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5<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Dear Clare,

## **Culture Strategy Action Plan – short update for CEEA Committee**

Thank you for your request of 30 May asking for a short update on progress with the actions of the Culture Strategy Action Plan since it was published in December 2023.

The summary below set out the progress the Scottish Government has made across the four sections of the Action Plan to date. As an [annex](#) to this letter, I have included a summary of the detailed actions set out in the plan for ease of reference.

### **1. Resilience**

The focus in this section is about seeking ways to review pressures on outgoings and activities, explore and develop alternative and additional income streams and focus on how collaboration can be improved for maximum efficiency and impact.

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### *Public Service Reform*

In order to maximise the impact of existing public sector support to the sector, the Scottish Government has been planning preliminary work to reform the culture sector with a view to delivering more efficient, cost effective, sustainable services now and for future generations. This planning work is crucial and will ensure we can continue to work with the publicly funded culture bodies to transform our culture sector to becoming more fiscally sustainable, contributing to our economy whilst delivering social impact that Scotland's people and communities need.

In terms of identifying and reporting efficiency, the Scottish Government is also working with culture sector partners on the development of a common understanding of how efficiencies are demonstrated in existing grant programmes for publicly funded culture bodies. From this enhanced understanding, we hope to develop and agree reform and efficiency options going forward.

### *Maintaining, developing and innovating the sector*

In support of exploring and developing alternative and additional income streams, the Scottish Government has been working to identify priority areas and activities for future investment in the culture sector particularly in light of recent issues around corporate social sponsorship. Additional funding will drive up opportunities for participation in creative pursuits, support the production of new works, and ensure that Scotland's cultural output has platforms at home and abroad.

### *Stakeholder engagement*

The Scottish Government recognises the critical importance of bolstering resilience in the culture sector and it will ensure that it continues to engage with partners to maximise the impact of existing public sector support, whilst advocating within national and local government to ensure the value of culture and events is understood. The Scottish Government will continue to work with the culture sector to identify barriers to immediate and long-term recovery and will continue to do everything within its powers and resources to help those most affected by current economic challenges.

## **2. Strengthening culture**

This ambition aims to create the conditions for culture to thrive, demonstrate the value of creative people, encourage diversity across the sector and foster international collaboration.

### *Fair Work*

The Scottish Government's aim for Scotland is to become a Leading Fair Work Nation by 2025. A Culture Sector Fair Work Task Force has been established to provide recommendations on priority actions that Scottish Government and partners can take to further Fair Work across the culture sector in support of the creative and cultural workforce.

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## *Skills*

In addition to its work to improve conditions for those working in the sector, the Scottish Government is taking steps to support individuals to develop the skills that enable culture to flourish. My officials are continuing to engage with their counterparts in skills policy to ensure that creative skills are fully considered in the development of new national skills planning processes.

Historic Environment Scotland has also recently published the historic environment sector's refreshed Skills Investment Plan (SIP). The first iteration of this plan was initially published in 2019, and it has now been reviewed and refreshed following extensive stakeholder consultation to ensure it can support the delivery of 'Our Past, Our Future', the strategy for Scotland's historic environment, and to grow the necessary skills for the sector. This plan works towards delivery of the three key priorities over the next five years of growing provision and building capacity, attracting future talent and improving access, and fostering innovation. Delivery and governance will be overseen by the Skills and Expertise group who will also provide advice, support, monitoring and advocacy to enable the delivery of the Skills Investment Plan and report to the Our Past Our Future Steering Group.

Historic Environment Scotland continues to champion traditional skills and is working with stakeholders across the country including the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Skills to address traditional skills gaps to help ensure Scotland's historic buildings and environment can thrive as part of the country's sustainable future.

## *Screen*

The Scottish Government is committed to working with Screen Scotland and our partners to build on the exceptional growth we have seen in recent years to maximise the cultural, wellbeing and economic benefits of our screen industries.

We have the talent, locations and expertise to make world-class productions in Scotland and are focused on building the skills, talent, support system and infrastructure to capitalise on the continued strong interest in production in Scotland, and continue to develop our sustainable creative economy.

The Scottish Government is continuing to support Screen Scotland to deliver on the wide range of commitments in their recently published [Strategy to 2030/2031](#), including in relation to: introducing screen into the school-age curriculum; developing skills and talent; attracting inward investment and productions; developing studios and infrastructure and pressing our public service broadcasters to increase production from Scotland.

## *Empire, Slavery and Colonialism*

The Scottish Government is proud to be proactively anti-racist and I am determined that the government will play its part in eradicating racism and inequality and in building a better, fairer world. In recognition of Scotland's colonial past, we are continuing to take steps to address the legacy of Empire, Slavery and Colonialism in Scotland's Museums.

