

**CONSTITUTION, EUROPE, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2023, Session 6**

**8 June 2023**

**Culture in Communities**

1. The Committee is undertaking an inquiry focused on the idea of a ‘place-based approach’ to culture within communities in Scotland, with the aim of understanding good practice and barriers to place-based cultural policy.
2. The [call for views](#) on this inquiry opened on Friday 17 February and closed on Friday 7 April. It received 57 submissions which are available to view [online](#). The themes arising from these submissions were [summarised by SPICe](#).
3. At this meeting, the Committee will take evidence from—
  - Alastair Evans, Interim Director, Strategy and Planning, Creative Scotland; and
  - Karen Dick, Head of Place, Partnerships & Communities, Creative Scotland.
4. The following papers are attached—
  - Annexe A: SPICe briefing
  - Annexe B: Written submission from Creative Scotland.

**CEEAC Committee Clerks  
June 2023**

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# Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

**8 June 2023**

## Culture in communities

### Introduction

This will be the sixth meeting during which the Committee will take evidence on its inquiry on culture in Scotland's local communities.

The Committee undertook a call for views earlier this year and [responses can be found online](#). On [20 April](#), the Committee took evidence from representatives from the local authority/ALEO sector, on [27 April](#), the Committee heard from academics and the National Performing Companies, and on [4 May](#) the Committee took evidence from a panel of arts and cultural organisations and officials from Creative Scotland who work on the Culture Collective programme. Evidence was also taken on [11 May](#) from organisations working with volunteers, and on [18 May](#) from the planning sector.

Last week the Committee visited organisations in Edinburgh on the first of three planned visits to local communities around the country. The Committee will also visit Dumfries and Orkney.

This week the Committee will take evidence from Creative Scotland on their role in supporting community-based culture organisations. Creative Scotland have provided the Committee with a [written submission](#) which focusses on the themes of: the role that cultural organisations play in civic society; place-based culture; and partnership working, especially with local authorities.

### Local cultural infrastructure

#### Importance of local facilities

Access to spaces locally has been a recurring theme of the Committee's work. Taking a broad view of culture and cultural activities means thinking of cultural assets broadly as well. This could be local community halls, theatres, cinemas, concert halls, schools, libraries or pubs. These assets may be the responsibility of

the local authority or may be owned by the third sector (e.g., churches or clubs), communities or privately.

On [27 April](#) Professor Stevenson argued that there is an imbalance in the attention given to different cultural assets. He noted that the closure of the Filmhouse in Edinburgh had been met with a public response, whereas community centres close without similar “anguish” being displayed. He suggested that in a cultural ecosystem, more attention should be given to community assets. He said—

“The danger is that when we consider what works, we are not also looking at what works but we are ignoring—the places that are shutting. A better idea is to give people just a little—to allow them a little time and a little resource to do things within existing spaces. Also, we need to understand that any space can be a cultural space. That will not always require significant investment, but it does require that we value the things that people are already doing.” (Col 8)

Community Leisure UK’s submission also noted that maintaining community assets can be costly. It said—

“Across the local public culture sector, the age and condition of some cultural venues and facilities and associated maintenance costs also require consideration, with investment needed into these venues, particularly reflecting the role of the sector to support progress towards net zero. Where there are listed buildings, planning permission and investment for decarbonisation proves even more challenging.”

Steve Byrne from Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland told the Committee that in one local authority where he worked, 133 community spaces are potentially being considered to be “divested from its estate”. ([4 May, col 16](#)) The National Performing Companies told the Committee that access to spaces where they could perform was key to where they could tour in Scotland. The panel on 11 May noted that rationalisation of the church estate created uncertainty in relation to access to spaces for groups to meet.

Professor Miles gave evidence to a 2018 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee on the social impact of participation in culture and sport. [His succinct submission to that inquiry](#) made a number of suggestions and comments based on the UEP that are relevant to the present inquiry. One suggestion was:

“Location is an important factor in participation levels. Our research has demonstrated that libraries with the highest number of users typically have good connectivity to the public transport network and are close to other local participation assets such as shops.”

Professor Miles told the Committee on [27 April](#), “if you are looking for practical ways of encouraging people to engage with different types of culture, and if that is thought to be a valuable thing to do, you need to put culture, or interventions, in the places that people normally inhabit—the places of their everyday engagement. People have done that: arts organisers have put work in shopping centres and so on.” (Col 7)

Jemma Neville from Creative Lives told the Committee that communities could benefit from a reimagining of civic spaces and the creative commons and better using the range of community assets, including parks and pubs as well as libraries and schools, for example. ([11 May, col 2](#))

The Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland's submission linked the idea of 20-minute neighbourhoods, it said—

“The 20 minute neighbourhood concept focuses on providing residents with easy access to essential amenities and services within a 20 minute walk or cycle from their homes. Dense, walkable town centres will enhance vibrancy and create opportunities for the arts, culture and creative industries but equally, ensuring local communities have access to cultural amenities and activities means that residents will not have to travel far for cultural experiences, thus reinforcing the 20 minute neighbourhood concept.”

The Scottish Library and Information Council said—

“For many members of the public, local libraries are the first place they experience and engage in a range of cultural experiences. The success of the delivery of programmes depends on trained staff or ability to commission someone to deliver a programme. Many programmes which run in public libraries are free to access and may be delivered by a third party i.e., not library staff but the venue being used as a point of access for a third party.

“Libraries are trusted safe spaces in communities hence why they are ideally placed to host a range of cultural activity and programmes.”

