultural places more	n/a	51	52	40

SHS: Cultural Participation (%)

	2018	2019	2022	2023
Any (excluding reading)	53	52	51	50
Any (including reading)	76	75	75	74
Would like to participate in cultural activities more	n/a	39	31	23

25. Attendance and participation were on the whole lower in 2023 than prior to the pandemic, but showed improvement compared 2022. There also appears to have been a drop in the appetite to attend or participate more.
26. There are differences in responses for different demographic groups. Around 30% of respondents in the 2023 SHS were disabled. The gap in cultural attendance (including cinema) was 22ppts (disabled: 60%, non-disabled 82%); however the gap in cultural participation (both including and excluding reading) was 4ppts.
27. There is a clear relationship between both attendance and participation and area-level deprivation and income levels. In the gap between cultural attendance in the fifth most deprived areas (in SIMD) compared to the fifth least deprived areas was 26ppts (excluding cinema) and 21 ppts (including cinema). For participation, the gaps were 21ppts (excluding reading) and 22ppts (including reading). Similar patterns can be seen looking at participation and attendance across net income bands.

Potential issues to explore:

28. Members may wish to explore with the panels:

- The extent to which Scotland's cultural strategies provide a clear framework for prioritisation, investment decisions and the measurement of success across the sector.
- The role of culture in contributing to wider outcomes, including health and wellbeing, education, community empowerment, economic development and international engagement.

- Patterns of cultural participation and engagement across different communities, and ensuring that everyone can access and participate in arts and culture.

Programme for Government

29. [The recent Programme for Government \(PfG\)](#) was published on 1 September 2026. This set out what the Scottish Government wants to achieve before the next Scottish Parliament election in 2031.
30. In relation to culture policy, the PfG included:
- In addition to increasing the culture budget by £100m by 2028-29, relative to 2022-23, the Government will provide a further £50m funding by the end of the Parliament.
 - expand opportunities for cultural participation, including introducing a Youth Culture Pass, and creative career paths.
 - design and deliver a National Performing Company for Traditional Music.
 - pilot a Scottish Artists Minimum Income “alongside delivering all our other commitments to the sector”.
31. For the current parliamentary year, the Programme for Government committed to establishing Screen Scotland as a distinct organisation separate from Creative Scotland, supporting the refurbishment and reopening of the People's Palace and Winter Gardens, making the Expanded Festivals Fund permanent, engaging with the BBC Charter renewal process, and working with partners to explore options for the reinstatement of the Mackintosh Building. It also signals plans to reduce the number of public bodies as part of wider public sector reform.

Potential issues to explore:

32. Members may wish to explore with the panels:
- The panels’ views on the impact that the Programme for Government commitments will have to support a sector to flourish.

Funding for culture

33. Public funding for culture and the arts is split between spending by the Scottish Government and its agencies and local government. There is also funding available from the National Lottery, via distributing bodies, such as Creative Scotland as well as philanthropy and earned income from sales of tickets, memberships etc.

Scottish Government funding

34. The Scottish Government [published the budget for 2026-27 on 13 January 2025](#). In relation to arts and culture, a key message of the Government’s budget

document was, “[the Scottish Government has] honoured our commitment to the culture sector with an increase of over £70 million compared to 2023-24, progressing well towards our commitment of a £100 million per year increase by 2028-29.” As noted above, the Government plans to increase culture funding by a further £50 million by the end of the Parliament.

35. The budget for 2026-27 was passed prior to the election and the relevant portfolio was Constitution, External Affairs and Culture.
36. In 2026-27, the overall budgets in the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture portfolio rose compared to 2025-26. The budget for 2026-27 in this portfolio totalled £354.5m in resource (day to day expenditure) and £43.0m in capital. Compared to the 2025-26 budget resource has increased by £33.2m and capital by £8.5m. Compared to the 2025-26 ABR, resource increased by £29.3. The Scottish Government is structured in 4 levels. Level 1 is at the level of a Cabinet Secretary’s portfolio, and levels 2, 3 and 4 provide increasing detail of this spend.
37. The Arts and Culture Level 2 line contains funding for Creative Scotland, the national collections, the National Performing Companies and others. These areas of spend are looking at in more detail below. Overall, the spending plans for this level 2 in the 2026-27 budget were:

Arts and Culture (£m)

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Budget
Resource	205.3	227.3
Capital	20.5	27.0

38. Much of the increase in budgets in this area can be linked to the ongoing increase in funding for the arts. The majority of the additional funding for arts and culture over the past years has been put into Creative Scotland and its multi-year funding – this increased by £20 million in 2026-27 compared to the 2025-26 budget.
39. The previous committee highlighted concerns from stakeholders that the additional money is not being optimally spread across the sector. MGS’ submission to the Committee for this week suggested that museums are under significant pressure and “it is time that Scotland’s museums and galleries receive their fair share”.