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The Scottish Government accepted the recommendations of the Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums group in early 2024. We are continuing work by supporting the original project group to establish an experience-led organisation to lead on this work going forward. This new organisation will consider options around delivering a dedicated space which examines the legacy of slavery and colonialism in Scotland. We are also contributing, alongside the National Lottery Heritage Fund, towards a multi-year programme of work, 'Delivering Change'. Developed by Museums Galleries Scotland, 'Delivering Change' will support the sector with fully equitable, human-rights based approaches to deliver comprehensive representation in Scottish museums, including from previously unheard voices.

### *International strategy*

The Scottish Government recognises that international engagement is vital to the culture sector. International exchange and collaboration supports learning, development and cultural innovation, the exchange of ideas and new ways of doing things. It can also support organisations' and practitioners' economic sustainability through access to new markets and development of new audiences.

On 28 March 2024, the Scottish Government published Inspiring Connections: Scotland's International Culture Strategy 2024-30. The development of the strategy was informed by indepth consultation and engagement with stakeholders throughout the sector, drawing on their knowledge and direct experience of the impacts that international activity can have and the barriers that exist to developing it.

The strategy sets out a vision for the Scottish culture sector to be globally connected with the means and opportunities to achieve its international ambitions and potential and contribute to Scotland's cultural, social, economic and environmental wellbeing through its international work. As the Scottish Government works to deliver the strategy, it will continue to collaborate closely with stakeholders to ensure activity under it reflects their priorities and that there is joint ownership.

### *Festivals*

The Scottish Government continues to provide significant funding to Scotland's festivals, to protect the entertainment, economic and skills development opportunities our world-class festivals provide, as well as the work they do to ensure widespread accessibility to culture for community and education settings. The £1.7m in 2024/25 in EXPO funding is in addition to the £750,000 for the Platform for Creative Excellence (PLaCE) Programme in transition funding for 2024 activity.

## **3. Transforming through culture**

Through harnessing culture's transformative potential, the actions outlined under this ambition are intended to enact meaningful and lasting change to the way we deliver health and social care, education, justice, and more. Mainstreaming culture in policy making can help us to shift decisively to a wellbeing economy – in turn reducing inequality and supporting a greener, happier and more innovative future.

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The Scottish Government has concentrated its focus on demonstrating how culture can contribute to outcomes across health and education portfolios as initial priorities areas, through the recently established Culture and Health Working Group and Culture and Creativity in Learning Groups. These groups are currently agreeing approaches to strengthen connections across sectors and support joint policy development and delivery in these two key cross-portfolio areas.

The Scottish Government has continued to provide ongoing support of directly funded organisations as well as key funded community programmes, notably Sistema and the Youth Music Initiative which provide meaningful opportunities for children and young people to engage with culture. My officials are also ensuring that the culture sector is appropriately considered and consulted in the development of the forthcoming Scottish National Adaptation Plan in accordance with the Government's strategic focus on action to address climate change and support the transition to a net zero nation.

In order to build on the commitment to realise and embed the transformational power of culture in achieving a broad range of policy outcomes, I am continuing to work across portfolios with my ministerial colleagues to strengthen connections and agree on joint areas of priority focus. Of course, the demonstration of how culture contributes across the range of outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework for Scotland requires joint effort between local and national government and our partners in the culture sector. As with the one of the overarching principles of the historic environment strategy, Our Past Our Future, we all must work collaboratively across sectors too - delivering outcomes will require that new connections and new relationships are forged to derive maximum benefit for the people of Scotland, and champion the role the whole sector plays in meeting national goals and priorities.

#### **4. Empowering through culture**

Through the actions outlined under this ambition, the Scottish Government intends to examine equity of access to culture and address the needs of communities holistically in order to develop long term solutions that strengthen national and local organisations' approach to cultural provision.

##### *Culture Value Summit*

The Culture Value Summit, titled Connections and Partnerships: The Value of Culture in Communities, was run in partnership with the Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and held at Verity House on 20 May 2024. The event brought together cultural organisations, local and national government; including arms length organisations, and organisations who support planning or the development of partnerships on a local and national scale. The event highlighted the value of culture to help deliver on a wealth of local outcomes and explored how to develop partnership working across boundaries to further the

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impact of culture in this space, and address the barriers which are holding us back from collectively doing more.

Officials are evaluating the outputs of the day and considering next steps. This will include working with the Local and National Delivery Group, and with COSLA on a joint culture partnership agreement. My officials will also consider how the Culture Conveners group can build the outputs of the day into their work planning going forward.