The Committee has heard that one barrier to participating or attending events or activities is a lack of public transport particularly in rural areas.

The written submission from Creative Scotland highlighted the importance of community spaces, stating that –

“Art and creativity improve our communities, support regeneration, provide vital hubs and bring people together. Shared creative spaces can facilitate greater social inclusion while cultural events can foster pride in the places we live. Art and creativity have a transformative and empowering effect. They boost confidence and support people to participate in their wider communities, to take a role in decision-making and to change the society they live in.”

## Community asset transfer

One way of maintaining community assets is to bring them into community ownership. There is a trend of more assets being brought into community ownership in Scotland. Volunteer Scotland's submission noted that managing these assets is a challenge. Its submission stated—

“The Scottish Government is committed to community ownership of such places and spaces where volunteer-led cultural activity takes place. This is demonstrated through ambitions related to Community Wealth Building which

holds the ‘socially just use of land and property’ as a core pillar. However, the community groups that seek to own and sustainably manage community spaces are finding the level of responsibility challenging.”

Sarah Latto from Volunteer Scotland expanded on this point during the 11 May evidence session. She said that some people felt that communities were forced into taking on the responsibilities and liabilities associated, otherwise the assets could be lost to the community.

## How do we know what exists?

One of the actions in the Culture Strategy for Scotland was to “work with Creative Scotland to map local authority support for culture and to explore future models of collaboration between national and local bodies”. This does not appear to have been completed and is not mentioned as part of the written submission from Creative Scotland to this inquiry.

Some local authorities have undertaken cultural mapping exercises, for example, [The City of Edinburgh](#).

Professor Stevenson told the Committee that “we do not have a good data set for all the assets and spaces” and Professor Miles said that during a research project his team collected its own data on assets because “official sources were so inaccurate and did not encompass the wider of definition of culture we use”. ([27 April, Cols 13-14](#))

As noted in a previous SPICe briefing paper, the Scottish Household Survey provides data on the extent to which respondents agree to the statements “this is a neighbourhood where there are welcoming places and opportunities to meet new people” and “this is a neighbourhood where there are places where people can meet up and socialise”. This can provide a national picture of people’s opinions of the assets in their neighbourhoods.

In the absence of clear datasets of existing assets, how planning and regeneration activities support the creation and protection of cultural assets is unclear. PAS’ submission said that its work to support community-led plans includes determining what physical assets and cultural activities exist. It said—

“Through this process, people often discover under-utilised assets (e.g., a hall, a gathering space, a playing field etc.) that, with co-ordination and a willingness to cooperate, can then be brought into use to benefit the community’s cultural life. It’s also an opportunity to avoid duplication and to encourage greater partnership working at the local level (e.g., local groups may join forces to attract funding and investment).”

Creative Scotland’s submission explained that its “funding and development work has supported artists, creative and community organisations to map, research and identify the gaps and opportunities for culture in their area.”

The national Culture Strategy included an action for the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland to “map local authority support for culture and to explore future

models of collaboration between national and local bodies”. While Creative Scotland’s submission indicated that in areas where the Place Partnership programme is active there had been mapping exercises, it is not clear whether this has been progressed nationally.

## **Value and contribution of volunteer networks**

A theme from the committee’s submissions was the value of committed volunteers in organising and maintaining the cultural scenes in their local communities. This was both set out explicitly and implicitly through respondents describing the work that they do in their communities. Creative Lives’ additional submission stated, “volunteer-led, community-based creative groups exist in every corner of Scotland, but many may operate below the radar.”

The submission from Volunteer Scotland echoed this and said, “when considering the availability and variety of cultural activities in local communities, it is important to acknowledge that the vast majority of such activity is dependent on the efforts of volunteers.” Volunteers cover a wide number of roles in community based creative activities, including organising and management. Volunteer Scotland’s submission noted that in a challenging financial climate these roles can bring their own stresses.

On [11 May](#) the Committee heard from witnesses about the vital importance of volunteers to arts organisations, and the challenges to supporting them appropriately. Alison Reeves of Making Music noted that –

“In working with our members, most of our role is in supporting volunteer committees to play their role well. That includes supporting good governance, looking after finances, applying for orchestra tax relief and gift aid and providing the infrastructure for the things that volunteer committee members need to do. We do that for our members. They are only 255 groups and they have to pay for that service. Those are things that all volunteers who lead cultural activity would benefit from.” (Col 15-16)

Sarah Latto from Volunteer Scotland picked up on a similar point stating that –

“volunteering is unpaid but it is not free. Resources are required to support it, and the volunteer charter sets out the principles for appropriate and sustainable volunteering. What is missing within that, however, is something about building capacity and an acknowledgement that volunteers are, more often than not, driven by their passion for a particular cultural activity. They are not necessarily driven by the fact that they have in their professional life certain skills that they want to bring to a particular role. There is a need to join the dots and to help people to do things such as their OSCR returns—if the organisation is a registered charity—which can be challenging. I hope to see Creative Scotland taking on a bigger role in acknowledgement of the capacity that is required in order for volunteers to support community-based cultural activity.” (Col 17)

Other submissions, for example from Moray Council, noted that if there is a lack of volunteers, this can impact on activities taking place. Volunteer Scotland's submission stated—

“Our research exploring the impact of the cost of living crisis on volunteering also explored the reasons why many organisations are experiencing volunteer shortages. It found that many individuals are experiencing practical barriers to volunteering, such as the need to work longer hours or not being able to afford travel expenses, as well as worsening mental health and wellbeing or increased apathy in the face of the current perceived state of ‘permacrisis’.”

