



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Thursday 23 September 2021

Session 6



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CONSTITUTION, EUROPE, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE
5th Meeting 2021, Session 6

CONVENER

*Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)

*Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab)

*Jenni Minto (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)

*Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)

*Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Lucy Casot (Museums Galleries Scotland)

Isabel Davis (Screen Scotland)

John McVay (Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television)

Iain Munro (Creative Scotland)

Alison Reeves (Making Music)

Fiona Sturgeon Shea (Federation of Scottish Theatre)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

James Johnston

LOCATION

The Robert Burns Room (CR1)

Scottish Parliament

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Thursday 23 September 2021

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:00]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Clare Adamson): Good morning, and a warm welcome to the fifth meeting in 2021 of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee. As a result of a membership change, this will be Sue Webber's last appearance. I thank her for her contribution; we wish you well for your new parliamentary duties.

Agenda item 1 is to decide whether we take the evidence that we have heard today in private. Do we agree to take item 4 in private?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: Thank you.

Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2022-23: Culture Sector

09:00

The Convener: Item 2 is our pre-budget scrutiny work. The committee is considering the continuing impact of Covid-19 on the culture sector and its longer-term future.

We have two panels of witnesses—our third and fourth on the topic. First, we will hear from Lucy Casot, who is the chief executive officer of Museums Galleries Scotland; John McVay, who is the chief executive officer of the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television—PACT; Alison Reeves, who is the Scotland manager of Making Music; and Fiona Sturgeon Shea, who is the chief executive officer of the Federation of Scottish Theatre. A warm welcome to you all.

We are tight for time, as we have two panels, so I would very much welcome succinct questions and answers. We will move straight to questions. I remind members that, if they have a direct question for a particular witness, they should name the witness and direct their questions to them. I ask the witnesses to come in only if they have something to add to what has been said by other witnesses, as we have considerable time restrictions.

Our initial questions are from Ms Boyack.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): It is good to see the witnesses in front of us this morning. I will kick off with a question that follows on from the evidence that we took last week. In his written evidence, John McVay from PACT mentioned the potential privatisation of Channel 4, which you say could potentially

“have drastic implications for the UK's independent film and TV sector”.

We got some very good evidence from the BBC about the importance of production in Scotland. Would you like to talk about how we avoid the risk to the recovery of the indy sector, which you have described in your submission?

John McVay (Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television): Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for the opportunity to meet you all today, and to help you in your deliberations, particularly in looking ahead to the recovery of our cultural industries, which represent one of the fastest-growing parts of the United Kingdom's economy.

Channel 4 is a critical part of that economy. Its research into the local economy shows that its spending on television production in any part of the UK—but let us focus on Scotland—brings

significant ripple effects across all the cultural industries. We employ writers, actors, directors, designers and musicians, so any decline in spend from Channel 4 will have a knock-on effect in the creative economy in Scotland.

The major worry about Channel 4—we will leave its remit to one side, because that can be delivered in a number of ways, whether the channel is in public or private ownership—and the major problem with the UK Government's proposals for Channel 4 is that it is currently a publisher-broadcaster, which means that it is not allowed to produce its own programming. The current proposal is to allow whoever owns Channel 4 in the future to produce its own programming. That necessarily and logically means that there will be a decline in commissioning from independent producers.

Channel 4 relies on independent producers. It has quotas for out of London production and a significant amount of those quotas are met by Scottish independent producers. If I am the new private owner of Channel 4 and I have my own in-house production, the first thing that I would do is consider what slots I will not commission from external suppliers.

Inevitably, that will mean that Scottish companies will not be commissioned where previously they might have been. Of course, it is quite difficult to be precise about the scale of that and when that will happen, but we have modelled it, and we have some independent research, which shows that, over 10 years, that would represent a transfer of value of £3.7 billion from Scottish and British small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs—the committee has met some of them—to new private shareholders. That will mean a decline in opportunities. It will also mean a decline of aspiration, because, if I am a new small start-up business in Glasgow, Dundee or Edinburgh and I have an idea that I think would work really well for Channel 4, I might no longer have that opportunity, because those slots might no longer exist.

Channel 4 has served a critical purpose over its nearly four decades in the TV sector in that it is meant to support SMEs and start-ups—that is part of its primary public purpose. That allows me to aspire to work for Channel 4. If I am successful and make a programme for Channel 4, my company would be a network production company and I have an opportunity to supply to other broadcasters.