Spending review

40. Along with the 2026-27 Budget, the Government also published a spending review covering 2026-27 (the current budget) and indicative figures for 2027-28 and 2028-29. The figures are presented at Level 2 and presented as the sum of

resource, capital and financial transactions. At the Level 1 data (i.e. portfolio level) this data is disaggregated by resource, capital and Financial Transactions. The table below is replicated from the [Government's 2026 Spending Review](#).

Constitution, External Affairs & Culture Spending Plans (Level 2)

Constitution, External Affairs & Culture Spending Plans (Level 2)

Level 2	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Arts and Culture	254.3	301.8	290.2
External Affairs	34.1	31.9	31.6
Historic Environment and Architecture	68.8	68.8	68.8
National Records of Scotland	40.4	43.4	47.3
Total Constitution, External Affairs and Culture	397.5	445.9	437.8
<i>of which</i>			
Total Fiscal Resource	354.5	357.6	390.4
<i>of which Programme Costs</i>	337.6	340.9	374
<i>of which Operating Costs</i>	16.9	16.7	16.4
Capital	43	88.3	47.4
Financial Transactions (FTs)	–	–	–

41. The Spending review set out the priority areas for this period. It said:

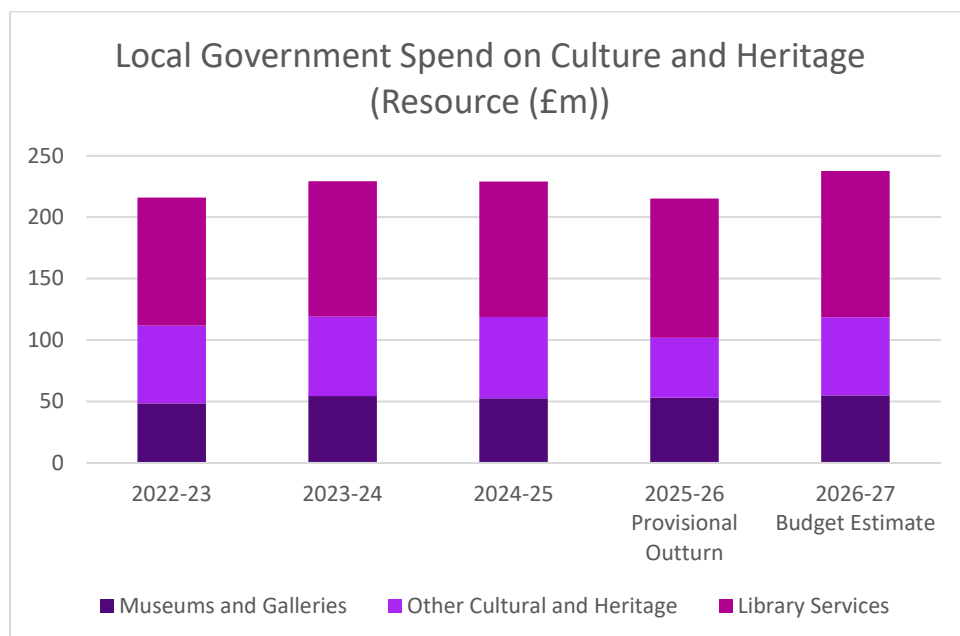
“Cultural delivery will expand through multi-year funding, sector innovation, heritage development and community arts. International development work will continue across health, education and equalities with partner countries, alongside humanitarian response.

“The portfolio is embedding fiscal sustainability through sector-wide collaboration and organisational reform. Public bodies are developing a prioritised pipeline of shared capital investment solutions, including joint storage projects.”

42. In relation to the path to increasing funding for the arts by £100m by 2028-29, Members will note that the spending plans indicate, at a portfolio level, a £3.1m increase (0.9% year-on-year) in resource funding next year followed by a further £32.8m increase (9.2% year-on-year) in 2028-29.