Creative Scotland's submission highlighted the Place Partnership Programme. It said that this is designed to “encourage and support local partners to work together with their creative communities and Creative Scotland”. It continued—

“The programme supports local groups to come together to spark ideas promote collaborative working, build capacity and ultimately deliver creative activity which responds to the distinct opportunities and challenges within different localities.”

## **Funding for community-based activities**

Creative Lives additional submission set out the findings of a survey of people involved in community and volunteer-led creative activity. Some of the challenges included increasing costs and access to venues. It also noted that for these groups a very small amount of money can make a significant difference and set out some examples of the work funded through a “micro-grant” scheme.

On [27 April](#), Professor Stevenson noted that the current funding landscape was complex, and that it was very hard work for community groups to apply for the required funding from multiple different places. He also explained that funding for projects was easier to find than funding for the essential overheads of community spaces and organisations. Professor Miles noted that there was a need to support volunteers to access funding opportunities and to successfully apply for what is available.

Professor Stevenson suggested that there should be better clarity about who is funding what and whether national and local funding streams could have different purposes. He indicated that a key issue is how overheads are met and he said that the “biggest challenge that we face is the persistent and pernicious obsession with short-term funding”. ([Col 19](#))

The Committee received a submission from Craignish Village Hall and this highlighted the challenges in managing a venue and seeking public funding with limited resources. Craignish Village Hall also noted that the annual cycle of funding from Creative Scotland is also a challenge.

One suggestion that the committee has heard several times is that participative creative work be considered and funded separately from professional arts which are largely intended to be consumed by audiences. Professor David Stevenson suggested that creative and cultural activities could be considered more as we do

sport, where the policy aims and interventions to support participatory and community-level sport are not the same as those to support high level or professional sport. The Stove Network's submission also suggested that community and participatory arts should have a distinct funding stream.

Jemma Neville from Creative Lives had a differing view; she told the Committee on [11 May](#) that—

“It is a mistake to separate so-called professional creative practice and community-led creative practice, because it is an ecology in which things are inherently linked ... Funding streams in the creative sector work best when there is scope for collaboration and flexibility and when there is no hierarchy.”  
(Col 5)

Creative Scotland's submission recognised the challenges faced by limited resources as well as the importance of small grants to voluntary organisations, stating that –

“While funding for activity is important, it is also crucial to recognise the role of everyday culture in contributing to the lives of communities and to ensure that these activities are also supported, whether through access to spaces or providing advice on running voluntary or grassroots organisations. Small grants can make a big difference for community led organisations. Reducing barriers to accessing spaces, including addressing high rental costs or supporting community asset transfers (with access to revenue funding, not only building costs) can ensure the sustainability of smaller communities and neighbourhoods.”

Creative Scotland reviewed its funding approach prior to the pandemic. Full implementation of a new funding model has been delayed by the pandemic and the uncertainties that have followed. Creative Scotland has said that its future funding approach will:

- Support a broader base of organisations to receive funding regularly
- Place a greater emphasis on managing relationships with creative organisations and individuals
- Ensure that decision-making processes are linked to priorities
- Directly support the development of artists and individual creative practitioners
- Simpler and more transparent processes

Creative Scotland has six funding criteria, one of which is “Engagement”<sup>1</sup>. [Creative Scotland says](#)—

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<sup>1</sup> The other five are: Quality and Ambition; Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability; Fair Work; and International.

“We want to ensure that alongside the work we fund is the opportunity for everyone in Scotland to engage with it, wherever they are. Engaging audiences in activity happens in different ways and in different settings, from cultural buildings and public institutions to smaller scale informal venues, outdoors and even in the home.”

Creative Scotland’s submission also highlighted the National Lottery Awards for All scheme which is a partnership between The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland, sportscotland and Creative Scotland. It said—

“This programme offers funding between £300 and £10,000 to support what matters to people and communities. Creative projects supported through the National Lottery Awards for All programme benefit communities and people across Scotland, demonstrating the big impact of small amounts of funding.”

Jemma Neville from Creative Lives argued that too much focus can be placed on funding. She said—

“I understand why there is scrutiny of funding, but that can unhelpfully overdominate the discussion, because it is a truism that lots of volunteer-led creative groups are largely self-sustaining and not dependent on funding but that they need enabling conditions. The things that might prevent a group from flourishing include, for example, a lack of reliable affordable transport, which has a disproportionate impact on older people and lone women. It can mean that people cannot get out as regularly as their group meets. There is a crisis of social isolation in this country in relation to loneliness and confidence, so Government policy could be better joined up in some areas and across different strands.” ([Col 5](#))

## Understanding participation

During the evidence sessions, the Committee has heard that defining and measuring participation in cultural activities requires a broad understanding of ‘culture’. There has also been an emphasis on recognising the cultural activity that already takes place and is valued within local communities.

On [27 April](#) both Professor Stevenson and Professor Miles provided the Committee with a wide definition of ‘culture’ and challenged traditional views of what community cultural participation may look like. Professor Stevenson told the Committee –

“cultural participation is the way in which we define ourselves both as part of a community and in terms of our differences from other communities—communities that we might share common interests with, but from which there are differences. That means that the various groups and communities need equity of access to resources—time, money or space—in order to be able to pursue the cultural participation that they find meaningful.” (Col 2)

Professor Miles noted –

“The working definition of culture draws heavily on official traditional forms and assumptions about what is valuable in respect of how people participate

culturally. First, we have to understand better what it means to participate culturally in those place-based circumstances.” (Col 3)

These themes were brought out by other witnesses heard by the Committee. On [20 April](#) Billy Garrett stated –

“Co-production, for example, is key. Instead of our forming a view of what people want, where they want it and how they want to access it, we discover that sort of thing in partnership with citizens and communities.” (Col 21)

The written submission from Creative Scotland also echoed this understanding of cultural participation –

“Every community has its own unique culture. It is important to recognise that a lack of established traditional artistic infrastructure does not mean that there is a lack of creative or cultural activity or expression – successful national or centralised initiatives need to understand these individual cultures. It is important that local and national government and national bodies recognise the individual needs and requirements of different communities and places, and of different artforms and creative practices.”