The downstream ripple effects of the proposals will be considerable in terms of a reduction not only in spend on existing companies, but of the aspiration and ambition of new businesses, which will be very detrimental. The Westminster Government has tried to reassure us about the

importance of the independent sector, but we have no idea what that means in practice. However, we know—we have modelled it—that if Channel 4 is allowed to make, own and control its own programming, there will be an impact on independent production.

Sarah Boyack: That is helpful. You commented in your submission about the need for investment in training for new entrants to the sector from the Scottish Government as a response to Covid. Last week, the committee heard lots of evidence from freelancers. I want to open the question to the other witnesses about the changes that could be made now. First, I would like to hear briefly from PACT and then, I hope, from Fiona Sturgeon Shea of the Federation of Scottish Theatre about how theatres and venues could support freelancers through longer-term contracts.

John McVay: Even given my comments about Channel 4, we are experiencing a boom in production across the UK. We are short of at least 30,000 jobs, which is an amazing opportunity for recovery in the UK audiovisual sector. A number of interventions by the Scottish Government's agencies and by Westminster has led the UK to recover much more quickly than our competitors. However, that has resulted in an overheating of the market, because production is now booming, which means that we have a shortfall of jobs.

We would like to work with all Administrations and Parliaments to see how we can deliver more opportunities. These are high-value careers and jobs, and we are short of many critical grades. We would like there to be more focus on that in order to remain competitive and facilitate the growth of Scottish businesses.

Sarah Boyack: Two weeks ago, we took evidence from representatives of the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union and the Musicians Union. It is particularly worried about freelancers and the issue of venues and theatres being unable to put on productions in the way that they have done in the past. Do you have a comment on that, perhaps in contrast to PACT, which is saying that there are lots of job opportunities in its sector? We heard that, in your sector, people are losing out and that there is perhaps a need to change how productions are commissioned.

Fiona Sturgeon Shea (Federation of Scottish Theatre): Thank you for the question. From our submission, you will see that we have been concerned about the freelance workforce for a long time. Our membership is now a 50-50 split between members and organisations. We do not just represent companies and buildings—our membership includes individuals, many of whom are freelance employees.

I agree that longer-term contracts are one part of the solution. However, as we said in our submission, reliance on organisations is not the only way to support freelancers. The concept of being a freelancer is often something that needs to be better supported in general. There is therefore a bigger context to that.

Our members would certainly welcome the opportunity to work with more freelancers. In my previous job with Playwrights Studio Scotland, I worked directly with playwrights for 10 years. We worked closely with the Federation of Scottish Theatre and the wider sector and established those mutually beneficial relationships that can be built up over time.

It also comes back to the issue that we highlighted in our submission around the complexity of business models and the long-term funding situation. With more funding and opportunities, we would be able to look at that fuller infrastructure and provide more support for organisations—and individuals—to do that.

Sarah Boyack: Would your priority be to have more multiyear funding for the theatre sector? One issue that has been raised with us is around community access and access to existing facilities. Are you considering that in relation to longer-term funding, as well as in relation to the community impact that such funding would have by supporting people to be in employment?

Fiona Sturgeon Shea: Absolutely. As I said, we are looking at the full picture. Our membership is pretty diverse and not only covers theatre buildings, but covers the whole infrastructure. We are trying in the submission to show a fuller picture of the infrastructure and how that could be supported long term. Every aspect must be prioritised—it is not about prioritising one part of it over another. I understand that that sounds very utopian.

The Convener: —[*Inaudible.*] particularly that last comment from Ms Boyack. I will go to Ms Reeves first. I remind witnesses that, if they want to come in on a particular question that was not directed to them, they should put an R in the chat.

Alison Reeves (Making Music): Good morning. It is nice to be here representing the non-professional arts sector. As I said in our submission, the staff who we employ—the people who we pay—in our sector are almost always freelancers. Very few people in our sector are on full-time contracts; they are people who have portfolio careers.

A lot of them—such as school teachers and college lecturers—are employed in the music education sector or are professional musicians in their own right. To support the people who are working in our sector, we therefore need to make

sure that their other work is also protected. We have done a lot of talking about instrumental music tuition in schools and how the people doing those jobs need to be protected. All the conversations about professional musicians working in the professional sector are crucial to us as well.

We need to ensure that those people are protected in every element of their portfolio careers. Some of that is about how we protect freelance workers overall in society. In our sector, we must ensure that our groups return as quickly as possible so that people can get back to that strand of their work and that part of their careers.

