The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Culture in Communities: The challenges and opportunities in delivering a place-based approach

Contents

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

"To consider and report on the following (and any additional matter added under Rule 6.1.5A)—

(a) the Scottish Government's EU and external affairs policy;

(b) policy in relation to the UK's exit from the EU;

(c) the international activities of the Scottish Administration, including international development; and

(d) any other matter falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture and any matter relating to inter-governmental relations within the responsibility of the Deputy First Minister.

(e) matters falling within the responsibility of the Minister for Independence.

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Introduction

1. This report details the findings and recommendations of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee ('the Committee') following its inquiry on culture in communities, with a focus on the challenges and opportunities in delivering a 'place-based' approach to cultural policy.

2. The call for views on the inquiry was issued on 17 February 2023 and closed on 7 April 2023. It received 58 written submissions, which were summarised by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe). The Committee held a series of evidence sessions between April and June 2023.

3. To gather further evidence on good practice and barriers to place-based cultural policy and cultural participation within different communities across Scotland, the Committee also undertook visits to Wester Hailes and Craigmillar in Edinburgh, Dumfries, and Orkney. A note of each visit has been published.

4. The Committee thanks all those organisations and individuals who provided the written and oral evidence and facilitated and participated in the engagement visits that have helped to inform the inquiry and the findings which follow.

Overview of a place-based approach to culture

A Culture Strategy for Scotland

5. The idea of taking a 'place-based' approach to culture is a key focus of *'A Culture Strategy for Scotland',* published in February 2020 by the Scottish Government. The importance of place is listed as one of its 'guiding principles'.

6. The culture strategy outlines that "place-based approaches enable local communities to influence, shape, and where there is an appetite, deliver long term solutions because it is easier for people and communities to identify with, relate to and feel connected with their place". [1]

7. In relation to a place-based approach to culture, the strategy states that "giving people a greater say in shaping the cultural life of their communities and community ownership can help protect Scotland's rich cultural heritage and provide inspiration for the cultural expression of the future." [1]

8. In the Programme for Government 2023-24, the Scottish Government set out that in the coming year it would "publish, and begin implementing" its "Culture Strategy Action Plan Refresh, to support the recovery and renewal of the culture sector with a focus on empowering individuals and communities to further develop their own cultural activity". [2]

The Place Principle

9. This followed the adoption of the Place Principle by the Scottish Government and COSLA in 2019, which committed them to taking "a collaborative, place-based approach with a shared purpose to support a clear way forward for all services, assets and investments which will maximise the impact of their combined resources". [3]

10. The Scottish Government's culture strategy outlined that the "adoption of the Place Principle can help realise our vision of an inclusive and extended view of culture which recognises and celebrates the value and importance of the emerging, the everyday and grassroots culture and creativity." [1]

11. The Scottish Government recognised that "a collaborative, place-based approach can help create the right conditions for culture to thrive", and highlighted that "partnerships between local government, cultural and creative organisations, businesses and organisations in Scotland's most deprived communities can and do realise a wide range of outcomes for people including improved health and wellbeing, social cohesion and reducing inequality." [1]

12. Planning Aid Scotland agreed that to "deliver on the 'Place Principle', a place-based cultural approach needs a decentralised, local approach that is agile and responsive to the needs of individual communities". It outlined that "a place-based approach can only achieve positive outcomes when all partners are involved, such

as different arms of the local authority, as well as relevant public bodies and agencies." [4]

Background

13. The wider principle of taking a community-led approach to the delivery of public services was set out by the Christie Commission report in 2011. It identified "recognising that effective services must be designed with and for people and communities" and "working closely with individuals and communities to understand their needs" as priorities for future service delivery, and recommended "making provision in the [then] proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill to embed community participation in the design and delivery of services". [5] The report also emphasised the importance of local partnership working and collaboration between public service providers.

14. Thereafter, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act was passed in 2015, with the aim to "help to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services." [6] The Act is referenced throughout this report in relation to the extent to which its provisions on community planning and community asset transfer support the delivery of a place-based approach to culture.

15. Ten years on from the Christie report, the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) outlined that there had been "progress" made on Christie's call for "more recognition" to be given to "the role that the third sector and local communities play in improving lives in their local area", for example through the Community Empowerment Act, which the AGS said, "has given individuals and communities important new powers to influence the services they need". However, the AGS also recognised "the third sector can feel like a poor relation to mainstream public services. And many community groups also still feel that barriers are put in their way to taking part in changing services for the better." [7]

16. Initiatives to support place-based and community-led approaches to culture have also been taken forward for several years, such as Creative Scotland's Place Partnership Programme. It told the Committee that this is a "strategic programme designed to encourage and support local partners to work together with their creative communities and Creative Scotland" and that it "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". [8]

17. The programme was commended by the Culture, Tourism, Europe, and External Affairs Committee in Session 5 in its 2019 report, *Putting Artists in the Picture: A Sustainable Arts Funding System for Scotland* , which recommended that it should be delivered with more local authorities and its implementation strengthened to embed the benefits of the investment for the long-term. We draw upon the Session 5 committee report throughout our report.

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

18. The Committee heard that 'good' place-based cultural policy "involves empowering the local community to create a cultural offering that caters to their specific needs",

and "requires co-production, where cultural institutions and communities work together as equal partners, so that communities have ownership over the cultural offering". [9]

19. Creative Scotland, the national body which supports the arts, screen, and creative industries across Scotland, described 'good' place-based cultural policy as that which "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". [8]

20. In relation to the importance of empowering communities as part of a place-based approach, Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland drew a distinction between the so-called 'democratisation of culture' and 'cultural democracy'—

> "The democratisation of culture refers to a policy of making accessible already existing cultural opportunities that have hitherto been taken by a restricted range of the population: cut-price tickets for the opera for example, or the opening of arts centres in communities where such facilities were unheard of.
>
> Cultural democracy on the other hand is a state in which everyone feels empowered to actively participate in the broadest range of cultural activity, what the Culture Strategy for Scotland describes as 'everyday culture'." [10]

21. An Arts Council England report from 2018 suggested that arts and cultural organisations looking to work towards 'cultural democracy' might shift from, for example, employing professional artists to come up with ideas for community programmes, to having those artists work with communities to co-create ideas, or from selling cheaper tickets to encourage broader audiences to attend, to connecting with those broader audiences to understand what they might want. [11]

22. The National Theatre of Scotland summarised that this "is about having conversations with organisations about what they need, as opposed to our imposing things on them". [12]

23. Dumfries and Galloway Council was of the view that, in order to overcome barriers to cultural participation, it is important to support communities to grow the cultural activities they want to see, rather than taking a "topdown" approach of giving communities access to culture that it is decided they should have. [13]

24. Glasgow Life agreed that co-production of cultural interventions was "key". Through such an approach, instead of "forming a view of what people want, where they want it and how they want to access it", this can be identified "in partnership with citizens and communities". [13]

25. The Committee heard that it was important to recognise the cultural activity that already takes place in and is valued by communities, including that which may fall under a wider definition of 'culture'.

26. In Professor David Stevenson's view, good place-based cultural policy "should be responsive to different groups, communities, people and places", with "meaningful cultural participation" able to look "very different for different groups and communities of people". He identified that a challenge with cultural policy 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". [12]

27. Professor Andrew Miles suggested that "we should be supporting what people already do" and emphasised that "we have to start with what people themselves want to participate in", questioning "how far we want people to go in moving into different cultural spheres, and why". [12]

28. Professor Stevenson warned that policymakers can fall into a "danger" of only helping individuals overcome barriers to cultural participation where these are "barriers to the type of culture that we feel is valuable for them to take part in", and identified that "we tend to challenge those who have the least amount of influence in society to diversify their cultural interests the most". [12]

29. Creative Scotland considered it "important that local and national government and national bodies recognise the individual needs and requirements of different communities and places" and "recognise that a lack of established traditional artistic infrastructure does not mean that there is a lack of creative or cultural activity or expression". [8]

30. However, the Committee also heard a view that some larger cultural organisations can "parachute" into communities and use community-based arts organisations and their connections, including to secure funding. There was a sense that the manner in which some larger organisations worked in communities for a short period of time—for example, through 'gifting culture' and providing free tickets to cultural performances—was often on the terms of those organisations and that communities did not have the agency to choose how they wanted to participate. [14]

31. The Federation of Scottish Theatre noted its concern regarding the "pitfalls of an approach that takes a narrow view of culture or cultural provision and 'redistributes' it according to this view, without the genuine needs and tastes of communities being taken into consideration, or thorough mapping taking place that respects existing provision in whatever form that takes". It considered that "cultural need can be defined by what the funding priorities or available resources are". [15]

32. Creative Scotland acknowledged that "there are cases of what might be felt as, 'We are doing good to communities—we are offering you something, so come and see it,' without understanding what it can mean to the people and what the unmet need is in that community". [16] It said it was "very vigilant in regard to projects and applications that we parachute into areas or where that relationship is imbalanced—when it is about an organisation coming into a community and saying, 'Here is an offer for you,' instead of saying, 'What does your community want or need, and how can we work together to deliver that?'. [16]

33. **The Committee recognises that the idea of taking place-based and community-led approaches to service delivery, including in relation to cultural provision, is not new, and that there is a strong evidence base supporting such an approach. We note the comments made by the Auditor General for Scotland in 2021 that while progress has been made on**

empowering local communities to influence service delivery, barriers remain, and further progress is still required.

34. **Our inquiry examined the application of this approach to cultural policy. We note that there was a clear consensus in the evidence received from a wide range of stakeholders on what a place-based approach to culture should look like in practice, for example in empowering communities to shape the cultural life of their place, and for organisations delivering cultural activities or interventions to understand and respond to the needs of communities.**

35. **Within this context, our report considers the following challenges we have identified for national public bodies and local government in delivering a place-based approach to culture where communities are central to shaping the cultural life of their place—**

    • **Supporting community-based cultural activity;**

    • **Funding culture in communities;**

    • **Providing and supporting local cultural services; and**

    • **Providing and protecting physical spaces in communities for cultural activity to take place in.**

Supporting community-led cultural activity

36. Throughout its inquiry, the Committee was told that local networks of community-based organisations and volunteers were vital to the local cultural ecology, and to supporting the delivery of a place-based approach where communities are central to shaping the cultural life of their place and to growing and sustaining the cultural activity which meets their needs.

37. Professor Stevenson considered that this "infrastructure—that local network—needs to be sustained. It will not necessarily have outputs constantly, but its presence—the sense of people being there, having the time and being able to contribute—is part of our infrastructure, along with those small spaces and small bits of equipment". [12]

38. The Committee also heard that this infrastructure, in addition to supporting community-led culture, supports national agencies to deliver cultural performances in communities. In Professor Stevenson's view, having local networks "maximises the investment that we put into our nationals. Otherwise, the nationals do not have a local infrastructure to build on when they go out touring". And therefore, "even if you want to democratise culture in the sense of democratising those high arts organisations, the best way to do that is through having a strong cultural democracy whereby there is a localised, grounded network that can be connected into". [12]

39. The National Partnership for Culture considered that "the aspirations of the Culture Strategy cannot be delivered without a vibrant and flourishing cultural ecology that supports the creation, presentation, and enjoyment of creative and cultural activity in every part of Scotland". [17]

40. Below, we consider the role of volunteer networks and community-based cultural organisations in delivering a place-based approach, and the challenges and opportunities facing these networks within the local cultural ecology.