## **The roles of national and local government**

### **Local Authority cultural strategy**

The importance of local authority involvement is a theme that has been picked up in the evidence provided to the Committee over the course of the inquiry. On [20 April](#) the Committee heard from a number of local authorities and ALEOs about their cultural strategy and how they interact with and support community groups. They emphasised the importance of partnership working, the interaction of culture with other policy areas such as health, and the challenges that they were facing in delivering cultural policy.

Kirsty Cumming from Community Leisure UK stated –

“With some of the changes across local authorities, we are seeing that there are not necessarily people with a cultural remit in the local authority. That expertise is lost somewhere. Where there is a culture trust, there is not necessarily a connection to the local authority with the expertise to really understand and embed some of the issues. There is certainly a change in the level of local authority expertise” (Col 9)

Other individuals also highlighted a disconnect between local authority strategy and the support provided to community groups. On [4 May](#) Steve Byrne from Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland noted –

“One thing that does not work and which we have found difficult is our relationship with local councils, in respect of council cultural provision.” (Col 16)

At the same evidence session, Kathryn Welch from Culture Collective noted –

““Disconnect” is the word that is often used here. Obviously, the situation will vary hugely, depending on where you are, who you know and who in your local authority is doing what, but often the local authorities and ALEOs feel like such huge, faceless, corporate organisations that it is hard to get a handle on who is there and how we might form a human relationship in order to make some good stuff happen.”

Even groups with a positive working relationship with their local authority talked about the difficulties that budget cuts have had on support from local authorities to the cultural sector. On [4 May](#) Kresanna Aigner from Findhorn Bay Arts told the Committee –

“We engage with a number of departments in Moray Council, such as the youth, economic development, education and health and social care teams. Those relationships are positive, and the teams engage with us, but there is no money—there is no funding... We need to recognise that not only has there been standstill funding within Creative Scotland, but that is coupled with local authority budget cuts, and with services being picked up by the third sector and the cultural sector. That presents an unprecedented challenge for trusts, foundations and local funding, such as local wind farms and other organisations and businesses that might provide support, and for Creative Scotland. We are all trying to do what should be happening as a basic human right with resources reducing. That really needs to be heard.” (Col 19)

The submission from Creative Scotland provided a number of positive examples of the importance of local authority involvement as a partner in supporting local culture. It also, however, noted the challenges. It stated –

“Local Authorities and Culture/Leisure Trusts are key partners in supporting and developing local culture and creative sectors, and providing access to culture. Local Authorities are required by Act of Parliament to ensure that there is ‘adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities,’ although ‘adequate’ is not defined. The pressure on local authority services due to constrained budgets, rising costs of living and non-statutory nature of some cultural services has seen threats to arts development, as well as library and museum services, and an overall reduction in the provision of grant funding and specialist services, like Arts Development Officers. The reduction in the Arts Development function of Local Authorities, creates barriers and a lack of consistent provision across Scotland. In some areas, creative networks and cultural organisations have capacity to provide the advice, funding, and connection to national opportunities for the creative sector in their area, however, the loss of Arts Development services in Local Authorities can result in significant challenges for national and local government, and national bodies, to work collaboratively for the benefit of communities.”

The Committee may wish to explore with Creative Scotland whether it is feeling additional pressure to support funding and development of local community level activities which might have been supported by local authorities in the past.

## Planning processes and placemaking

Taking placed-based approaches is a key pillar of the Culture Strategy for Scotland. In [2019 the Scottish Government and COSLA agreed to adopt](#) a “Place Principle to help overcome organisational and sectoral boundaries, to encourage better collaboration and community involvement, and improve the impact of combined energy, resources and investment.” Key to this principle is the consideration of the potential of people, physical and natural assets in a place, understanding how these interact, and how planning policy can work within this existing framework to improve outcomes.

On [27 April](#) Professor David Stevenson stressed that cultural practice and participation is not homogenous. He said to the Committee—

“Part of the challenge for good cultural policy is that good place-based cultural policy should be responsive to different groups, communities, people and places, so it is vital that it represents the differences that people express in that way. We all experience culture and we all want to participate in and express our cultures. However, there are differences. When we are faced with limited resources and there are discussions about how and on what we spend money and use the spaces that we make available, there are choices to be made. Part of the difficulty can be that we fall into thinking that there is a one-size-fits-all model and that we can invite people into a universal shared culture. Cultural participation is something that we all share, but meaningful cultural participation can look very different for different groups and communities of people.” (Col 2)

Community planning partnerships are intended to enable public bodies to work together along with local communities to design and deliver better services. The Committee heard on 20 April that there was a mix of experience in relation to how and whether culture policy and the interests of the creative sectors was represented at the CPP level. Kirsty Cumming from CLUK said—

“It is not about our members being on community planning partnerships per se but about a mechanism for a cultural voice locally. ... For me, it is about having somebody who can give a representative opinion on behalf of the community, as the voice of culture—not necessarily one organisation or one service, but a mechanism through which people can feed into and take things back from those opportunities.” ([20 April 2023, col 27](#))

The Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland’s submission highlighted the importance of [Local Place Plans](#). Its submission stated—

“In the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, Local Place Plans (LPPs) were introduced to offer communities the opportunity to develop planning proposals for the use of land in their local area. LPPs are a way in which we can achieve placemaking objectives but they could also provide a useful mechanism for community-led cultural provision and wider community engagement around the planning of town centres.”