Making sure that our groups are able to return as quickly as possible is dependent on lots of factors at the moment. I can talk about those at more length if the committee would like me to, or we can cover that in a different question.

Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con): How I frame my question will come as no surprise, as I am moving to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee. At that committee, it was mentioned that every committee should take a health approach when considering how things are assessed and how funding is allocated.

My question is for Fiona Sturgeon Shea. Your submission has a section called “The impact of the performing arts”. That refers to health and wellbeing, which is great to see. Have you ever measured that? If you can demonstrate the health and wellbeing benefit that your sector brings, have you tried to translate that into a case for more funding? Will you explain more about the tangibles that are being realised in relation to health and wellbeing?

09:15

Fiona Sturgeon Shea: I am sure that studies exist, but as a membership organisation, we have not specifically done any ourselves. However, I am aware that many organisations are working really closely together in that area and have begun to evidence what they are doing really strongly. More work definitely needs to be done in that respect. If you need more evidence, I can survey our members and provide you with some really good case studies in writing, if that would be helpful.

The Convener: I will bring in Ms Casot at this point and then go to Ms Reeves for a comment about the wellbeing work.

Lucy Casot (Museums Galleries Scotland): Good morning. Thank you for having me along to give evidence from Museums Galleries Scotland. We have carried out some literature review work on the impact of museums and galleries on health and wellbeing that we hope will be relevant, and

we are happy to share it with the committee. It contains some nice case studies.

On cross-portfolio working and resourcing, that aspiration has come out of some really strong exemplar projects that have tended to be run on a short-term basis and which explore a particular area. An example that indicates what might be possible is the Football Memories Scotland project. I am not sure whether you are aware of that, but it originated with the Scottish Football Museum and has been run in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland for more than 10 years.

That is one area where museum collections have been demonstrated as having really beneficial health outcomes for people—in this case, those suffering from dementia. The longitudinal research study of the project has shown that it has worked and been really beneficial, and it is now drawing in some money from Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board.

There are also many examples of projects that have been programmed by museums and galleries—and, indeed, by other cultural organisations—to support autism and a range of different health issues. We know that those work—the research shows as much—and it would be great if we could start to mainstream some of the projects instead of seeing them just as opportunities to be funded in the short term. Indeed, we have presented some evidence to the national partnership for culture, and we hope that some recommendations on the issue will come out towards the end of the year.

The Convener: Thank you for giving me an opportunity to highlight Motherwell Football Club as an excellent example with regard to the project that you mentioned. Motherwell was one of the pilots, so I know the project very well and cannot speak highly enough of it.

Alison Reeves: As Lucy Casot has said, there is a lot of published research on the impact of the arts on health; indeed, the impact of music on health is definitely well established, and we can point you to some studies if you would like to look at them.

Some groups target elements of health that we know music is most beneficial for. For example, there has been a big growth in choirs for people with dementia and their families; indeed, we are part of the dementia inclusive singing network. It is certainly well established that singing is very beneficial for lung health, which is really relevant at this time. There is a group called the Cheyne Gang, which supports people with poor lung health, and it has been doing some work on the benefits of singing on long Covid.

The idea that music is beneficial in that respect has been well researched and is well understood.

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

Sue Webber: I will make an observation. It has been great to hear some of those examples, but they all seem to be focused on the elder end of the population—one of the examples given was about dementia. I suppose that what I am asking about with regard to health and wellbeing is how we level up the agenda for those in deprived areas and how work in the sector can provide a springboard for people in an abusive environment and give them the confidence to leave. That is the longer-term issue that I am trying to get at. We should be trying to rescue people earlier in their lives instead of trying to treat their diseases at the end of them. As I have said, though, it was great to hear some of those examples, especially with regard to dementia, so thank you very much.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): I have a brief supplementary question for Alison Reeves. How does what you were talking about materialise when it comes to funding and discussions with, for example, health and social care partnerships? Are music projects going to the national health service locally to have a discussion about social prescribing, and getting funding to do that kind of work, or is it just a useful add-on? Is it that the NHS and general practitioners might be aware that voluntary projects are happening locally but there is no direct funding?

Alison Reeves: I am representing the non-professional sector in particular today. We are mindful of how we might engage with conversations on social prescribing. Occasionally, a project might have enough funding to speak directly to healthcare. In our experience, the projects within communities usually decide that they want to have those conversations. We are not experiencing approaches from health services to the arts sector to ask for those partnerships.