Volunteer networks

41. The Committee heard that the "vast majority" of cultural activities in communities is "dependent on the efforts of volunteers". [18] According to Volunteer Scotland, "culture in communities would be significantly reduced without volunteers", [18] however it said that much of this activity is "unseen". [19]

42. Creative Lives illustrated what is meant by 'volunteers' in this context using the example of a community choir—

> "The people who turn up to sing for the joy of singing, who are often from professional, community or amateur backgrounds, do so in a participatory sense. The volunteers are the ones who set up and run things and keep the choir going. They may also bring in paid support for tutoring, recording and so on." [19]

43. Making Music considered that many volunteers within its member groups would not consider themselves as such, with the "driver" for their volunteering being their own participation in a leisure activity—"they take part in their choir, they sing and they organise the rota for the tea or organise ticket sales at the door, so they do not count themselves as volunteers". [19]

44. The role of volunteers in sustaining local culture was recognised by local authorities. Orkney Islands Council said that "most activity in Orkney is entirely grassroots, home-grown and volunteer managed", [20] while Moray Council reflected that "a large percentage" of cultural activities in Moray are "managed, operated and created" by the voluntary sector. [13]

45. While volunteer-led, locally based creative groups "represent the true backbone of culture in Scotland", Creative Lives considered that it is "one of the most overlooked parts of our cultural landscape". [21]

Time and resource challenges

46. The Committee heard concerns that there could be inequalities between communities who have greater time and resources to volunteer and those who do not, and, given the vital role of volunteering in sustaining culture in communities, how this could impact on access to opportunities for cultural participation across communities in Scotland.

47. The Scottish Household Survey for 2021 found that adults who participated in formal volunteering were less likely to live in areas of multiple deprivation, and more likely to have higher incomes (see Figures 1 and 2).
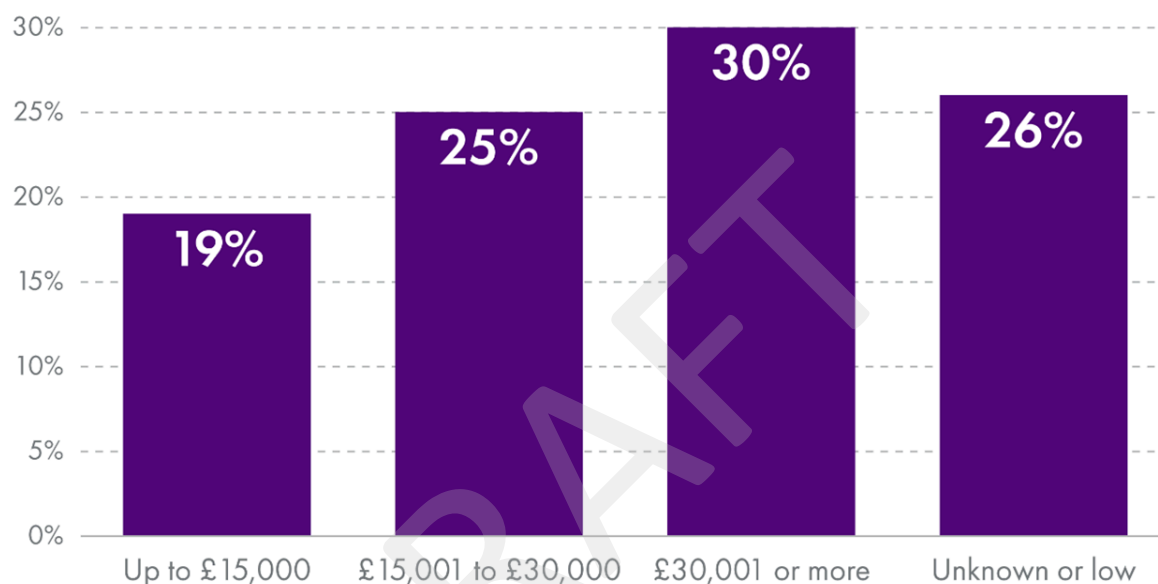
Figure 1

Adults formal volunteering over the previous 12 months by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile (2021)
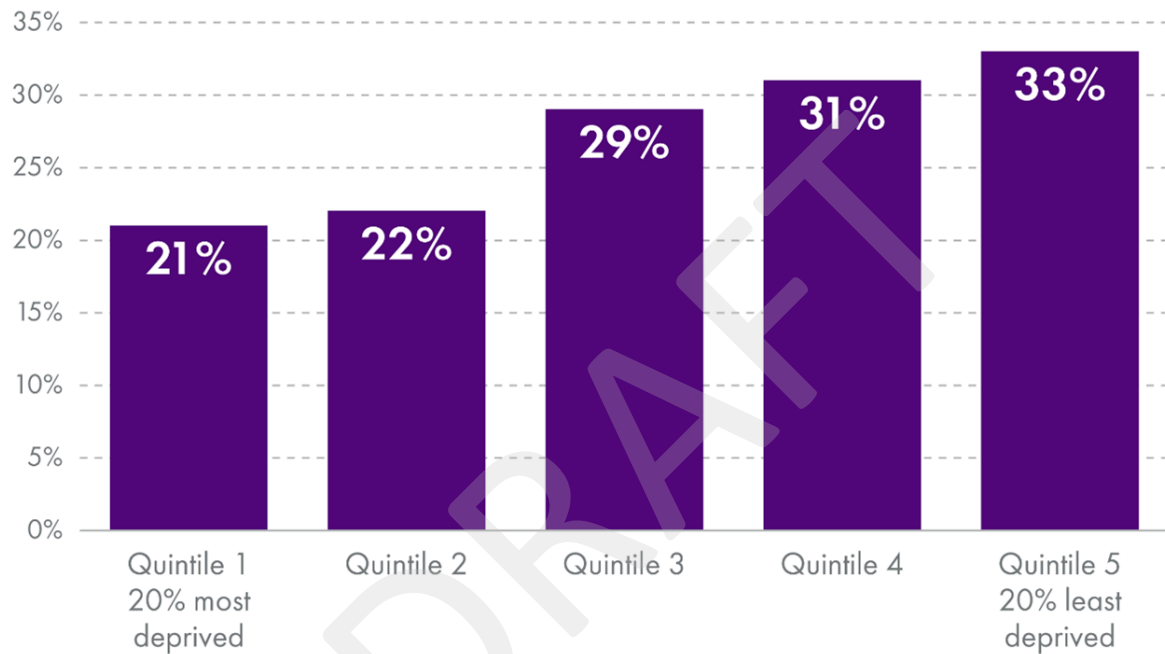
Source: Scottish Household Survey 2021

Figure 2

Adults formal volunteering over the previous 12 months by net annual household income (2021)

Source: Scottish Household Survey 2021

48. Professor Andrew Miles said that it is "very clearly the case that better resourced people have more time", including for volunteering and organising cultural activities, while Professor Stevenson posed the question of "who has the time to set up a new organisation?" [12]

49. Professor Stevenson also noted that there was a "significant challenge regarding diversity on the boards" of both voluntary organisations and major cultural organisations in relation to age, ethnic background, and class. He suggested that more representative boards could lead to a "diversity of programming" which results in more diverse audiences. [12]

50. On the Committee's visit to Orkney, the Committee heard that there was an immense commitment from the community to make cultural activity happen, with high levels of volunteering and the vast majority of cultural activity run by small organisations. There was seen to be a greater onus on the community to be self-starting and sustaining in providing cultural opportunities. [14]

51. However, the reliance on the community to sustain cultural activity was recognised as a challenge for Orkney as well as a strength, with volunteer fatigue and burn-out identified as key concerns. The Committee heard that there was an ageing population, including among volunteers, with concerns raised about the sustainability of volunteer-led culture in Orkney. [14]

52. Professor Stevenson illustrated the delicate nature of relying on voluntary networks to sustain cultural activity with the example of the Touring Network, which supports

professional music, dance, theatre and children's events to be staged across the Highlands and Islands—"It is an ageing network of, essentially, voluntary producers who do the work of connecting: opening up the halls, making sure that someone has somewhere to stay and ferrying people in cars where there are no buses. However, it faces a challenge in that a lot of those people are saying, 'I am too old', or 'It is time for someone else to pick this up', and moving on. If there are no young people with the time, because they are too busy trying to find work or their work is very short term, we lose that network, which is part of the infrastructure." [12]

53.   Volunteer Scotland called on Creative Scotland to take on "a bigger role in acknowledgement of the capacity that is required in order for volunteers to support community-based cultural activity". [19]

54.   Creative Lives said that voluntary groups "need support from infrastructure bodies" in terms of skills development and networking opportunities, while Making Music noted that there was "not the same professional development support for volunteer-led arts activities as there is for professional arts". [19]

Financial challenges facing voluntary groups

55.   Similar challenges were raised in relation to the inequality between those who greater time and resources to attend or participate in cultural activity and those who do not. Professor Miles assessed that "the only people who are increasing their [cultural] participation" are those who are "economically capital-rich". He highlighted that those who have more disposable income to spend on participating in culture also tend to have more time to spend on culture. [12]

56.   Furthermore, the Committee heard that as many voluntary arts groups are "self-sustaining and rely on charging for some of their services", this presents a challenge for those who "do not have the money to pay to access culture in their community".

57.   Creative Lives said that the cost-of-living crisis was a "major concern" for the voluntary arts sector and warned that it "may result in less availability of creative activities as the cost of materials, utilities and venue hire charges increase". It also highlighted the impact on "the cost of transport and digital connectivity which are also essential in allowing more people to participate in creative activity alongside others". [21]

58.   Making Music noted the financial challenges faced by voluntary groups due to the cost-of-living crisis who are "very reluctant" to raise their fees due to members "experiencing challenges with their own incomes". [19]

59.   Volunteer Scotland said there was a "catch-22 situation" where costs for cultural organisations were rising, for example charges for hiring community halls, but where those "who usually access their cultural services cannot afford to pay more". It considered that there is "a need for funding to support equality of access to culture". [19]

60.   Creative Lives encouraged the exploration of "a regular funded micro-grant programme for community-based and volunteer-led groups" which would enable voluntary arts groups "to both thrive and survive, providing true value for money and

a major social return on a small investment". [21] Creative Scotland recognised that "small grants can make a big difference for community led organisations". [8]

61. **The Committee recognises the vital role of volunteers in sustaining grassroots cultural activity in many communities, and that without these networks, the delivery of a place-based approach to culture—where communities are central to shaping the cultural life of their place and to growing and sustaining the cultural activity which meets their needs—would be significantly more challenging.**

62. **However, we also recognise that volunteering in the community is time and resource intensive. We are concerned by the evidence received that there could be disparities between communities who have greater time and resources to volunteer and those who do not, and, given the vital role of volunteering in sustaining culture in communities, that this is likely to impact on access to opportunities for cultural participation across communities in Scotland. The Committee's view is that it is crucial for all communities across Scotland to have the opportunity to shape the cultural life of their places, and to be able to grow and sustain the cultural activity which meets their needs.**

63. **The Committee therefore notes the calls from organisations representing the voluntary sector for there to be greater support for voluntary arts, both in terms of capacity-building for volunteers and regular micro-grant funding for voluntary groups, in response to some of the resource challenges we have highlighted above; and invites the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland to explore whether further support can be provided to protect and encourage the vital contribution of volunteers to culture in communities, including in communities with fewer resources.**

Community-based cultural organisations

64. Through its inquiry, the Committee also heard from a range of organisations working within communities across Scotland on the opportunities they provide for communities to participate in cultural activity, including national cultural organisations delivering participatory projects across communities, those embedded in specific communities, and community organisations with a cultural arm. We consider the role of community-based groups below.

65. The Committee heard evidence that well-established community-based arts organisations which had been embedded within communities longer-term were effective in supporting cultural participation and engagement in their areas. Instead of getting communities engaged through a specific project which ends due to the funding concluding, and there being nothing for them to move on to, it was important to continue to support participation through other projects and groups. [14] Station House Media Unit said that taking a place-based approach to culture "is about long-term engagement", as opposed to "a cultural organisation swooping in and delivering 12 weeks of a programme and then disappearing". [22]

66.   As discussed above, the Committee was told that it was important to understand the unmet needs of the community, and co-produce the cultural activity that can meet those needs, and that community-based organisations were well placed to deliver this work. Instead of 'doing the arts' to people or seeing them as 'targets', it was said to be important for organisations delivering this work to be 'in and of' the community. [14]

Culture Collective

67.   The Committee heard that one example of how cultural organisations, artists and communities have been supported to develop local cultural projects is the Culture Collective programme, funded by Scottish Government emergency COVID-19 funds through Creative Scotland. It is a network of 26 participatory arts projects, which are shaped by local communities alongside artists and creative organisations.