However, the RTPi identified three potential challenges to the LPPs working as intended and supporting a thriving local cultural scene. These included:

- ensuring that culture is embedded in LPPs
- ensuring that LPPs are inclusive and representative of the diverse cultural groups that exist within the community; and
- ensuring that there are resources and expertise to support the process.

On [18 May](#) the Committee heard from experts in the field of planning about the possible interactions between planning processes and culture. Johanna Boyd from Planning Aid for Scotland noted –

“Although LPPs are at a very early stage, there is also a question about how much awareness there is of communities’ ability to flag culture, heritage and the arts in their LPPs... We need culture to be embedded right at the start of the LPP process. If that is done well, culture can be used as a methodology for creating a really powerful LPP with culture in the mix. (Col 4)

Craig McLaren was optimistic about the potential for planning processes to support local cultural activity and community involvement. He stated –

“planners are now trying to do front-loaded engagement to support communities to identify the opportunities, and we are also trying to contextualise that within the constraints that we face. I mentioned earlier the idea of creating a place vision. Planners can work creatively with communities, stakeholders, funders and cultural organisations to try to pull together the vision and the delivery plan to make it happen.”

The written submission from Creative Scotland also highlighted the importance of a voice for culture in the planning process. It stated –

“While Creative Scotland, is not a statutory partner in community or locality planning processes, unlike other national bodies, e.g. SportScotland. The role that culture and creative practitioners can play in creating vibrant, diverse and resilient places has been demonstrated through the many regeneration and development projects which are culture-led or centred around culture, which demonstrate that including culture from the very start in planning can help to rejuvenate places and communities.”

## Evaluation of cultural initiatives

The evidence received by the Committee has also included questions regarding how the success of cultural projects is measured, by both local authorities and by funders. On [20 April](#) there was a discussion on this topic and Katie Nicoll discussed a framework that she had created for use in Renfrewshire Council, noting that every local authority measured their cultural strategy differently.

Rebecca Coggins stated that –

“because each local authority’s area has a completely different cultural landscape, it can be really difficult to compare them. It is like comparing apples with pears. It would be great to find a simple way to make comparisons—a way that is not too difficult for the arts organisation or community group on the ground.” (Col 32)

She also suggested that –

“It is sometimes difficult to remove cultural input from other inputs, but it should not be separate; it should all be part of one thing. If we are taking an approach to a place by responding to what that place thinks it needs and giving it the means to build on its assets and to develop, that should be holistic.” (Col 31)

Measurement of success was also discussed by community groups in terms of funding applications on [4 May](#). Rachael Disbury said that a ‘crucial aspect’ of the Culture Collective funding was that the criteria to apply was very simple, and that organisations were trusted to use the funding to deliver successful projects in a flexible way. (Col 21) Kathryn Welch further explained that –

“we have intentionally stepped away from asking projects to report on how many people came to a session, for example, and to get away from reporting on a scale of one to 10 on things like, “How is your health and wellbeing today as opposed to a month ago?” Metrics such as that have been really harmful, as I think that people will be aware. It has been transformational to shift the conversation from how many people came to a session to how those sessions are going and what people are getting out of them. For example, we might have people coming to those sessions who might not have been able to do so in the past. ... I suppose that the question to ask in response to that is: how do we shape policy through storytelling, and how do we recognise not only what metrics can do but what they cannot do?” (Col 39)

Creative Scotland’s written submission does discuss some of the different funding streams that they use to support community cultural projects, but not the specifics of the funding criteria or how they measure the success, or otherwise, of the projects that they fund.

As noted above, Creative Scotland is in the process of moving towards a new funding model which will place more emphasis on the relationships between the recipients of funding and Creative Scotland. Creative Scotland’s will also adjust its expectations in terms of applications and monitoring. These will be “scaled according to investment”.

The latest published annual plan for [Creative Scotland covers the year 2022-23](#). This lists 26 key performance indicators which it uses to monitor its own performance. These KPIs include measures such as extending or ensuring continued breadth of funded activities both in terms of geography and the range and type of work that is undertaken. It also includes measures of public perceptions of national and local creativity, and the value of local cultural offer. Many of the KPIs reference measuring the reach and work of the activities or the organisations that Creative Scotland funds. This reflects the fact that funding decisions are Creative

Scotland's key lever in delivering its statutory functions. However, the Committee has heard that supporting creative activity in communities is not wholly reliant on cultural funding. One of the actions in Creative Scotland's Strategic Framework is to advocate "for the arts and creativity, promoting policy and practice that enhance their growth". How this is being measured and the outcomes achieved is not clear.

**Laura Haley and Ned Sharratt**  
**SPICe Research**

**2 June 2023**

Note: Committee briefing papers are provided by SPICe for the use of Scottish Parliament committees and clerking staff. They provide focused information or respond to specific questions or areas of interest to committees and are not intended to offer comprehensive coverage of a subject area.  
The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP [www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot)

## Written submission from Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland, inclusive of Screen Scotland, is the national body which supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland. We are a Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by Scottish Government and Scottish Ministers and we receive our funding from both the Scottish Government and the National Lottery.