Local government spend

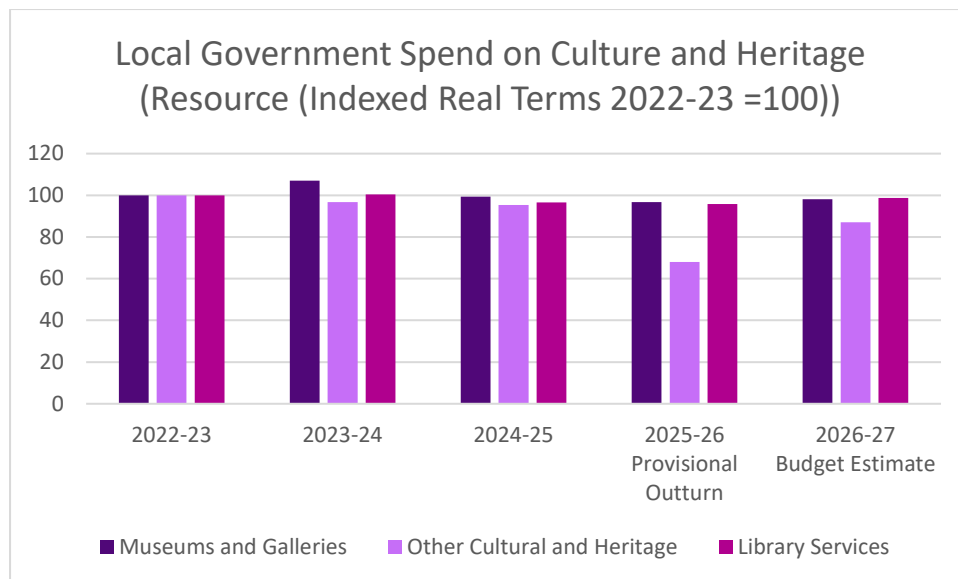
43. The Scottish Government publishes data on local authorities spend on a variety of areas, including culture and heritage. The chart below shows the net resource² spend (and planned spend for 2026-27) in this area under the categories, Museums and Galleries, Other Cultural and Heritage, and Libraries.



44. Library Services expenditure is consistently the largest spending category and is to increase from £104 million in 2022-23 to a budgeted £119 million in 2026-27. Museums and Galleries spending is relatively stable across the period, rising from £48 million to a planned £55 million in the period. Spending on Other Cultural and Heritage activities remained broadly stable until 2024-25, before falling to £49 million in the 2025-26 provisional outturn and returning to £64 million in the 2026-27 budget estimate.

45. The following chart presents the same data in real terms and indexed to 2022-23 = 100 under each of the three areas of spend. This means that each of the years from 2023-24 to 2026-27 shows spend as a percentage the 2022-23 funding in real terms.

² The data is net of any ringfenced grants or earned income.



46. In real terms, spend on Library Services has remained broadly stable throughout the period, while Museums and Galleries real terms spending is estimated to be slightly below its 2022-23 level by 2026-27. Other Cultural and Heritage spending shows a more marked decline, reducing by 32% in real terms in 2025-26 compared to 2022-23 before partially recovering in spending plans for 2026-27.