68.   Professor Stevenson said the programme had been "so powerful" as a result of "recognising the need for strong networks locally". [12] The Culture Collective told the Committee that the programme had provided a national network between the projects, with "opportunities to share resources, learning and experiences", but that it had also "been able to create small, informal networks with the projects and the practitioners within them" more locally. [22]

69.   Creative Scotland told the Committee that the programme offers "a strong example of how to address unmet need, through place-based and people-centred processes" with each project "designed and driven by the community in which it is rooted". [8] It "did not want to see predetermined outcomes, because the outcomes should be determined through working with the communities". [16]

70.   Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland said that it had given them "the space, flexibility and freedom to be in a place for a year of more", [22] with this longer-term engagement and embedding within communities, as discussed above, seen to be beneficial to the delivery of a place-based approach.

71.   Stellar Quines thought that it had enabled them to show "how it could be and what might be possible" if the necessary funding was available. [22] The Culture Collective commented that while community work has thus far existed with "dregs of funding", this programme being "funded at scale" had enabled the projects to "shift the question" from "How can we do this cheaply because that's all we've got?" to "How can we be most effective and most brilliant?" [22]

72.   The funding for the Culture Collective is coming to an end, with projects concluding in October 2023. It is not clear whether the initiative will be replaced.

73.   In evidence to the Committee, a representative of the Culture Collective project lead team said: "we are trying to build a sustainable network that can exist beyond our contract and the known lifetime of the Culture Collective, while at the same time knowing that it will never be enough and that this should not be a short-term initiative… Trying to wind down in a healthy and sustainable way is not what we want to be doing, but it is the best that we can do with the resources that we know we have." On the Culture Collective's legacy, they added that "we are focusing on building a network that exists sustainably without our support". [22]

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74. The National Partnership for Culture noted that "important national initiatives such as the Culture Collective and Creative Communities have already grown from the Culture Strategy but embedding these ways of working will require long term commitments and further changes to how culture is supported." It considered that these such initiatives can be used "as foundations" to be built upon. [17]

75. **The Committee consistently heard throughout its inquiry that the Culture Collective programme had been a powerful example of a national place-based initiative which had supported cultural organisations to work in partnership with artists and communities to develop local cultural projects.**

76. **Given that the funding for the programme and its projects will soon conclude, the Committee calls on the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland to set out how the foundation and legacy of Culture Collective will be built upon through future place-based initiatives. We further consider the role of funding to support community-based cultural activity below.**

Funding for culture in communities

77.   In this section, we consider the challenges to the delivery of a place-based approach posed by the wider budgetary challenges faced by the culture sector and the challenges of project funding for place-based cultural activity, as well as opportunities for the future funding of community-based cultural activity.

Impact of wider budgetary challenges on place-based culture

78.   The Committee has taken considerable evidence to date on the budgetary challenges facing the culture sector. In its pre-budget scrutiny report last year, the Committee concluded that the sector was facing significant financial pressures, contributed to by a "perfect storm"[i] of long-term budget pressures, reduced income generation, and increased operating costs. [23]

79.   Through the course of this inquiry, the Committee heard that the ongoing impact of the wider budgetary challenges facing the culture sector placed limits on what was possible in the extent to which cultural organisations are able to deliver place-based and participatory cultural projects with communities, and on the ability of voluntary groups to source funding for their activities.

80.   Several organisations highlighted, as the Committee has heard previously through its budget scrutiny, that they have been in receipt of 'standstill' funding for several years. Creative Scotland previously told the Committee that many organisations it funds on a regular, multi-year basis "have received unchanged levels of funding, for a number of years" and that this is "increasingly unviable" as it represents "an increasing year-on-year cut for organisations". [23]

81.   SPICe analysed the funding received by Creative Scotland from 2014-15 to 2022-23 from both the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. Figure 3 illustrates the relative real terms changes in the sum of grant-in aid funding from the Scottish Government (not including emergency COVID-19 funding) and National Lottery funding.

82.   SPICe assessed that the total grant funding for Creative Scotland in 2021-22 (excluding emergency COVID-19 funding) was approximately 10% lower in real terms than in 2014-15. It noted that this is despite the Scottish Government providing increased funding for Screen Scotland, part of Creative Scotland, since 2018-19 and that therefore, the real terms cuts to the areas of Creative Scotland that are not screen related since 2014-15 will be substantially more than 10%. [24]
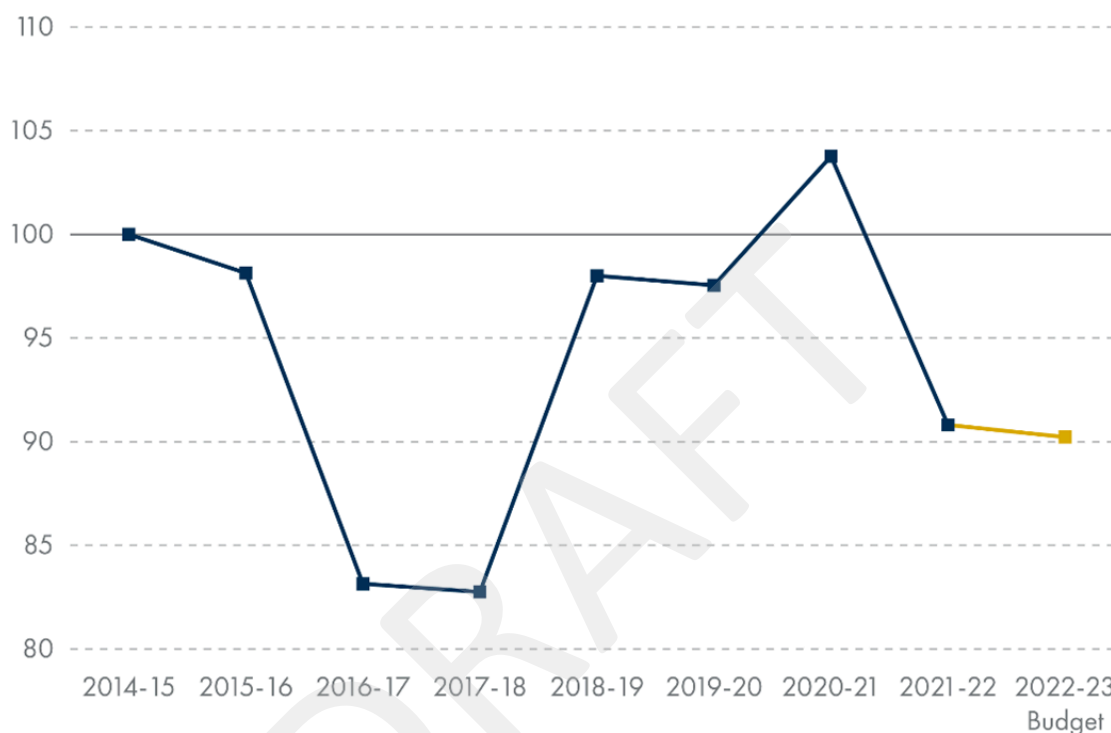
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i Creative Scotland told the Committee in its written submission to that inquiry that the recovery of the culture sector is "fragile and gradual", with the benefits delivered by the COVID-19 emergency support being "more than overtaken by a 'perfect storm' of factors."

Figure 3

Grants to Creative Scotland
Real Terms 2014-15 =100

Source: Personal Comms with Creative Scotland

83.   The Federation of Scottish Theatre noted that, as a result, organisations that are needed to deliver cultural work in communities "are in an extremely precarious financial position". It said that "inconsistency of funding" puts place-based cultural work "seriously at risk" and that place-based cultural policy needed to be "sufficiently and effectively resourced". [15]

84.   YDance highlighted that it is "increasingly difficult to source a reasonable level of funding for participatory dance programmes in local communities", noting that its Creative Scotland funding has been "standstill for 8 years" and "local authority culture and education budgets are cut to the bone". [25]

85.   Stellar Quines agreed that the arts having been "chronically underfunded and on standstill for so long creates a limit on what is possible". [22] Fèisean nan Gàidheal highlighted that standstill funding is having a "real effect" on its ability to "even sustain" the work it is currently delivering, "never mind develop it" [22]

86.   Findhorn Bay Arts noted 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." It highlighted that this "presents an unprecedented challenge" for trusts and foundations. [22] The Royal Scottish National Orchestra also commented that the reduction in its local authority income had put "increasing pressure on trust and foundation income" and that this would be "very difficult to sustain". [12]

87. Scottish Chamber Orchestra on the other hand spoke to the delivery of their five-year community residency in Craigmillar supported by funding from City of Edinburgh Council. It said this project was "a model for how it could work in other places, if that level of funding was available". [12]

The challenges of project funding for place-based culture

88. The Committee heard that organisations often have to source project funding for this community-based work, however that it is often short-term and volatile, and unable to cover essential core costs.

Short-term nature of funding

89. Professor Stevenson's view was that the "biggest challenge" the sector faces is a "persistent and pernicious obsession with short-term project funding". [12] Scottish Ballet said that this approach created a "stop-start mechanism" where funds are raised for piloting a project "and then that funding may drop away". [12]

90. The Committee has previously recognised that multi-year funding has been a consistent ask from the culture sector and set out its view that the shift towards increased multi-year funding should allow much greater progress in delivering the mainstreaming of culture across all policy areas. [23] In response to a letter from the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture, Angus Robertson MSP, ('the Cabinet Secretary') said in March 2023 that he remained "keen to conclude some work on multiyear funding, even if economic uncertainty means that the figures for later years can be at most only indicative." [26]

91. Scottish Opera outlined that "the need for consistency" and "taking a long-term approach" are key characteristics of a place-based approach. [12] Art27 highlighted that "short term and underfunded work disrupts trust" with communities, [27] while Findhorn Bay Arts said that "embedding artists in communities and building long, robust and meaningful relationships" helps to overcome barriers to participation. [22]

92. Station House Media Unit considered that "enabling and supporting creative community anchor organisations to run long-term interventions, co-designed and developed alongside those who benefit from them, creates long-term lasting change". It said that this impact is "almost impossible to replicate with short-term funded project work, where city centre based, regional, or national cultural organisations parachute in with 'outreach' course for a number of weeks and then have to pull out again when the funding comes to an end." [28]

93. But the Federation of Scottish Theatre recognised that "sustaining activity over time to evidence the real benefits of the intervention is less attractive [to funders] than new projects". [15] Alchemy Film and Arts said that funding applications "always need new ideas". [22]

94. The Committee heard that continually seeking small, short-term pots of funding,

requiring new ideas, takes up significant time and resource of staff members and volunteers, which drives energy away from delivery. [14] The Cabinet Secretary said that this "goes to the heart of why a multi-annual approach to the funding of cultural organisations" is a "priority" for the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland. He said he was "very keen to support Creative Scotland as it moves towards a new funding model" which he hoped would "obviate some of the issues around annual applications for funding". [29]

Who covers the overheads?