Our remit is set out in Part 4 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 which describes the general functions of Creative Scotland as:

1. Identifying, supporting and developing quality and excellence in the arts and culture from those engaged in artistic and other creative endeavours
2. Promoting understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the arts and culture
3. Encouraging as many people as possible to access and participate in the arts and culture
4. Realising, as far as reasonably practicable to do so, the value and benefits (in particular, the national and international value and benefits) of the arts and culture
5. Encouraging and supporting artistic and other creative endeavours which contribute to an understanding of Scotland's national culture in its broad sense as a way of life
6. Promoting and supporting industries and other commercial activity, the primary focus of which is the application of creative skills.

We support the arts, screen and creative industries as a development organisation, a funder, an advocate, and as a public body that seeks to influence others to increase opportunity and maximise the impact our resources can offer. We work in partnership with Government, Local Authorities and the wider public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver this support.

### Communities and Creativity

Art and creativity improve our communities, support regeneration, provide vital hubs and bring people together. Shared creative spaces can facilitate greater social inclusion while cultural events can foster pride in the places we live. Art and creativity have a transformative and empowering effect. They boost confidence and support people to participate in their wider communities, to take a role in decision-making and to change the society they live in.

Arts organisations and institutions can play a civic role, providing places for people to come together and spaces to make their voice heard. Organisations which promote co-creation are particularly significant: by reflecting, responding to, and creating with

the communities of which they are part, they can better meet the specific needs of local groups and provide a platform for issues and people who might otherwise be underrepresented or unheard. As well as playing a vital role in developing, sustaining and inspiring arts and creativity, communities are intrinsic to protecting and promoting our cultural heritage. Our oral traditions, festive events, social practices and skills in traditional crafts are infused with invaluable knowledge and skills that are passed on from one generation to the next. We also create our own contemporary practices and cultures which hold deep meaning, provide connection to others and contribute to our sense of self. When creativity and community combine, we can express ourselves - as individuals, as groups and as a wider society.

The character of a place can be shaped by arts and creativity, defining the identity of a village, town or city, and encourage residents to celebrate the places and spaces they share. Access to creative activity and events can also support inclusion, leading to an increased sense of belonging and tackling isolation. In addition, a place with a strong cultural offer makes it more desirable to people and businesses as a place to live and work, helping to sustain local economies.

There are clear and significant impacts of art and creativity to communities: contributing to stronger social ties, creating pride in the places we live, supporting a sense of citizenship and breaking down barriers. These benefits also highlight the importance of closing the gap in cultural participation between the most and least deprived areas of the country, of increasing access and engagement in the arts especially amongst economically disadvantaged communities and challenging the barriers that prevent participation.

Through all our funding and development work Creative Scotland supports the arts, screen and creative industries in all parts of Scotland and in all 32 Local Authorities, contributing to the sustainability, wellbeing and cultural life of people and communities.

### **Response to questions**

- How do national and local layers of government, along with the third sector, complement each other to ensure that communities have opportunities to take part in cultural activities?
- How is unmet cultural need determined? And who decides this?

### **Working in partnership to support access to cultural activities and address unmet need**

Creative Scotland works in partnership with local and national government, and the wider public, private and voluntary sectors to support culture in communities across Scotland.

Local Authorities and Culture/Leisure Trusts are key partners in supporting and developing local culture and creative sectors, and providing access to culture. Local Authorities are required by Act of Parliament to ensure that there is 'adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities,' although 'adequate' is not defined. The pressure on local authority services due to constrained budgets, rising costs of living and non-statutory nature of some cultural services has seen threats to arts development, as well as library and museum services, and an overall reduction in the provision of grant funding and specialist services, like Arts Development Officers. The reduction in the Arts Development function of Local Authorities, creates barriers and a lack of consistent provision across Scotland. In some areas, creative networks and cultural organisations have capacity to provide the advice, funding, and connection to national opportunities for the creative sector in their area, however, the loss of Arts Development services in Local Authorities can result in significant challenges for national and local government, and national bodies, to work collaboratively for the benefit of communities.

An example of partnership working across national, local and third sector to deliver creative opportunities is the Youth Music Initiative (YMI), launched in 2003. Funded by the Scottish Government, YMI aims to break down the barriers to music making by offering free access to children and young people across Scotland. Over the last 20 years, the music education programme has increased participation from 60,000 to 360,000 young people per year.

Further information: [www.creativescotland.com/youth-music-initiative](http://www.creativescotland.com/youth-music-initiative)

Each of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities receives funding through the YMI to allow children and young people across Scotland, to take their first steps in their musical journey through an eclectic range of inclusive music making activities in school settings. From whole class African Drumming workshops in Shetland and a Hip Hop project in Aberdeenshire to North Lanarkshire's Rock Fest, the fund supports children to develop new skills, their imaginations, self-expression, and confidence, offering new experiences and helping us all learn more about ourselves and others. The Youth Music Initiative's school-based programme sees Local Authorities and Cultural Trusts work in partnership with third sector cultural organisations. In Highland, Fèisean nan Gàidheal works successfully in partnership with Highlife Highland, delivering tuition covering an introduction to traditional music in all 173 primary schools in the area over eight weeks per year.