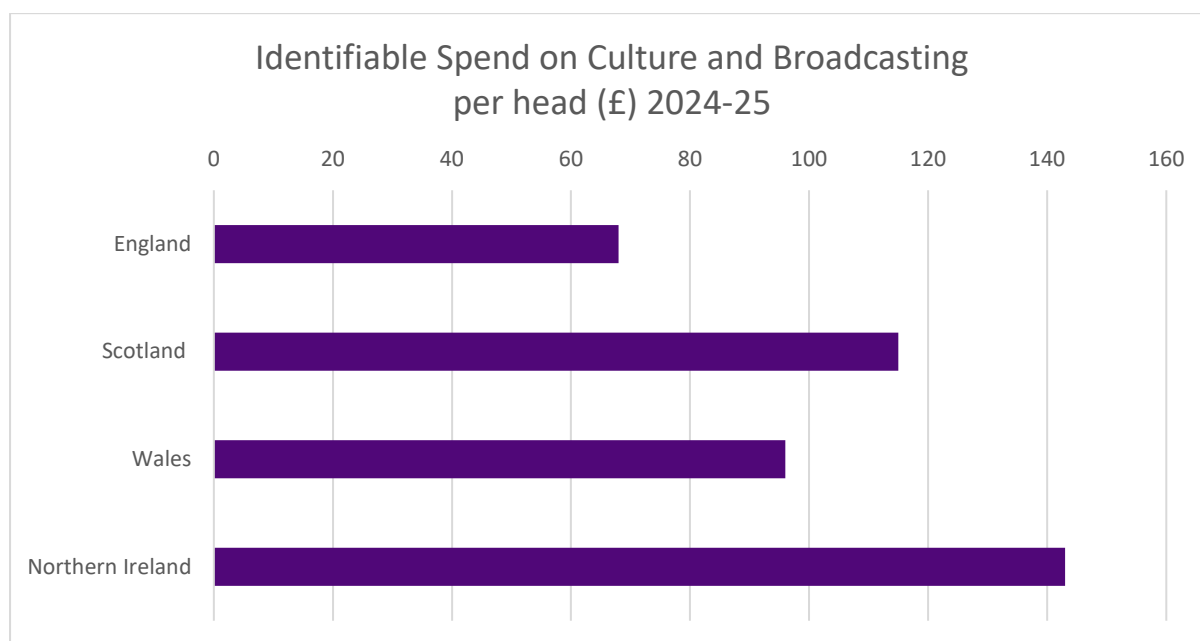
Local authorities' duties and Public Sector Reform

47. There are a range of duties on local authorities in relation to cultural provision in their areas. The Public Libraries Act 1887 requires local authorities to “manage, regulate and control all libraries or museums or galleries”, and creates restrictions as to how they may charge for these facilities.
48. Section 14 (1) of the Local Government and Planning Act 1982 required the then district and island councils to “ensure that there is an adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities”. This duty of ‘adequate provision’ was transferred to the new unitary authorities under Schedule 13 of the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994. The 1994 Act also confirmed local authorities’ power to provide grants or loans to cultural organisations based outside their areas and to “make such contribution as will support and promote music theatre, dance, opera, visual art or other art forms and museums and galleries”.
49. The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 created duties affecting local authorities’ cultural activities, specifically the introduction of:
- a duty to achieve Best Value
 - a duty to initiate and facilitate community planning, and
 - the power to advance community well-being in the context of community planning.

50. The Scottish Government is planning on reform of the structure of local government.

Comparison across the UK

51. It is possible to get comparative data on spend by government function across the UK. The [Country and Regional Analysis](#) estimates for the allocation of identifiable expenditure that benefits the regions and nations of the United Kingdom. This data is also split by Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG). The data provides estimates of expenditure on 'Cultural services' and 'Broadcasting and publishing services' which covers most of the arts, culture and heritage sectors. The chart below shows the per head spend for each nation in 2024-25 for Culture and Broadcasting³.



Potential issues to explore:

52. Members may wish to explore with the panels:

- The extent to which recent increases in public funding for culture have addressed the most significant financial pressures facing cultural organisations, museums and galleries, and artists.
- The respective roles and coherence of Scottish Government funding, local authority expenditure and other funding sources (including earned income and philanthropy) in supporting a sustainable and resilient cultural sector across Scotland.

³ Derived using the sum of COFOG codes '8.2 Cultural services' and '8.3 Broadcasting and publishing services'.

Funding streams

53. While the previous sections focus on overall levels of public expenditure, organisations and individuals experience that spending through a range of specific funding programmes and mechanisms.
54. Some organisations are directly funded by the Scottish Government, such as the National Collections and the National Performing Companies along with a range of other bodies, such as the V & A in Dundee.