95.   Members heard that securing core funding for community-based cultural activity was a major challenge, with there being a persistent problem of what was referred to by stakeholders as "donut funding", where funding supports project delivery, such as material costs and freelancers, but not core costs such as the infrastructure, overheads of running a premises, and management staff costs. There was said to be an assumption from some non-government funders that core funding is met by local or central government. [14]

96.   However, it was outlined that without these core functions of community organisations, the organisations would not be able to operate, and therefore, the projects they run for communities would not be able to be delivered. [14]

97.   Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) reflected that "there is a trope that nobody will pay to fix the roof but that, if you tell them what is happening underneath it, you might get some money for the activity", and that funding mechanisms can "inhibit" such cultural activity "if they are focused too narrowly". [30]

98.   Professor Stevenson considered that in a "fractured funding landscape", "we have a big challenge in determining who covers the overheads, whether they are the overheads of a major theatre space or those of keeping the heating on in a village hall", and noted that in other countries, there is a "much clearer understanding of how different elements of the funding landscape support different things". [12]

99.   He said "we could take a much bolder overview by asking, 'What is national funding looking to support? Is that there to provide the infrastructure? Is the local authority there to provide the activity?' and considered that such a funding model would mean "individual organisations not having to spend time navigating a very complex landscape in order to piece together bits of funding to support the infrastructure." [12]

100.   We also note the conclusion of our predecessor committee in 2019 that the "existing policy framework for establishing the respective roles of local and national government in funding the arts, including opportunities for co-funding, is not working well." [31]

A specific funding stream

101.   The Committee heard that for many people, participation in culture in the community "is what their cultural life looks like". Therefore, the Culture Collective thought there was a need to consider "how we prioritise culture and community",

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"how we recognise that as more than just a nice add-on for the culture sector", and "how to shift the current balance to recognise the community element as the heart of the culture sector". [22]

102. It considered that "for far too long, there has been deeply embedded inequity in the cultural sector, whereby one form of culture" is "put on a pedestal above other forms of culture". [22] Members were told that community-based organisations, particularly in more deprived areas, were not equally funded with other arts organisations, and that it was important to consider who is able to access the culture provided by organisations in receipt of public funding. [14]

103. Creative Lives added that governments "must acknowledge that creativity extends far beyond the boundaries of the professional and publicly funded arts sector". [21]

104. The founding ethos of the first Arts Council of Great Britain that "it is about the best not the most" was said to still inform Creative Scotland's approach. [14] In relation to how community culture could be better prioritised, Art27 reported that "in other countries the complex and multifaceted community arts sector is recognised through its own sector development agencies". [27]

105. On the Committee's visit to Dumfries, Members heard comparisons made with Ireland, where national government makes distinctions about how it supports different types of culture, and where there were three core agencies supporting culture: the Arts Council (the equivalent of Creative Scotland), Create (an independent agency but one directly funded by the Arts Council, and supporting community-based creative practice), and Creative Ireland (which was understood to run mostly national initiatives for grassroots participation in culture). [14]

106. The Committee also heard that community-based culture should be better prioritised through funding. Professor Miles said that there needed to be "structural funding into communities". [12]

107. Members heard that community-based arts organisations often support the fulfilment of national outcomes in areas such as health and wellbeing, as well as the delivery of cultural opportunities to a wider breadth of people, and that this should be reflected in funding envelopes. [14]

108. An argument was made that there should be a specific funding stream for community-based culture, alongside funding for professional arts. The Stove Network considered that "culture funding is for professionally created culture", while conversely its "type of work is forced to compete for 'communities' funding and 'wellbeing' funding where it is judged against projects like foodbanks", and therefore "cultural participation projects often lose out in competitive funding environments". [32]

109. The Federation of Scottish Theatre echoed that this cultural activity can be often forced "into direct competition" for funding "with more traditional 'front line' services", with the wider value of culture not "always recognised by funders or key decision-makers when making choices between different activities". [15]

110. The Committee was told that "dedicated funding streams" for cultural participation

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projects were required to better support this activity. [32] The Stove Network suggested that this could be provided through portfolios such as health, education, and justice spending a percentage of their budget "on activities that support participation in culture towards their own portfolio objectives". [32]

111. The Cabinet Secretary told the Committee that "culture is agreed to be a priority across government because of what it can offer to the outcomes for which various government departments are responsible", however that the Scottish Government is still "in the foothills" of making the process of cross-portfolio funding work. [29]

112. The Committee also heard distinctions drawn between funding for sport and funding for culture, with it viewed that the funding of participation in sport, alongside funding for elite sport, could provide a model for funding for participation in culture. Professor Stevenson thought that "the challenge for arts and culture, which sport does not have, is that we are trying to service both with the same policy interventions; whereas, in sport, it is recognised that elite-level sport requires different interventions from those that support local-level movement and sport activity." [12]

113. However, Creative Lives' view was that it would be a "mistake to separate so-called professional creative practice and community-led creative practice" in funding streams, as it said this is "an ecology in which things are inherently linked". It said that "we run into muddy water if we start to have a false dichotomy involving professional, amateur and community arts" as they are "all interrelated". Instead, its view was that "funding streams in the creative sector work best when there is scope for collaboration and flexibility". [19]

114. **The Committee concluded in its pre-budget scrutiny report last year that the budgetary challenges facing the culture sector had become "much more acute", contributed to by a "perfect storm" of long-term budget pressures, reduced income generation, and increased operating costs, as noted at paragraph 78 above. Our view was that these challenges meant there was now "an increased urgency for the Scottish Government to accelerate consideration and implementation of an innovative approach to the funding of the culture sector," including "progressing additional revenue streams such as the Percentage for the Arts scheme", for "consideration" to "be given to how the sector could benefit" from a Transient Visitor Levy scheme, and "consideration of investment from budget lines beyond the culture portfolio". [23]**

115. **Through this inquiry, the Committee heard that these long-standing financial challenges facing the culture sector, which have intensified in recent years, places limits on what is possible in the delivery of place-based and participatory cultural projects with communities.**

116. **We also heard that the reliance on project funding—which is short-term, volatile, requires resource-intensive applications, and does not cover core costs—presented significant challenges for community-based cultural organisations in supporting the delivery of a place-based approach to culture, as this requires greater consistency and a longer-term embedding**

within communities to be successful.

117. **The Committee's view is that the current funding environment poses a significant challenge to the successful delivery of place-based cultural policy, and we re-affirm our call for the consideration and implementation of innovative approaches to the funding of the culture sector to be accelerated in response. A multi-annual approach to funding, which the Cabinet Secretary said the Scottish Government considers a "priority", is at the heart of this. Recognising the immediacy of the challenges facing the culture sector, the Committee is of the view that the Scottish Government should set out, in the context of Budget 2024-25 and the publication of the refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan, how it will accelerate the implementation of innovative approaches to the funding of the culture sector. We will consider this further in our forthcoming pre-budget scrutiny.**

118. **Given the evidence received that place-based cultural activity often relies on project funding which does not cover core costs, we also acknowledge that there is a challenge in determining 'who covers the overheads' within the funding landscape, and that there needs to be a clearer understanding of the respective roles of national and local government funding for community-based culture in supporting cultural activity as well as the infrastructure underpinning it.**

119. **The Committee's view, therefore, is that the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, COSLA and local authorities should consider how it can take a strategic, joined-up and complementary approach to funding for cultural activity in communities, what the respective roles of national agencies and local government are, and where external funders are able to fill any gaps, noting the evidence we received that a reliance on trusts and foundations as a result of reduced public funding for culture is unsustainable. We further consider collaboration between local and national government as part of the next section of this report.**

120. **We will also write to key non-government funders of cultural activity in communities to invite their views on the evidence and conclusions of this report, including on the challenges raised by stakeholders in relation to short-term project funding, and on the roles of non-government funders within the funding landscape, given the financial challenges facing national agencies and local government.**

121. **Lastly, the Committee acknowledges that there was a strong view expressed in the evidence we received that there needs to be a greater prioritisation of the role of community-based and place-based culture as being central to the cultural sector and the delivery of cultural outcomes, with the recognition that, for many people, their cultural participation is within their communities. We therefore invite the Scottish Government to explore the model suggested by some witnesses for community-based culture to be considered and funded separately from professional arts.**

122. **Stakeholders suggested that this could be supported by funding from**

across different portfolios for activities that support participation in culture towards their respective objectives. We note the comments of the Cabinet Secretary that while culture is agreed to be a priority across government, the Scottish Government is still in the "foothills" of making cross-portfolio funding work. As noted above, our view is that the Scottish Government should now set out how it will accelerate this work.

123. **The Committee has recommended through our scrutiny of the Resource Spending Review Framework and our pre-budget scrutiny for Budget 2023-24 that consideration should be given to investment in culture from budget lines beyond the culture portfolio. We reiterate this view again, and that the contribution that community-based cultural activity in particular makes to wider local outcomes should be considered as part of this discussion.**

Local cultural provision

124.   A key consideration of the Committee's inquiry was the role of local government, alongside national government, in ensuring that communities have opportunities for cultural participation. We address the challenges and opportunities facing local cultural provision below.

Challenges to local cultural services

125.   Local authorities are required to "ensure that there is adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities", though "adequate" is not defined.[ii] Some local authorities have arms-length external organisations run their culture services.

126.   However, the Committee heard that funding challenges facing local government were impacting on the provision of cultural services in communities by local authorities and arms-length culture trusts.

127.   The *Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2023* report from the Accounts Commission assessed that, with "little resilience" in local culture and leisure services "owing to long-term funding reductions", future challenges to these services are "significant". Figure 4 illustrates the percentage change in local government expenditure on culture and leisure services from 2012-13 to 2021-22 compared to other services.

Figure 4

Percentage change in expenditure (in real terms) over ten years from 2012/13 to 2021/22
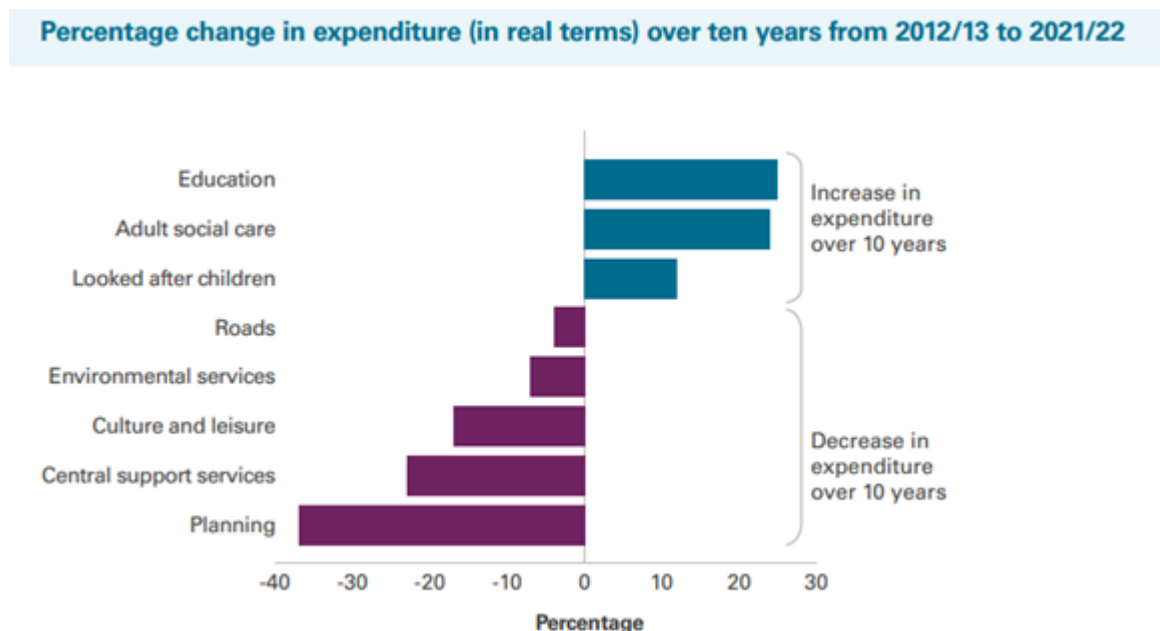
Source: Local Government Benchmarking Framework, 2021/22

128.   SPICe analysed local government spend on Museums and Galleries, Other Culture and Heritage, and Library Services from 2011-12 to 2022-23 with financial data

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ii Section 14 of the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982

based on collations of individual local authority outturns (Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics workbooks and 2022-23 Provisional Outturn and Budget Estimates). The data for 2022-23 is a budget estimate. [24]