YMI funded projects working in communities include:

- The Lullaby Project delivered by Fèis Rois pairs musicians and isolated new mothers in the Highlands to write lullabies for their wee ones. Website: [www.feisrois.org/classes-courses/lullaby-project](http://www.feisrois.org/classes-courses/lullaby-project)

- The Aberdeen Youth Music Partnership delivered by Station House Media Unit will bring together organisations, practitioners and young people in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to work together to further the area's Youth Music Action Plan. Further information: [www.57north.org/news/shmu-awarded-funding-to-continue-aberdeen-youth-music-partnership](http://www.57north.org/news/shmu-awarded-funding-to-continue-aberdeen-youth-music-partnership)

Every community has its own unique culture. It is important to recognise that a lack of established traditional artistic infrastructure does not mean that there is a lack of creative or cultural activity or expression – successful national or centralised initiatives need to understand these individual cultures. It is important that local and national government and national bodies recognise the individual needs and requirements of different communities and places, and of different artforms and creative practices. Cultural practices which do not necessarily take place in theatres or music venues, including Gaelic culture and Traditional Arts, are vital to the cultural life and heritage of communities. Supporting and trusting people, artists and communities to create their own artistic infrastructure and drive their own creative lives, without pre-determined expectations, would allow communities to explore unmet cultural needs. This may include, for example, funding for screen equipment for local community halls or to create festivals and performances.

There are good examples of community-led creative infrastructure development, responding to the need. The development of Cromarty Cinema is an example of a relatively low-cost facility (sub-£250,000 for the whole facility) which supports the continued sustainability of a community. Website: [www.cromartycinema.com](http://www.cromartycinema.com)

National Lottery Awards for All is a partnership between The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland, sportscotland and Creative Scotland.

This programme offers funding between £300 and £10,000 to support what matters to people and communities. Creative projects supported through the National Lottery Awards for All programme benefit communities and people across Scotland, demonstrating the big impact of small amounts of funding. Website: [www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland)

While funding for activity is important, it is also crucial to recognise the role of everyday culture in contributing to the lives of communities and to ensure that these activities are also supported, whether through access to spaces or providing advice on running voluntary or grassroots organisations. Small grants can make a big difference for community led organisations. Reducing barriers to accessing spaces, including addressing high rental costs or supporting community asset transfers (with access to revenue funding, not only building costs) can ensure the sustainability of smaller communities and neighbourhoods.

While it's important to recognise the difference between cultural ambitions and needs across communities, it's also important to be able to support people to identify unmet needs and how to achieve their ambitions.

Creative Scotland's funding and development work has supported artists, creative and community organisations to map, research and identify the gaps and opportunities for culture in their area.

Education Scotland's review of Creative Scotland's Creative Place Awards programme, in 2015, highlighted the wider benefits where people worked together to celebrate their place through arts and culture. This involved self-evaluation and engagement with HM Inspectors as part of the process. The reviews highlighted the economic and social benefit of culture to local communities. Review: [www.education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/thematic-reports/creative-place-review](http://www.education.gov.scot/education-scotland/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/thematic-reports/creative-place-review)

Creative Scotland's Place Partnership Programme is a strategic programme designed to encourage and support local partners to work together with their creative communities and Creative Scotland. The partnership should aim to make significant interventions which address opportunities and issues and help to strengthen creative development in their area. The programme supports local groups to come together to spark ideas promote collaborative working, build capacity and ultimately deliver creative activity which responds to the distinct opportunities and challenges within different localities. Website: [www.creativescotland.com/placeprogramme](http://www.creativescotland.com/placeprogramme)

The programme sits distinct from other funding in that the emphasis is collaborative planning and working (as opposed to an application-based approach), particularly within regions of Scotland where the infrastructure relating to the arts, screen and creative industries is comparatively underdeveloped. It stands as an important aspect of our development role across Scotland.

16 Local Authority areas across Scotland have been part of the Place Partnership Programme, and in many cases, a first step in understanding the requirements of the area was to undertake cultural mapping, to identify the challenges and opportunities of the area, and consultation to understand the needs of the creative sector and local communities. The outcomes of mapping and consultation, and each Place Partnership, vary according to the unique needs of each area.

Examples of some Place Partnership projects:

- Angus: Development of the Angus Cultural Strategy. Further information: [www.creativescotland.com/culture-and-heritage-boost-for-angus](http://www.creativescotland.com/culture-and-heritage-boost-for-angus)

- Argyll & Bute: Establishment of CHARTS – Culture Heritage and Arts - a formally constituted arts and heritage network. Website: [www.chartsargyllandisles.org](http://www.chartsargyllandisles.org)
- Dumfries & Galloway: Supporting the establishment of DG Unlimited, a sector advice, support and advocacy body which is a key partner for Dumfries and Galloway Council. Website: [www.dgunlimited.com](http://www.dgunlimited.com)
- Inverclyde: The annual Galoshans Festival: Celebrating Halloween coming home to Greenock, with community events, high quality installations, music and performance, the festival is now by managed by the Galoshans Consortium of partners including CVS Inverclyde, Inverclyde Council and cultural organisations. Website: [www.galoshans.com](http://www.galoshans.com)
- North Ayrshire: Islands Arts Co-ordinator – a post which supports ambition and development across Cumbrae and Arran, managed jointly by North Ayrshire Council and Creative Scotland, and supported by Arran Theatre and Arts Trust and Millport Town Hall, the post works with creative practitioners, artists and arts organisations across both islands.
- Stirling: establishment of SceneStirling, a collaborative initiative by the city's arts and cultural partners to showcase Stirling's cultural and creative sector, develop creative networks, support opportunities for creative practitioners and create more visibility for arts and culture in Stirling. Website: [www.scenestirling.com](http://www.scenestirling.com)