Creative Scotland

55. Creative Scotland has a range of funding streams:
 - Multi-Year Funding
 - Open Funds for both organisations
 - A collection of targeted programmes for specific policy objectives (touring, youth music, community-level participation etc.)
56. Creative Scotland's Multi-Year Funding (MYF) Programme provides longer-term financial support to cultural and creative organisations, covering the period April 2025 to March 2028. The MYF programme significantly expanded the number of organisations receiving regular support from 119 under the previous Regularly Funded Organisations programme to 262 organisations in 2026-27. The total budget for MYF in the current financial year is £72 million.
57. The submissions from the FST and SCAN asked that the Scottish Government protect funding to MYF and provide a timeline for regular funding after the current three-year MYF period ends in 2028.
58. Creative Scotland is a distributor of National Lottery funds. Lottery funding supports the open funds for both individuals and organisations. The Open Fund for Organisations is mainly lottery funded and offers funding of between £1,000 and £100,000 for projects or programmes of activity lasting up to 18 months. The Open Fund for Individuals offers funding of between £500 and £50,000 and is to support creative activity from individual artists, producers and other creative professionals in Scotland and will support a period of research, development and/or delivery of creative activity for up to 24 months. Creative Scotland estimates that a total of £15 million of lottery funding will support the open funds in 2026-27.
59. Culture Counts' submission argued for the Scottish Government to provide additional funding to the Open Funds.
60. Creative Scotland funds the Culture Collective and Place Partnerships in partnership with local authorities and others. The [Culture Collective](#) programme supports network of practitioners, organisations and communities to work collaboratively to shape the cultural life of their local areas. The second cohort of Culture Collective recipients were announced in May 2026; 23 collectives

were awarded over £5 million. This fund is administered by Creative Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. [Place Partnerships](#) is Creative Scotland's place-based development programme, through which the organisation works with local authorities, cultural trusts and other local partners to support cultural development and creative capacity within specific areas.

61. Creative Scotland also administers a new festivals fund on behalf of the Government [This year Creative Scotland awarded a total of £5.7 million to 55 festivals across Scotland](#), including the St Magnus Festival.
62. [Creative Scotland has a touring fund for theatre and dance](#), to support tours across Scotland.
63. Creative Scotland has said it will explore the viability of opening a dedicated Capital fund in the future. This year, Creative Scotland will begin an assessment of infrastructure needs across the sector which is preparatory to a future “Capital Plan”. The FST’s submission noted the “lack of capital investment for venues” and said that this impacts negatively on the sector.

Museums Galleries Scotland

64. MGS operates a small suite of funds centred on organisational sustainability, collections care, capital maintenance, skills development and public engagement (e.g. the [Museum Development Fund](#)).
65. MGS also administers the [Museum Futures Programme](#) on behalf of the Scottish Government which was introduced last year as part of the expanded funding for culture and the arts. This £4 million programme is focused on collaboration, innovation, and organisational sustainability. The funding strands of this programme are:
 - Museum Futures Innovation Fund: up to £250,000 for projects that improve a museum's long-term financial position.
 - Museum Futures Unlocking Potential Fund: up to £100,000 to address barriers preventing strategic development.
 - Skills Development Bursaries and Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Exchange Bursaries to support professional development and learning between museums.
66. MGS’ submission asked that the Museum Futures programme be allocated funded on a longer-term basis. MGS also argued for a dedicated capital fund for museums and galleries.

Potential issues to explore:

67. Members may wish to explore with the panels:

- Whether the current mix of funding streams provides coherent support across the cultural ecosystem, including major organisations, museums, community initiatives, festivals, touring activity and individual artists.
- The relative contribution of different funding models, including directly funded organisations, multi-year funding, open project funding and targeted programmes, in supporting the Scottish Government's strategic objectives for culture.
- The administrative costs of applying for grants.

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Date: 23/09/2026

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ANNEXE: Session 6 budget scrutiny

In Session 6, the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee took a cumulative approach to budget scrutiny, focusing on culture spending.

[In its final pre-Budget scrutiny report 2026-27](#), the Committee identified several recurring themes throughout the Session, which continued to feature in evidence received during 2026-27. These included—

- The ongoing financial context for the culture and heritage sector, and the impact and distribution of additional funding provided by the Scottish Government
- Multi-year funding
- Strategic approaches to funding decisions
- Mainstreaming and cross-portfolio funding
- Alternative funding models

The sections below summarise the Committee's key findings and recommendations from its prebudget scrutiny 2026-27. References to the Scottish Government's position are drawn from its [second, more detailed response to the report](#).

Financial pressures

The Committee welcomed the Scottish Government's commitment to increase culture funding by £100 million by 2028-29, a sentiment that was widely echoed in the evidence received.

The Committee noted concerns that, despite this investment, the culture and heritage sector continues to face financial challenges from long-term budget pressures and rising operating costs, including employment costs such as employer National Insurance contributions, public sector pay policy and Fair Work commitments, which may reduce the impact of additional funding.

The Scottish Government stated that it is on track to meet its commitment to increase funding for culture.