129.   Spend in cash terms is shown in Figure 5 below. SPICe notes that this demonstrates a clearer trend of reduced spend in cash terms on library services. Figure 6 shows the relative real terms changes of local government spending on: the sum of museums and galleries and other cultural and heritage activities; and libraries. SPICe stated that this shows significant real terms reductions in spend by local government in these areas. [24]
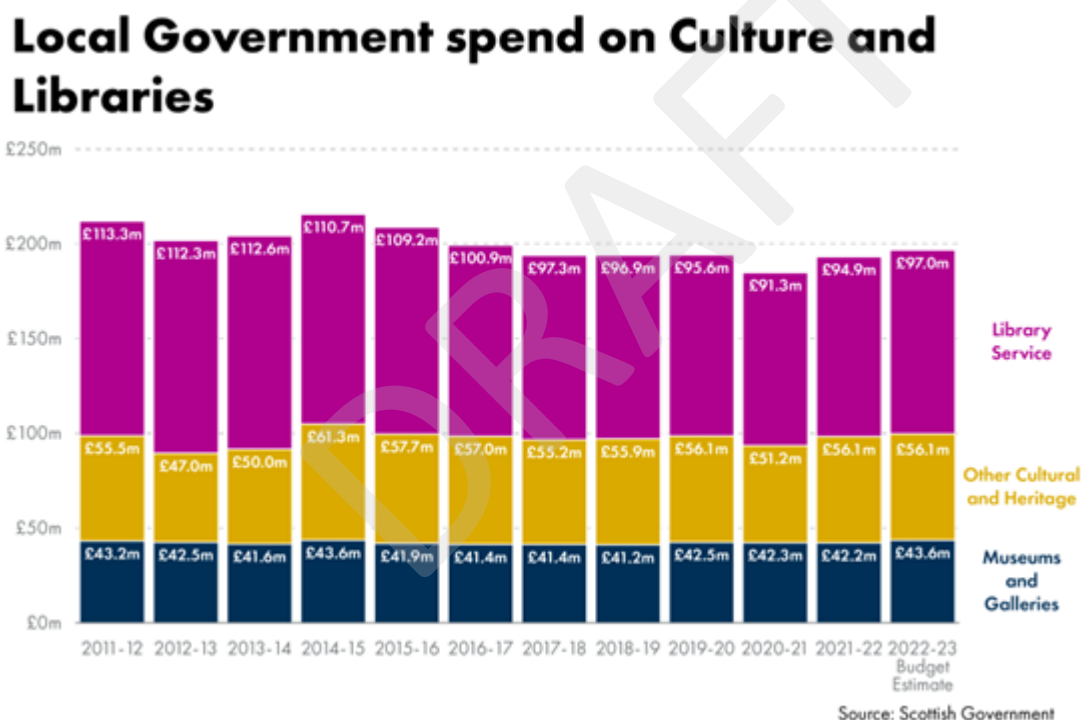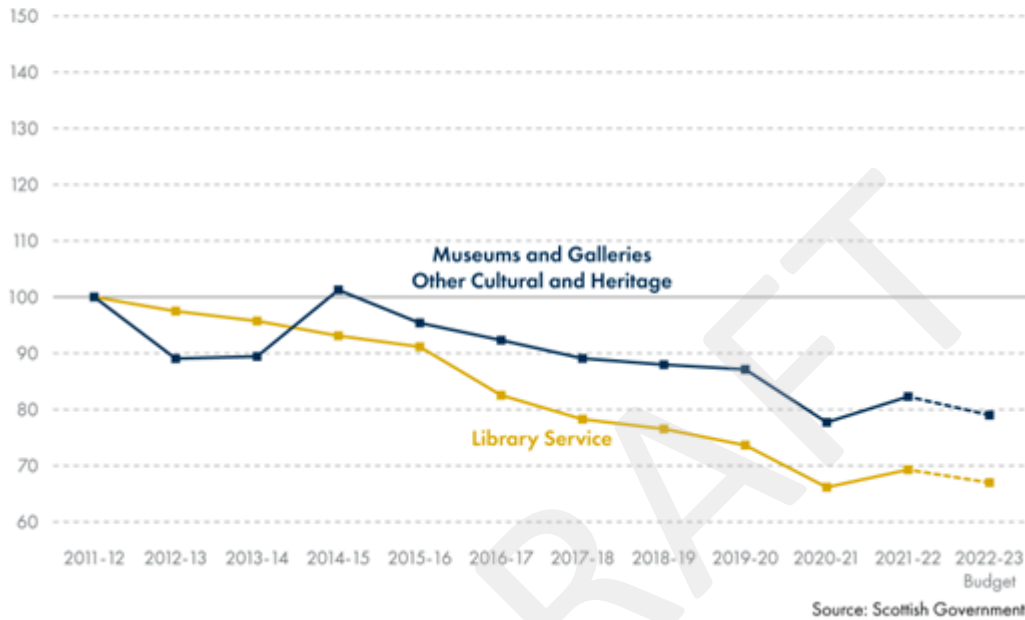
Figure 5

Local Government spend on Culture and Libraries

Source: Scottish Government

Figure 6

Local Government spend on Culture and Libraries

Real Terms 2011-12 =100

Source: Scottish Government

130. The Federation of Scottish Theatre noted that the "scarcity of specific local authority cultural funding over the last decade, and recent cuts across local authorities in Scotland, is keenly felt". [15] The Museums Association said that such reductions in spend "will result in some local authorities limiting cultural provision or removing free access to culture". [9]

131. Glasgow Life said "the health of local government finances" is having a "direct impact on the funding available" for the services it provides. It urged the Committee to understand the "increasingly impossible tasks of balancing the cost of running venues alongside the costs of providing cultural programmes" and noted that "the current funding context must be addressed at national and local levels to provide strategic, sustainable place-based cultural activity". [33]

132. Community Leisure told the Committee that, as of March 2023, 95% of the arms-length culture trusts in its membership were "at risk", with management fees from local authorities having been "steadily decreasing over a number of years". It said that "any reductions will now result in reductions in provision". [34]

133. Creative Scotland expressed concern that "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". [8] Creative Lives referred to there having been a "decimation of local arts development officers" across Scotland. [19]

134. The Committee also heard of the impact of the reduction in local authority funding for culture on the provision of cultural activities by cultural organisations. For

example, Scottish Ballet said that it was previously funded in each local authority area where it performed to do outreach programmes with organisations in those areas, however that this funding "has eroded to zero" over the last decade, while the Royal Scottish National Orchestra said that local authority funding had "decreased enormously", and while it is committed to work in every local authority, "the funding for that now comes from trusts and foundations". [12]

135.   Given the reduction in spend on cultural services by local authorities, the Museums Association considered that national government should work with local government together with the third sector "to ensure that each local authority in Scotland has a strong cultural offering to avoid access to culture becoming a postcode lottery". [9]

136.   Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland said that there is an "inconsistency in cultural provision at the local level". [22] The Independent Report of the National Partnership for Culture was also of the view that "there is currently significant disparity in the role culture plays within local authorities across Scotland, which is a significant barrier to realising the aspirations of the Culture Strategy across every part of Scotland". [17]

137.   The Cabinet Secretary expressed concerns that in some local authorities there may have been a "diminution" of local cultural provision, noting that "decisions have been made in localities that relegate the importance of culture and the arts in decision making and delivery". [29]

138.   He told the Committee that national and local government have "co-responsibility" for delivering on culture and that he wanted to work in partnership with local government "to underline the importance of mainstreaming culture and arts priorities in local decision making", noting that there could be more done to protect local cultural provision. [29]

139.   The Cabinet Secretary noted the importance of empowering local authorities to make decisions about local priorities, however at the same time acknowledged the concern that this "might lead to culture and the arts being less supported in some parts of the country". He told the Committee that he was keen to work with partners in local government to ensure that culture is not the first thing to be economised in favour of other priorities, given the current financial constraints. [29]

140.   He added that the Scottish Government was "very alive" to the fact that if there has been a "diminution" of the cultural provision being delivered by local authorities, "there is potential for displacement and for the costs needing to be borne by others, whether that is Creative Scotland or the Scottish Government directly". [29]

141.   **The Committee notes the essential role of local government in the delivery of a place-based approach to culture, including through the delivery of cultural services, the provision of spaces for cultural activity to take place in, and the provision of grant funding for cultural activity, at a local and more decentralised level; as well as through empowering communities to grow cultural activities and shape cultural services which meet their needs.**

142.   **The Committee also recognises the funding challenges facing local**

government and echoes the concerns raised by witnesses about the impact that reductions in spend on cultural services by local authorities could have on their ability to deliver those services for communities.

143. **There is also an outstanding question for the Committee in relation to the impact that the reduction of local authority funding for culture and reduction in services in some cases may have on other actors within the cultural ecosystem to fill any gaps in provision, noting the wider funding challenges for culture discussed above.**

144. **The Committee's view is that the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, COSLA and local authorities should work in partnership to assess the ongoing impact of the fiscal environment on local cultural provision, and in line with the Place Principle approach, support a clear way forward for services which will maximise the impact of combined resources. We further consider the collaboration necessary within local authorities, and between local and national governments, to deliver a place-based approach, and the opportunities provided by Community Planning Partnerships to facilitate this collaboration below.**

A whole system approach

145. As outlined above, the culture strategy recognised that "a collaborative, place-based approach can help create the right conditions for culture to thrive", and committed to work with local government to realise local outcomes. [1]

146. Throughout its scrutiny of the culture portfolio this session, the Committee has reported on the value of taking a 'whole system' approach, between and across different layers of government, to realise the wider benefits of culture for communities. In reporting on the Resource Spending Review Framework, the Committee agreed with COSLA that "a 'whole system' approach is essential to the spending review and that this is consistent with an outcomes-focused and collaborative approach". [35] In response, the Scottish Government recognised the need to "collaborate, both across Scottish Government and the wider public sector to achieve the outcomes we seek". [36]

147. Through this inquiry, the Committee considered how national and local layers of government work together and complement each other in line with the Place Principle to support the provision of cultural services, ensure that communities have opportunities to take part in cultural activities locally, and support local outcomes to be met through culture.

148. On 30 June 2023, after the Committee had concluded taking evidence on this inquiry, the Scottish Government and COSLA announced a new Partnership Agreement (the Verity House Agreement), setting out their "vision for a more collaborative approach" to delivering "shared priorities for the people of Scotland".

Local-national co-ordination

149. As mentioned above, the culture strategy outlined that the adoption of the Place Principle by the Scottish Government and COSLA—which committed them to taking a "collaborative, place-based approach with a shared purpose to support a clear way forward for all services, assets and investments which will maximise the impact of their combined resources"—could help realise the strategy's "vision of an inclusive and extended view of culture which recognises and celebrates the value and importance of the emerging, the everyday and grassroots culture and creativity." [1]

150. There are a number of actions in the culture strategy which relate to local authorities, including for the Scottish Government to—

- Work with Creative Scotland to map local authority support for culture and to explore future models of collaboration between national and local bodies;

- Launch a Creative Communities programme in partnership with Inspiring Scotland and with support from Creative Scotland – a new initiative to support and empower individuals and communities to further develop their own cultural activity;

- Work in partnership with culture trusts and local authorities, including in Community Planning Partnerships local networks and COSLA to realise local outcomes across Scotland;

- Work with Culture Conveners from Scottish local government and culture trusts including through establishing a joint meeting of arts and culture conveners;

- Work with national organisations to help them plan their community activities to ensure the widest possible reach across Scotland.