Creative Scotland's Culture Collective programme, supported by Scottish Government, is a network of 26 participatory arts projects, shaped by local communities alongside artists and creative organisations. From Shetland to Inverclyde, Aberdeen to Hawick, each unique project is designed and driven by the community in which it is rooted, playing an important part in shaping the future cultural life of Scotland. For the projects themselves, the Culture Collective provides a network: opportunities to share resources, learning and experiences. For the sector as a whole, the Culture Collective shines a light on the crucial importance of participatory arts projects for artists, for communities and for the future. Website: [www.culturecollective.scot](http://www.culturecollective.scot)

Many Culture Collective projects highlight the wider wellbeing potential of the arts, in bringing people together, tackling loneliness and isolation, and enabling people to embrace the joy and pleasure of creativity, whilst others have a focus on creative placemaking.

As the programme was designed to be flexible and respond to local need, and to deliver against the National Culture Strategy, Culture Collective and the projects it supports offers a strong example of how to address unmet need, through place-based and people-centred creative processes. The programme provides multi-faceted

explorations, learning and examples of how to enable people to shape the future cultural life of their community.

Some examples of Culture Collective projects:

- Toonspeak: The Here We Are Culture Collective project is based in Ward 17 (Springburn/Balornock/Barmulloch/Robroyston/Millerston), in the North of Glasgow, with a programme which has contributed to the wellbeing of members of the community, from children and young people to adults. Project website: [www.toonspeak.co.uk/culture-collective-2](http://www.toonspeak.co.uk/culture-collective-2)
- Alchemy Film & Arts: Alchemy's Culture Collective project, The Teviot, the Flag and the Rich, Rich Soil, aims to investigate the borders, boundaries and lines of Hawick, reframing the town's cultural identities as they relate to land, water, industry, territory, place and environment. Project website: [www.alchemyfilmmandarts.org.uk/the-teviot-the-flag-and-the-rich-rich-soil](http://www.alchemyfilmmandarts.org.uk/the-teviot-the-flag-and-the-rich-rich-soil) Blog post by Michael Pattinson: [www.culturecollective.scot/blog/up-the-teviot-on-artists-and-residencies-in-hawick](http://www.culturecollective.scot/blog/up-the-teviot-on-artists-and-residencies-in-hawick)
- SEALL: Aiserigh project is a collaboration between SEALL, ATLAS Arts and Fèisean nan Gàidheal, to work together with individuals, communities, businesses and organisations across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh to develop a range of ways to use culture as a powerful tool for creating strong and healthy communities for the future. Project website: [www.seall.co.uk/aiseirigh](http://www.seall.co.uk/aiseirigh) Blog post by Louis Barabbas: [www.culturecollective.scot/blog/louis-barabbas-on-keeping-community-spaces-alive-and-thriving](http://www.culturecollective.scot/blog/louis-barabbas-on-keeping-community-spaces-alive-and-thriving)
- Open Road: Safe Harbour, Open Sea: this project, in partnership with Fittie Community Development Trust, aims to celebrate the history and heritage of the community, create a cultural programme for the community hall and explore the future of the coastal community. Project website: [www.openroadtld.com/projects/culture-collective/](http://www.openroadtld.com/projects/culture-collective/)

Further blog posts from Culture Collective: [www.culturecollective.scot/blog](http://www.culturecollective.scot/blog)

We would be happy to share a copy of the interim findings from our research and evaluation programme, undertaken by Queen Margaret University, to further demonstrate the impact of Culture Collective.

What does good 'place-based' cultural policy look like in practice?

Good 'place-based' cultural policy recognises the individual needs of people, communities and places, recognises unique culture and heritage of individuals and communities, and responds to the ambition, need and challenges of each place. There is no 'one size fits all' approach, and processes or strategies which work in one area, or with one community, are not necessarily directly replicable in others.

Policy and strategy development should be co-created – involving local people, local creative and cultural organisations and groups, as well as third sector, private and public organisations and local and national government. It is important that place-based cultural policy does not just exist in a silo, but embodies the Place Principle, and includes policy areas from health to planning. Place-based approaches should prioritise inclusion, ensuring that it is not only the loud voices which are heard, but that the culture and traditions of communities and places are valued alongside diverse voices and cultures, and proactively include marginalised groups.

While Creative Scotland, is not a statutory partner in community or locality planning processes, unlike other national bodies, e.g. SportScotland. The role that culture and creative practitioners can play in creating vibrant, diverse and resilient places has been demonstrated through the many regeneration and development projects which are culture-led or centred around culture, which demonstrate that including culture from the very start in planning can help to rejuvenate places and communities. Many cultural organisations and creative practitioners are skilled at working with people and drawing out their ideas, so are invaluable in including communities in shaping their own futures.

TRACS: The People's Parish project aims to inspire and support creative neighbourhood projects in each of Scotland's 871 civil parishes, connecting local stories, traditions and cultural memory with the distinct local voices, culture and creativity of our places today. The People's Parish is part of the Culture Collective programme, which supports projects in nine different communities across Scotland. Project website: [www.peoplesparish.scot](http://www.peoplesparish.scot)

We recommend the following reports on place-based working and creative placemaking:

- Working Better Together in Place | surf.scot [www.surf.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Working-Better-Together-in-Place.pdf](http://www.surf.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Working-Better-Together-in-Place.pdf)
- Embers | The Stove Network [www.thestove.org/projects/ongoing-projects/embers/](http://www.thestove.org/projects/ongoing-projects/embers/)