Multi-year funding for directly funded organisations

Throughout Session 6, the Committee highlighted delays in delivering the Scottish Government's commitment to introduce multi-year funding settlements for directly funded organisations and sought an explanation for the slow progress.

The Scottish Government attributed delays in part to uncertainty around UK Government spending plans before the Spending Review in 2025. It continued—

“The Cabinet Secretary has recently discussed the potential of multi-year funding with a number of sector organisations including Museums Galleries

Scotland and our National Performing Companies with the aim of providing what assurances he can on future funding pending the outcome of the current budget process.”

Funding for infrastructure

The Committee sought an update on proposals for a Creative Scotland-managed capital programme in response to concerns about cultural infrastructure and maintenance pressures. The Scottish Government stated it would explore avenues to bringing capital investment into the culture and creative sector. It also said:

“Over the course of the 2026-30 Spending Review period, the [culture and external affairs] portfolio will see a [capital budget] allocation of almost £220 million. This will ensure the ongoing maintenance and support of our essential cultural assets.”

Creative Scotland Multi-Year Funding

The Committee welcomed the expansion of Creative Scotland’s [Multi-Year Funding Programme](#) but questioned whether support had been spread too widely, highlighting the need to balance support for more organisations with adequate funding for each. It also sought assurance on how the programme’s impact and outcomes would be assessed and queried whether the application process is overly resource intensive.

In regard to monitoring and reporting in the Multi-Year Funding Programme [Creative Scotland’s response](#) stated:

“As outlined in the MYF Guidance and funding agreements, we ask organisations to submit plans and updates to ensure we have accurate information on the activity being delivered, track progress and understand the impact their work is having.”

Strategic approaches to funding decisions

The Committee highlighted concerns about a lack of strategic clarity in cultural funding decisions. It asked the Scottish Government to detail its progress towards adopting a strategic approach to the delivery of funding for the culture sector over Session 6. The Scottish Government said:

“The Scottish Government has increased multi-year funding to the sector through Creative Scotland meaning that more organisations than ever before enjoy the financial security that enables them to focus on their creative output and engagement and plan over longer timescales. After just six months, the £4 million Museum Futures Programme is already demonstrating real promise in shifting mindsets and approaches across the sector. This real-time, evidence based ‘test and learn’ approach is crucial to shaping effective strategic plans for the sector’s future. Together with the learning taken from other major initiatives such as the Festivals Strategic Partnership and the Creative Scotland Review, this work will play an important role in informing a coherent, long term strategic direction for culture in Scotland. The Scottish

Government is supportive of multi-year funding in principle as evidenced by the Fairer Funding Pilot which gives selected organisations a commitment to two years of funding and early grant notification in 2025-26 and 2026-27. Sistema Scotland and the Youth Music Initiative are part of this pilot and an evaluation of this approach is underway.”

Mainstreaming and cross-portfolio funding

A recurring theme in the Committee's scrutiny during Session 6 was the need to mainstream culture across government portfolios. The Committee noted limited progress and sought an update on cross-portfolio working and its outcomes. The Scottish Government stated:

“The Scottish Government engages across policy areas to mainstream culture in policy making. Mainstreaming work is delivered using existing resources. Given current and ongoing fiscal challenges and the need for the Scottish Government to remain flexible when managing budgets across portfolios, it is not expected to result in any immediate joint funding for additional programmes. Ultimately, allocations in other portfolios are not for the Culture Secretary to decide, however the Cabinet Secretary and culture officials continue to advocate for culture in the cross-policy space and to demonstrate the impact that culture has and can have across government.”

Alternative funding models

In light of the challenging fiscal environment, the committee highlighted an “urgent need to progress additional funding models”.

The Government’s response suggested that after scoping a “percentage for the arts” scheme, whereby large public capital projects would include funding for local cultural assets, it would not proceed with the scheme. The Government highlighted funding [Creative Communities](#) and the Culture Collective, which it said help meet the aims envisaged for a percentage for the arts scheme.

The Government also said:

“The Scottish Government is also continuing to work with the sector’s public bodies around optimising operating models, for example, the revised draft business model and Framework Document for Historic Environment Scotland to drive increased commercial income and reduce Grant in Aid over time, and increasing collaboration to deliver shared outcomes for the sector, for example, the partnership project between National Galleries Scotland and National Museums Scotland at the Artworks, Granton.”