151. As it has not been reported how much progress has been made on these actions aside from on the Creative Communities programme, SPICe outlined that the extent to which local authorities have engaged with these actions is not clear. The extent to which local authorities refer to the national culture strategy or use it to influence local plans or strategies is also unclear. [37]

152. Community Leisure previously told the Committee that there are "opportunities for closer alignments, particularly in how the culture strategy at a national level is adopted and embedded at local authority level and in how local authority approaches to provision feed into a national strategy." [38] In evidence to this inquiry, it said that "the picture is perhaps a bit mixed across the country" in relation to how the culture strategy has influenced delivery at a local level, and that this "depends very much on local authorities' priorities and how they implement and embed the strategy". [13]

153. Glasgow Life said that the national culture strategy "significantly influences how we conceive, deliver and conceptualise culture in Glasgow" and that it provided a "platform on which conversations with national agencies take place". [13]

154. COSLA also previously told the Committee that while the culture strategy had been "well received", in its view, "without joint political ownership and investment it is difficult to see how the strategy will positively influence provision at a local level in

the tight financial climate." [39]

155. The Culture, Tourism, Europe, and External Affairs Committee in Session 5 recommended in 2019 that there should be an "intergovernmental policy framework between local and national government to support the arts as part of its [then] forthcoming culture strategy", with "a requirement for local authorities to plan for culture and to take account of local and national priorities in doing so." [31]

156. The response from the then Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for culture noted that as set out in the culture strategy, the Scottish Government along with COSLA was establishing a joint meeting of the Culture Conveners from Scottish local government and culture trusts, which it said would be "a critical first step in giving due consideration to the Committee's recommendation for a new intergovernmental policy framework between local and national government to support the arts." [40]

157. Community Leisure told this Committee that it had held "discussions with COSLA on the culture conveners initiative with regard to how that works and what its purpose is." It added: "we want to think about shaping that a little bit more so that there is more value and a clear purpose there." [13]

158. The National Partnership for Culture, established by the Scottish Government to advise Ministers on the delivery of the culture strategy, made the following recommendations on 'Community and Place' when it reported in March 2022 which stressed the importance of effective collaboration between approaches at national and local levels—

   • National initiatives should be joined up and both inform and be influenced by local and regional initiatives;

   • Equity of access to culture should be prioritised at a national level to support local, grassroots delivery; and

   • Local authorities should use culture as part of their delivery across wider local authority services. [17]

159. The Scottish Government responded in September 2022 that while "setting the strategic direction of local authorities is not facilitated by the Scottish Government, nor does the Scottish Government provide direct funding for local authority culture facilities", it was "working with partners to develop actions that support national and local organisations working together to support culture, which will be captured in the forthcoming Culture Strategy Action Plan". [41]

160. It said that "this work will complement meetings between Ministers and the Culture Conveners group, to identify ways to strengthen and review models of co-operation around the principals of recovery and renewal and through key workstreams such as education, health and wellbeing. [41]

161. The Committee asked for an update on the action within the culture strategy for the Scottish Government to "work with Creative Scotland to map local authority support for culture and to explore future models of collaboration between national and local bodies".

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162. Creative Scotland told the Committee that while work had been undertaken to "map the structures and financial channels in the sector and to look at how national bodies work with public bodies", this had been paused due to the pandemic. It said it planned to revisit this work later in the year. [16]

163. It also recognised that since the work it had undertaken on the mapping exercise prior to the pandemic, "the financial context has changed considerably", stating that the "significant pressure" on local authorities and cultural trusts had not provided "a gap" for Creative Scotland to meet with local authority partners to map out how they wanted to work together. [16]

164. Creative Scotland also said that the loss of arts development services in some local authorities "creates barriers and a lack of consistent provision across Scotland" and "can result in significant challenges for national and local government, and national bodies, to work collaboratively for the benefit of communities." [8] The Cabinet Secretary also recognised that where there is a loss of arts development officers, the local authority and, by extension, national organisations, lose the "interlocutor" which they rely on to know what is happening culturally in communities. [29]

165. Community Leisure assessed that "the national-local dynamic needs a bit more co-ordination" however that there had been increased partnership working since the pandemic. [13] Glasgow Life concluded that a "more joined-up approach between local and national agencies" was "urgently required to address barriers to creating sustainable place-based programmes of cultural activity". [33] It described "the connection between national, metropolitan, regional and local levels" as not "completely coherent". [13]

166. **The Committee recognises that while there is an appetite for a more joined-up approach between local government and national agencies, and that this vision has been supported by the culture strategy and the Place Principle, the evidence we received would suggest that further progress is required to improve collaboration.**

167. **The Committee would therefore welcome a further update before the end of 2023 on what progress has been made on the commitment in the culture strategy for the Scottish Government to work with Creative Scotland to map local authority support for culture and explore future models of collaboration between national and local bodies.**

168. **The Committee is cognisant that, if local authority support for culture is not understood at a national level, it may be challenging to assess where there is unmet cultural need across Scotland and direct resources. This is particularly pertinent in the context of reductions in spend on cultural services by local authorities.**

169. **We also note the evidence received in relation to the loss of arts development services across several local authorities and the impact that this could have on collaboration between national and local government, as well as on the level of support provided to communities to develop cultural activity.**

> 170. **The Committee invites the Scottish Government to set out as part of its refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan how it will respond to the recommendations of the National Partnership for Culture and how it will seek to improve collaboration and connection between local government and national agencies in the delivery of place-based culture. Below, we consider the role of Community Planning Partnerships as a vehicle through which this collaboration can take place.**

Community planning

171. As mentioned at the outset of this report, the passage of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 ('the 2015 Act') was an important step in making progress towards a community-led and collaborative approach to the delivery of public services. The 2015 Act made significant changes to community planning legislation in response to recommendations of the Christie Commission, with the reforms recognising that public bodies need to work closely in partnership with each other and their local communities in order to make the biggest difference in the outcomes for which they are responsible. [42]

172. The culture strategy committed the Scottish Government to "support Creative Scotland and other national cultural organisations to realise the potential that culture has to achieve local outcomes", and also to "work in partnership with culture trusts and local authorities, including in Community Planning Partnerships local networks and COSLA to realise local outcomes". [1]

173. In particular, the role that Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) can play in providing a forum for public services, including national and local layers of government, and communities to work together to meet local outcomes through culture was raised by several witnesses in evidence to this inquiry, and we consider this below.

174. CPPs are intended to enable public bodies to work together along with local communities to design and deliver better services. Each CPP focuses on where partners' collective efforts and resources can add the most value to their local communities, with particular emphasis on reducing inequality. [43]

175. CPPs are required by the 2015 Act to prepare and publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) which SPICe advise should be clearly based on active participation by communities and community bodies and on a good understanding of the needs of the communities in the local area. [37] The Session 5 Committee highlighted that 2015 Act did not provide any role for the Scottish Government to require LOIPs to reflect nationally imposed priorities. [31]

176. The culture strategy suggests that "arts and culture can contribute to many of the often deep-rooted and complex themes that [CPPs] typically prioritise in their Local Outcomes Improvement Plans, such as around inclusive growth and improving employment prospects, positive physical and mental health, children's wellbeing and sustaining fragile communities. [1]

177. SPICe suggest that one might expect CPPs to consider both how a range of services could impact on the availability of cultural activities across local communities and how cultural activities could contribute to a range of outcomes. [37]

178. Community Leisure highlighted the benefits that its members have seen from sitting on CPPs—

> "They can understand the discussions about community and they have opportunities to be involved: for example, if there is a discussion about health and wellbeing, they can offer a service. Such a connection is made much more fluidly than it would be if they were sitting outside the community planning partnership and trying to understand what was happening within it." [13]

179. Glasgow Life said that CPPs are "important for presenting an opportunity for culture to build coalitions and consensus and to develop relationships and move things forward. [13]

180. Creative Scotland said that "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." [8]

181. Within local authorities, the Committee heard that it was important for culture to be "embedded across services" and taken "out of the silo that it has perhaps traditionally been in". However, Community Leisure said that "there are challenges where culture does not have a high profile at a local level". [13]

182. It explained: "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." [13]

183. BEFS noted that CPPs have "lots of competing demands" and that there is a challenge in "how culture finds its voice within that when there are health and education priorities". [30] Glasgow Life noted that, with "competing priorities for the public pound", "culture always has to make its case". [13]

184. Community Leisure told that the "voice of culture" in community planning partnerships is "not consistent across the country". It commented that there are "significant issues around the value of culture coming through" where there is "no connection to community planning partnerships and health and social care partnerships, or to the local authorities". It said it was important to have the "right flags in the ground" to "connect the different agencies". [13]

185. This inconsistency was highlighted by varying experiences across the local authorities that the Committee heard from.

186. In Renfrewshire, the CPP is "part of the discussion" in how the investment associated with Paisley's UK City of Culture 2021 bid and its legacy plan is being

spent. [13] While Glasgow Life is "heavily engaged" in the community planning partnership process in Glasgow, its view was that "the priority that community planning partnerships attach to culture could, possibly, be better". [13]

187. Moray Council agreed that the connection of culture with the CPP could be improved. It said that culture is connected to the CPP in Moray and in its LOIP, however that this was focused solely on how culture supports economic development, rather than wellbeing. [13]

188. Dumfries and Galloway Council said "culture does not feature" in the CPP at present however it hoped this would change. Cultural voices however were represented on the community learning and development partnership and the place partnership. [13]

189. The Stove Network said that there needed to be "joined up working" between community organisations, local authorities, and local cultural organisations. It suggested that "this could be facilitated through appointing cultural representatives to community planning partnerships, local health boards, and regional economic partnerships". [32]

190. Glasgow Life regarded the inclusion of culture in forums such as community learning and development partnerships, community planning partnerships, and health and social care partnerships as a "no brainer". [13]

191. The 2015 Act expanded the number of public sector bodies that are subject to community planning duties, and placed specific duties on those community planning partners, including to co-operate with other partners in carrying out community planning. [6] Schedule 1 sets out the statutory community planning partners. This includes bodies such as sportscotland, however Creative Scotland is not listed.

192. Creative Scotland told the Committee that it was "on record" as saying it "would be positive about being a statutory partner in community planning." At present, it felt as though it often needs to "knock on the door from the outside just to get into conversations at local level." [16]

193. While not being a statutory partner does not stop it "working effectively with all local authorities and helping them to develop their strategies and plans", Creative Scotland's concern was that "it gives rise to the potential for an uneven strategic locus across the country." [16]

194. It added that LOIPs "do not always mention culture. Councils might have cultural strategies sitting to the side of those plans, but we want to see them in the centre—the more central we can be to local planning protocols, the better." [16]

195. The Cabinet Secretary noted that "sometimes culture and the arts are not afforded the prominence they should have in terms of planning", and said that it would be an "entirely sensible approach" to have cultural organisations embedded in CPPs. [29]

196. **The Committee recognises that CPPs can provide an important mechanism**

for collaboration between local and national bodies and with communities more broadly. However, it is clear from the evidence we received that CPPs could be better utilised with respect to culture.

197. The Committee heard that, where there is a cultural voice in CPPs and other forums, this can be beneficial in giving culture a greater platform and providing opportunities to facilitate interventions which use culture as means to improve local outcomes across portfolios. However, that the extent of this cultural voice in community planning is inconsistent across Scotland.

198. The Committee recognises that there is a strong argument for a cultural organisation, such as Creative Scotland, to be a statutory partner in community planning, to provide a cultural voice in community planning, and support an improved collaboration and alignment between local government and national agencies. We support Creative Scotland's call for it to be a statutory partner in community planning. Additionally, the Committee's view is that CPPs should ensure that local cultural organisations are represented in community planning processes.

Spaces for culture

199.   Finally, the Committee consistently heard throughout its inquiry that having physical spaces within communities where culture could take place was key to enabling the development and growth of cultural activity locally and therefore in supporting a place-based approach.

200.   Creative Scotland reflected 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", for example "through access to spaces". [8] It said that "reducing barriers to accessing spaces" can "ensure the sustainability of smaller communities and neighbourhoods". [8]

201.   In this section of the report, we consider—

- The challenges faced in mapping and accessing the physical spaces in communities that can be used for cultural activity; and

- The role that community ownership and the planning system could play in protecting these cultural and community assets.