### *Public Library Improvement Fund*

The Scottish Library and Information Council have delivered the second round of the 2023/24 Scottish Government-funded Public Library Improvement Fund projects and are finalising arrangements for the 2024-25 PLIF programme. Scottish Library and Information Council has also worked with the Association of Public Libraries Scotland to develop a new data collection platform for public libraries, building community demographics for each library, that reflects the breadth of activity taking place in Scotland's public libraries and is accessible to the public via the SLIC website.

### *Culture and Leisure Services Research*

Creative Scotland, sportscotland and Community Leisure UK, working alongside research consultancy EKOS, have carried out research on local government delivery of and support for culture and leisure services in Scotland, including delivery through arm's length external organisations. The research will inform how we can all work collaboratively together to the benefit of local communities around delivery of culture and leisure services in Scotland.

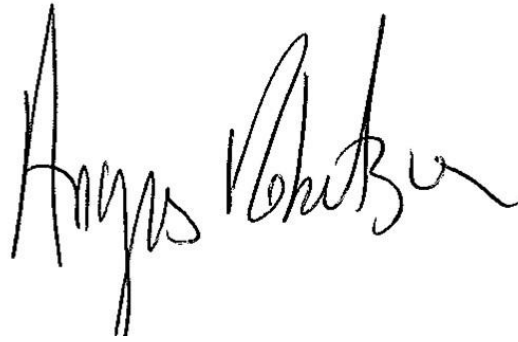
I hope the above outline of key achievements to date provides the Committee with assurances that delivery of the Action Plan is very much underway. It is worth noting that, when the Scottish Government engaged with key stakeholders throughout the development of the Action Plan in 2023, there was, and remains, a general recognition that many of the challenges facing the sector will need a longer term approach and ongoing partnership working across and beyond the sector to effect real change at a strategic level.

The Scottish Government has achieved a significant amount in the first six months since publication of the refreshed Action Plan. Discussions with partners about where our collective priorities lie and how resources should be targeted across the sector in the next five years are underway and will undoubtedly result in the acceleration of some planned actions and, consequently, the deceleration of others to match available resource. The Scottish Government will provide a further high level progress report to the Committee at the end of the 2024-25 reporting year.

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Yours sincerely,



**ANGUS ROBERTSON**

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## **ANNEX A**

### **Summary of Actions**

#### Chapter 1 – overview actions: Resilience

R1: Ensure effective ongoing engagement with the sector and maximise impact of existing public sector support.

R2: Seek ways to review pressure on outgoings and activities.

R3: Explore and develop alternative and additional income streams.

R4: Collaboration for effectiveness and impact.

R5: Advocacy effort within national and local government to ensure the value of culture is understood and maximised.

#### Chapter 2 – Strengthening Culture

S1: Continue to make the Culture and Heritage Sectors part of Scotland as a Leading Fair Work Nation by 2025.

S2: Develop and implement a long-term strategic approach to making improvements to the data landscape for culture, working closely with expert partners.

S3: Work in partnership to increase diversity in the sector, sharing new approaches and codes of practice that ensure skills development and board membership have diversity at their core, including helping recruitment diversity by introducing appropriate remuneration for board members of national culture and heritage public bodies.

S4: Develop and implement a long-term strategic approach to skills development in the Culture Sector and creative industries.

S5: Work to tackle modern-day racism by reinterpreting aspects of our hidden or contested heritage. S6: Publish our International Culture Strategy.

S7: Champion the economic impact of culture, in particular within the context of community wealth building and creative placemaking.

#### Chapter 3 – Transforming through Culture

T1: Collaborate to realise the transformational power of culture in achieving a broad range of policy outcomes by developing cross-Government policy compacts, embedding culture at the centre of policy-making.

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T2: Harness the transformational power of culture to deliver on climate change priorities.

T3: Scope the creation of another Youth Arts Strategy.

T4: Foster greater collaboration between the Culture and Education Sectors.

T5: Strengthen cross-Scottish Government joint working on culture and health and wellbeing policy development and delivery.

#### Chapter 4 – Empowering through Culture

E1: Support libraries to deliver free of charge services in the heart of communities across Scotland.

E2: Bring together local authorities, national and cultural organisations, via a Local and National Delivery Group, to identify, and commit to working together towards shared culture outcomes across Scotland, in line with the aims from the Ministerial meetings with Culture Conveners and the Culture Partners group.

E3: Understand local authority support for culture, in the context of the impact of, and recovery from, the Covid pandemic, to identify more effective models of collaboration, and delivery utilising data and knowledge from successful programmes.

E4: Amplify the important role community-based cultural assets such as libraries, museums and galleries can play in strengthening and empowering communities, in line with the themes of existing and upcoming strategies.

E5: Continue the series of the joint meeting of the Culture Conveners and Scottish Government.

E6: Develop a joint working agreement for Culture between the Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government.

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