Community assets as cultural spaces

202.   Professor Miles told the Committee that, in many communities, cultural participation is supported by "the availability of all kinds of infrastructure that would not be termed as cultural". [12] The Committee heard that culture takes place across a variety of spaces, both in traditional cultural venues such as theatres, but also in community assets such as village halls, community centres, schools, libraries, and church buildings.

203.   The Cabinet Secretary recognised that "one of the most significant contributions" local authorities make to culture in communities is the provision of facilities for cultural groups to use, for example school buildings. [29]

204.   During its visit to Orkney, the Committee was told how some community assets were being used as multi-purpose spaces for different forms of cultural activity. For example, the town hall was used as a concert hall, cinema, and theatre, and different groups using the building were able to share resources. [14]

205.   Professor Miles stated that such assets "are fundamentally important resources that we need to retain and recognise for their importance." [12] Professor Stevenson also thought there was "a risk that we do not properly understand what our cultural infrastructure is", and considered that it was important to recognise these community spaces as an important part of the cultural ecology. [12]

206.   However, Professor Stevenson did not think enough use was being made of public spaces that could be cultural spaces. [12] Creative Lives said that it was important to better utilise existing venues, but also to reimagine the creative commons and to better use civic spaces such as parks, cafes, and pubs, as well as libraries and the

school estate. [19] It highlighted its 'Spaces for Creativity' survey which found that "95 per cent of venue respondents reported that they would like to attract more creative groups to their venue". [21]

Access to cultural spaces

207. Concerns were raised with the Committee regarding the affordability and availability of spaces that support cultural activity in communities, and the impact of the potential closure of assets on the cultural ecology. Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland warned against the "encroaching danger of the loss of third spaces that are not work or home". [22]

208. Making Music highlighted that access to "affordable and accessible venues" was part of the "delicate infrastructure" that its members required to sustain their cultural activity. It warned that this infrastructure which is sustaining voluntary arts "will be eroded if we do not take care". [19]

209. At the other end of the spectrum, the Committee also heard that venues which rely on local authority support are "crucial" to the work of the National Performing Companies which "produce the content that goes out to those venues". The National Theatre of Scotland made clear that it "cannot exist without the venues that local authorities provide". It told the Committee that "the cultural economy is very much interlinked", and therefore, "if any one aspect of the cultural landscape is affected, we all are". [12]

210. However, Professor Stevenson noted that as a result of the financial challenges facing public bodies in owning and managing community assets, the costs are being passed "further and further down the chain" with it "harder and harder for people to access spaces". [13]

211. Community Leisure agreed that many of those using culture trust spaces for creative activities "may be unable to afford higher rates or to, in turn, pass on costs to members of their groups". It considered that "there is a balance to ensure that activities and services remain affordable and accessible for all within the community, whilst ensuring financial sustainability of the organisation". [34]

212. Creative Lives said that "many local venues and facilities have remained closed" following the pandemic, with those that have reopened "now more expensive" and local groups "'priced out' of their own communities". [21] Volunteer Scotland highlighted that "the lack of affordable and accessible community venues" had pre-dated the pandemic. [18]

213. Fèisean nan Gàidheal considered that "unaffordable rental levels" for community spaces such as schools "present a very real threat to community cultural activities". [44] It suggested, therefore, "if local authorities are looking at their obligations with regard to providing cultural activities to people," the cost to rent such spaces should be a consideration. [22]

214. Moray Council acknowledged that "there has been a lack of investment" in local authority managed venues, many of which are not "set-up to provide cultural

activities to the extent that organisations are seeking". [13]

215. Creative Scotland also expressed concerns about the condition of "the fabric of buildings in the asset base around Scotland—not just the Victorian theatres, but much newer buildings as well." It said there is "a need for repair and renovation to be covered by small capital and equipment funds" and that it is "doing further work to quantify the cost of that". However, Creative Scotland said that its current funding mix "does not allow" for it to have a capital programme to support the refurbishment of cultural assets. [16]

216. Creative Lives expressed concerns about the "longer-term viability of venues run by local councils or arms-length culture and leisure trusts, which may be subject to closure". [21] The Committee heard that some assets owned by local authorities or culture trusts were under threat, given the financial pressures facing local government.

217. Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland provided an example of one local authority in which it delivers work where 133 community spaces "will potentially be divested from its estate in the next two years", some of which are "key community centres" that are used for cultural work. It warned that this response to "short-term financial problems" would ultimately lead to "longer-term problems for communities if some of those centres shut down". [22]

218. Community Leisure reported in November 2022 that 63% of culture trusts in Scotland are in "discussions and planning" relating to the closure of local venues including community halls, theatres, and libraries, with increasing energy bills, local authority pay awards and depleted reserves highlighted as adding to the financial pressure. [21]

219. Several witnesses also expressed concerns regarding the potential impact of the Church of Scotland rationalising its estate. BEFS recognised that there was "a social outcome and a civic need" for the buildings within the church estate "to be part of our places and our community". [30]

220. Making Music said that church buildings were "ideal" for its members to use for music making due to their size and acoustics, and with more than half of the voluntary-led music groups within its membership using church halls, the rationalisation of the church estate was "proving a significant challenge". [19]

221. The Cabinet Secretary said that many churches and church halls no longer being available "underlines the importance of local government making facilities available to cultural and arts organisations". Where those facilities are not available, he suggested that "thought must be given at the local level to what alternatives might exist". [29]

222. Professor Stevenson viewed that the impact of community spaces closing was even "more significant in rural areas and smaller places, in terms of the effect of one space—one community hall—that had supported a multitude of cultural activities closing down." [12]

223. Professor Stevenson highlighted that while "strong arguments" have been made for

why spaces such as Edinburgh's Filmhouse should be protected, spaces "across our communities" which are "as important to the cultural ecology" as the Filmhouse, such as community halls, are closing down without the same "anguish" being expressed. [12]

224.   He considered that "we are ignoring" the "places that are shutting", and suggested that when looking at 'what works', "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." [12]

225.   **The Committee recognises that community assets are an essential part of the local infrastructure necessary to sustain cultural activity in communities, and to delivering a place-based approach. For culture to thrive within communities, there must be spaces in which cultural activities can take place.**

226.   **The Committee is therefore concerned by the evidence we received that some cultural and community assets are becoming less available, less affordable, and at risk of closure. We recognise that the lack of access to or loss of community assets and spaces is likely to impact on the access to culture for those communities. We consider the role of the planning system in protecting spaces for culture below.**

227.   **The Scottish Government may also wish to explore, given the concerns raised about the condition of assets within the cultural ecology, whether there should be a role for Creative Scotland to deliver a capital programme to support the refurbishment, retrofitting and upkeep of assets that are used for cultural activity.**

Mapping spaces for culture

228.   The Committee heard that the mapping of cultural and community assets and spaces was important to support those assets to be better-utilised, and to inform planning decisions.

229.   Through its work in helping communities create community-led plans, Planning Aid Scotland recognised that "one of the simplest yet most important actions is to understand and co-ordinate the physical assets and cultural activities of a place." It highlighted that through this process, communities "often discover under-utilised assets" that "can be brought into use to benefit the community's cultural life". [4]

230.   The Committee also heard that the "co-ordination of the data on all our assets, cultural or otherwise, will be increasingly important when we consider the potential for assets to be transferred into community hands". BEFS elaborated that "even if there is a well-meaning intention behind saving an asset for a community, that does not necessarily mean that it is the right asset in the right place", and that "even the most enthusiastic local community cannot support multiple cultural centres". Therefore, it is important for communities to know "what might be coming on to the market so that there is not a knee-jerk reaction as soon as something comes into play". [30]

231. However, the Committee was told that there was no comprehensive mapping of assets nationally. Professor Miles said that the Everyday Participation research project which he led collected its own data on assets "because official sources were so inaccurate and did not encompass the wider definition of culture". Professor Stevenson told the Committee that "we do not have a good data set for all the assets and spaces". [12]

232. Creative Scotland recognised that when working locally, it can be "hugely helpful in having all the partners around the table and mapping not only the assets that we know about but those that the local community feels could be brought back into use", however, it said that nationally it would "not look to have an asset register because of the scale of resources required for its creation and upkeep". [16]

233. **We note the views of Creative Scotland that it would be challenging to keep a national asset register, however we recognise that the mapping of cultural and community assets and spaces could support those assets to be better-utilised, improve understanding of the impact of individual site closures within the wider local context, and inform planning decisions, and should be at least being undertaken at a local authority level. The Scottish Government and national agencies should also have an understanding of where across Scotland communities have limited access to spaces for culture.**

Community ownership of cultural assets

234. The Committee heard that communities taking on the ownership and management of assets that support cultural activity is one possible route to keeping those assets open for use by the community.

235. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 introduced a right for community bodies to make requests to all local authorities, Scottish Ministers, and a range of public bodies for any land or buildings they feel they could make better use of. They can request ownership, lease, or other rights.

236. The Committee was told by Community Leisure that culture trusts have "expressed an interest in further exploring and discussing the practicalities" of transferring venues to the community through the community asset transfer process. [34]

237. Station House Media Unit considered that "the model of community ownership of cultural assets can provide an innovative and sustainable future for creative community engagement". [28] However, the Committee heard concerns that some communities could feel obligated to "step up" and take on the management of assets that are due to close, "because it will not want to lose that space, as it is important for their cultural activity". [19]

238. Volunteer Scotland expressed concerns about assets being "offloaded" on to communities, where "if they want to keep that asset, they need to put in the time to keep it open", and it questioned whether it is a voluntary decision "if somebody feels

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that they have to take it on for the benefit of the community". [19]

239. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) highlighted that the main challenge in community ownership was not the initial transfer of the asset to the community—"which can be done fairly easily"—but the ongoing "management and maintenance" of the asset. [30]

240. Planning Aid Scotland identified that "the crucial thing for making community asset transfer successful is to work with the communities right from the outset", with it being "really important to identify who has the capacity and the skill set within communities to ensure that, once the asset is transferred, it has a long-term sustainable future." [30]

241. BEFS summarised the key barrier to sustainable community ownership of churches as the capacity that it requires within communities, and finding people to volunteer their support while "the time that people have to do those things has been diminishing", and while "reductions in local authority staffing" has placed additional requirements on communities in terms of their capacity. [30]

242. Volunteer Scotland reported that "the community groups that seek to own and sustainably manage community spaces are finding the level of responsibility challenging" [18] and that communities often "struggle to have the capacity to take on that level of liability for an asset". [19]

243. Creative Lives highlighted that "many faith-based buildings "are underutilised or have disproportionate running costs to make them affordable, safe and accessible".[1] Volunteer Scotland noted the financial challenges of "owning big, draughty church halls and the associated energy costs", highlighting that "there is a resource issue and a support challenge there for the volunteers who support community-based assets".[2]

244. Creative Scotland summarised that "it is key to ensure that, when people think about taking on assets and taking control of such buildings, they understand what they are letting themselves in for." It told the Committee that the support it provides as an organisation "has to be about the programme that they are running rather than just the retention of an asset." [16]

245. The Cabinet Secretary said he did not have an answer to the challenges posed by the level of responsibility that community ownership places on individuals, however that "there is definitely a question about how people can be best advised" in relation to community asset transfers. [29]

246. **The Committee echoes the comments from Creative Scotland that "often, if it has come to the point of someone divesting themselves of such assets, that is because they have challenges in managing them. If that challenge is passed on to community groups, particularly if they are volunteer led, it can be extremely challenging for them to take that on without further funding, advice, support, or information on how to manage the building. They need continuing support." [16]**

247. **The Committee recognises that the successful community ownership of assets requires expertise within the community as well as the time and resources of volunteers, and that there are often high costs associated with the management and maintenance of these spaces.**

248. **It is clear from the evidence received that community ownership cannot always be the answer to protecting assets subject to closure. However, where this is a viable option, communities need to be provided with ongoing support and advice.**

249. **The Scottish Government should engage with the organisations we heard from who highlighted the challenges of community ownership to better understand the pressures on local communities who are taking on the management of local assets that support cultural activity, and to explore what further support or advice could be provided.**

Impact of the National Planning Framework 4

250. The Committee took evidence on the role of the planning system in protecting these cultural and community assets, and heard that there has been a greater shift towards embedding culture in planning policy.

251. The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), published in February 2023, sets out the Scottish Government's national planning policy. It includes a new policy on 'culture and creativity', the intent of which is to "encourage, promote and facilitate development which reflects our diverse culture and creativity, and to support our culture and creative industries." It has the following outcomes—

   • Locally distinctive places reflect the diversity of communities and support regeneration and town centre vibrancy;

   • Cultural and creative industries are expanded, providing jobs and investment; and

   • Communities have access to cultural and creative activities. [45]

252. Witnesses welcomed the "useful" inclusion of the culture and creativity policy in NPF4. Making Music welcomed that it "recognises that having [cultural] spaces available is one of the things that make a successful and healthy neighbourhood". [19]

253. RTPI said it demonstrates the priority culture has, [30] and highlighted the "increasing role that planning will likely have in supporting the culture sector" as a result. However, it warned that resource challenges facing planning authorities could present barriers to fulfilling this role. [46]

254. NPF4 sets out that development proposals that would result in the loss of an arts or cultural venue will only be supported where—

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- There is no longer a sustainable demand for the venue and after marketing the site at a reasonable rate for at least 12 months, through relevant local and national agents and online platforms, there has been no viable interest from potential operators; or

- The venue, as evidenced by consultation, no longer meets the needs of users and cannot be adapted; or

- Alternative provision of equal or greater standard is made available at a suitable location within the local area; and

- The loss of the venue does not result in loss or damage to assets or objects of significant cultural value. [45]

255.   Planning Aid Scotland considered that this provision in the NPF4 could make it more challenging for a development proposal resulting in the loss of the space as an arts or cultural venue to be accepted, in particular if communities have identified the building as a key cultural asset. [30]

256.   However, BEFS questioned what a 'sustainable demand' for venues currently means for communities at present, highlighting that "communities have less and less resource for taking part in culture". [30]

257.   NPF4 also sets out that "development proposals for creative workspaces or other cultural uses that involve the temporary use of vacant spaces or property will be supported." [45] RTPI said that "the idea of 'meanwhile' uses" being embedded in planning policy is "useful" and should be able to be used to "good effect" by cultural organisations. [30]

20-minute neighbourhoods

258.   NPF4 also includes a policy on 'local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods' and RTPI highlighted the "potential role culture could play" in achieving this policy. [46] The Museums Association was of the view that "culture and heritage should be considered essential amenities under the '20-minute neighbourhood' approach to planning". [9]

259.   RTPI said—"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." [46]

Local Place Plans

260.   Witnesses highlighted the important role of Local Place Plans (LPPs) in enabling communities to make their views heard on spaces for culture, including existing cultural assets. [30] A Scottish Government official told the Committee that LPPs could give local people a voice in protecting spaces. [29]

261. Introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, LPPs are community-led plans setting out proposals for the development and use of land. LPPs are to be taken into account by planning authorities in preparing Local Development Plans (LDPs), however RTPI's view is that there is a need "to ensure that that connection works much more effectively." [30]

262. The Committee heard about the development of the LPP for Wester Hailes, which had involved a range of cultural and community organisations coming together, and had built on a longstanding interest in placemaking at WHALE Arts. Participants suggested that LPPs had been important in introducing a mechanism for ensuring local views are considered by the local authority. However, it was noted that while the LPP for the area is "exciting", it is only useful if the local authority takes it on board. [14]

263. Both LPPs and LDPs are to have regard to NPF4, including the policy on culture and creativity. NPF4 sets out that LDPs should "recognise and support opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage and the arts". [45]

264. However, Planning Aid Scotland suggested that while "the policy directive is clear", there is a "question of how much awareness there is" of the policy and questioned "how much awareness there is of communities' ability to flag culture, heritage and the arts in their LPPs". [19]

265. It said there was a need for capacity building in communities around NPF4 and how culture can be embedded in LPPs, with it crucial for culture to be "embedded right at the start of the LPP process". RTPI agreed that "there is a need to build capacity in some communities" however that there are "limited resources". [30]

266. RTPI considered that while LPPs can be "an important tool for communities to shape the future of their local areas", should culture not be embedded within them, LPPs could in fact "hinder cultural provision locally". [46]

267. RTPI also assessed that LPPs could act as a "barrier" to the provision of cultural initiatives if there is a "lack of resources" and "lack of expertise within the community". In its view, the Scottish Government should "dedicate resources for planning authorities to support LPPs" and "establish a national grant scheme for communities" to support them to produce LPPs. [46]

268. Planning Aid Scotland drew attention to the fact that inequalities could be widened through the LPP process if "communities that have the financial and capacity resources will be able to push forward and produce an LPP" while communities with less resources and capacity are not able to have the same influence. [30]

269. It said that "communities with resources" such as those which "might be able to draw on wind farm development funding" or "have money sitting in trusts" are "much more ready to step forward and deliver local place plans, because they take time and money to deliver." [30]

270. **The Committee welcomes the inclusion of the new policy on culture and creativity in the National Planning Framework 4 published earlier this year**

as a positive step in embedding culture in the planning process, which could provide opportunities to protect spaces for culture. We recognise the important role of Local Place Plans in enabling communities to make their views heard on spaces for culture, including existing cultural assets, and therefore we also welcome that Local Place Plans and Local Development Plans must have regard to NPF4, including the culture and creativity policy.

271. However, we note the views of the Royal Town Planning Institute that should culture not be embedded within them, LPPs could hinder cultural provision locally. Therefore, while we recognise that the new planning framework is in its infancy, we wish to highlight the evidence received by stakeholders that although the directive of the culture and creativity policy in NPF4 is clear, there needs to be greater awareness raised of the policy within communities and with local authority officers, and further capacity building provided to support communities to embed culture in their LPPs.

272. Finally, we heard similar concerns raised on the development of LPPs as we did in relation to community ownership of assets that there is an inequality between those communities which have the expertise, time, and resources to dedicate to developing an LPP and those who do not in the extent to which their local cultural and community assets are protected, and in turn, their access to cultural opportunities. We invite the Scottish Government to engage with Planning Aid Scotland and others to consider what further support and capacity building can be provided to communities to engage in the planning process, in particular those with fewer resources.

Conclusions

273. **Throughout our inquiry, we heard many positive examples of place-based cultural work being delivered in communities, and a strong recognition from a broad range of stakeholders of the importance of this approach, underpinned by an emphasis on communities and place within the Scottish Government's culture strategy which builds on the long-standing ambition to adopt place-based and community-led approaches to service delivery.**

274. **At the same time, the Committee's findings above demonstrate that while progress has been made, there are several significant challenges facing national and local government in delivering a place-based approach to culture, which must be addressed in order to realise the ambitions of the culture strategy; and, given the cross-cutting nature of these challenges, that this requires a whole-system approach, between and across different layers of government.**

275. **It is clear that funding constraints within the current financial environment poses a significant challenge to the successful delivery of place-based cultural policy, including with respect to the funding of community-based cultural organisations to deliver place-based projects and activities, of local government cultural services, and of publicly owned community spaces where cultural activity can take place.**

276. **Despite the welcome emphasis on the role of communities and place in the culture strategy, it is our view that there still needs to be a much greater prioritisation in practice of the role of community culture as at the heart of the culture sector. Existing community empowerment mechanisms could also be better utilised to support the application of a place-based approach to culture, with the voice of culture needing to be better embedded and enhanced at a local level.**

277. **We invite the Scottish Government to address these challenges and the findings and recommendations set out in this report in finalising its refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan later this year.**

Annexe A: Minutes

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Meeting Minutes - 12th Meeting, 2023 - Thursday 20 April 2023

3. Culture in Communities: The Committee took evidence in a roundtable format from—

- Kirsty Cumming, Chief Executive, Community Leisure UK;

- Billy Garrett, Director of Culture, Tourism and Events, Glasgow Life;

- Katie Nicoll, Cultural Regeneration Lead Officer, Renfrewshire Council;

- Rebecca Coggins, Principal Officer, Arts and Museums, Dumfries and Galloway Council;

- Kim Slater, Sport and Culture Service Manager, Moray Council.

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Meeting Minutes - 13th Meeting, 2023 - Thursday 27 April 2023

1. Culture in Communities: The Committee took evidence from—

- Professor David Stevenson, Dean of the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management and Professor of Arts Management and Cultural Policy, Queen Margaret University;

- Professor Andrew Miles, Professor of Sociology, University of Manchester;

and then from—

- Steven Roth, Executive Director, Scottish Ballet;

- Brenna Hobson, Executive Director, National Theatre of Scotland;

- Alex Reedijk, General Director, Scottish Opera;

- Gavin Reid, Chief Executive, Scottish Chamber Orchestra;

- Alistair Mackie, Chief Executive, Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Meeting Minutes - 14th Meeting, 2023 - Thursday 4 May 2023

2. Culture in Communities: The Committee took evidence from—

- Rachael Disbury, Co-Director, Alchemy Film and Arts;

- Caitlin Skinner, CEO and Artistic Director, Stellar Quines;

- Arthur Cormack, Chief Executive, Fèisean nan Gàidheal;

- Murray Dawson, Chief Executive, Station House Media Unit;

- Kresanna Aigner, CEO and Creative Director, Findhorn Bay Arts;

- Robert Rae, Co-Director, Art 27 Scotland;

- Steve Byrne, Director, Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland;

and then from—

- Kathryn Welch, Programme Lead and Morvern Cunningham, Creative Lead, Culture Collective .

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Meeting Minutes - 15th Meeting, 2023 - Thursday 11 May 2023

1. Culture in Communities: The Committee took evidence from—

- Sarah Latto, Policy Officer, Volunteer Scotland;

- Alison Reeves, Scotland Manager, Making Music;

- Jemma Neville, Director, Creative Lives.

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Meeting Minutes - 16th Meeting, 2023 - Thursday 18 May 2023

2. Culture in Communities: The Committee took evidence from—

- Craig McLaren, Director of Scotland, Ireland and English Regions, Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland;

- Johanna Boyd, Chief Executive, Planning Aid Scotland;

- Ailsa Macfarlane, Director, Built Environment Forum Scotland.

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Meeting Minutes - 19th Meeting, 2023 - Thursday 8 June 2023

2. Culture in Communities: The Committee took evidence from—

- Alastair Evans, Interim Director, Strategy and Planning and Karen Dick, Head of Place, Partnership and Communities, Creative Scotland.

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Meeting Minutes - 22nd Meeting, 2023 - Thursday 29 June 2023

2. Culture in Communities: The Committee took evidence from—

- Angus Robertson, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture and Lisa Baird, Deputy Director, Culture and Historic Environments, Scottish Government.

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee - Meeting Minutes - 23rd Meeting, 2023 - Thursday 7 September 2023

4. Culture in Communities (In Private): The Committee considered and agreed a draft report.

Annexe B: Evidence

Oral evidence

- 20 April 2023

- 27 April 2023

- 4 May 2023

- 11 May 2023

- 18 May 2023

- 8 June 2023

- 29 June 2023

External engagement visits

A note of the Committee's engagement visits to Wester Hailes and Craigmillar in Edinburgh, Dumfries, and Orkney is available here.

Written evidence

The written submissions received to the Committee's call for views are available here.

Annexe C: Membership changes

Since the Committee launched its call for views for the inquiry, the membership of the Committee has changed as follows—

- On 18 April 2023, Ben Macpherson MSP replaced Jenni Minto MSP;

- On 25 April 2023, Neil Bibby MSP replaced Sarah Boyack MSP;

- On 29 June 2023, Kate Forbes MSP replaced Ben Macpherson MSP;

- On 29 June 2023, Keith Brown MSP replaced Alasdair Allan MSP;

- On 29 June 2023, Alexander Stewart MSP replaced Maurice Golden MSP.

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