We do not have a clear view of how social prescribing might work for our sector. We have concerns that our sector might be expected to provide resources that we do not have because it has not been clearly shown to us how those people who come from the health sector would be supported to move into our groups. We are open to those conversations but cannot yet see a clear model that would not rely on our groups making a lot of effort. At the moment, they are neither resourced nor skilled enough to do that. We are open to having those conversations, but we do not

see a model that we could engage with at the moment.

The Convener: For the record, it is probably worth saying that, although this is the committee's final formal evidence session, tomorrow we are having a roundtable with a number of third sector organisations that are working with younger people using music and the arts.

I move to questions from Dr Alasdair Allan.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): I have a general question, followed by a couple of very specific ones. My initial question is possibly for Alison Reeves and Lucy Casot.

Given what you have said about the importance of the arts, music and museums in the community, and given that we are going to be talking about a budget at some stage, do you feel that budgeting recognises the importance of mainstreaming the arts? I am not going to be the person who goes on record and says that we should be talking about what the NHS spends on the arts while we are in the middle of a Covid crisis. However, everybody recognises that, as you have said, the arts benefit health, town planning, business and the community. Do we budget in a way that is joined up enough to recognise those things?

The Convener: I will go to Ms Sturgeon Shea first. She might also have wanted to comment on the previous question.

Fiona Sturgeon Shea: On the previous question, I wanted to give a couple of examples of the organisations that I was talking about that have a long-term commitment in that area. It might be particularly interesting for the committee to look at the written submission that it has had from the arts in education recovery group, when it comes to that. There are groups such as Starcatchers, the clowndoctors and the elderflowers that work in those areas.

I am sorry; you will need to repeat your question for me.

Dr Allan: My question was, do we budget as a country that recognises the need to have joined-up working between the arts and different sectors, or does the expenditure for such an exercise fall always on the arts sector?

Fiona Sturgeon Shea: Individual organisations work hard to diversify their income, so there are organisations that receive funding from a broad range of sources, but it is difficult and, in our submission, our members call for a "unity" of all those bodies and policy makers, so that they can look at funding in concert. The culture spend is essential and welcome, but it has been at a standstill for a long time, so that is difficult, and in order to maximise those opportunities, I think that what Dr Allan says is absolutely right.

John McVay: It is a very interesting question, which the pandemic has thrown into relief. I think that Winston Churchill said that if it is not about culture, then what are we fighting for? Culture lies at the very heart of our health as a civil society that generates ideas, innovation, excitement and business growth.

As I said earlier, we are experiencing a boom in TV and film production across the UK. Those are significant opportunities and we should be doing everything that we can to find talented young people and get them into those industries. That can often be done through third sector and local community groups, which is where I got my initial experience.

It is right and proper that all Governments and Administrations consider how culture and the arts play a more significant role than they are often credited for in the overall welfare of the population, not just in relation to mental and physical health but creativity. For too long, there has been a trend in education towards science, technology, engineering and maths. I think that it should be STEAM, because the arts and creativity are what we need in the 21st century.

I remind the committee that if it had not been for UK film and TV production, UK gross domestic product would have been negative for two years running, so the economics of that are significant. I commend all my colleagues and witnesses on the panel for the work that they do to make sure that people can get access to the arts and culture for a variety of reasons.

As a broader and more philosophical issue, all parliamentarians and MSPs should consider why the sector is always separated into a bunker. It is a very good question but, although I have given evidence to many Administrations over the years, no one seems to grasp that it is a critical issue that should be embedded across everything.

Lucy Casot: It is an excellent question and the simple answer is that we do not recognise that need enough. At the moment, it is important to understand the pressure that there is on organisations. In particular, I am thinking about civic museums. Some of our local authority museums have led some fantastic practice by running additional programming for young people, including young people at risk. The programmes are fantastic, but they are run through culture budgets. We are particularly concerned about that pressure on local authority and civic museums because, although the pressure applies across the piece, those are the programmes that are easily lost. The core purpose of museums is to care for their collections and open them to visitors so, although the fantastic programmes work and have benefits that are being proven through research, they are the first to be cut.

The alternative way of looking at that is to say that we need more money from the culture budget to do that work but, if those benefits go to young people at risk or people with dementia, is there an opportunity to look across portfolios and ask whether we could join that up, so that the work is funded more holistically? We have relied on individual institutions to identify opportunities and develop those programmes, and a huge amount of ambitious and fantastic work has been done but, with a more co-ordinated approach, we might be able to grow that. Otherwise, I think that we will start to lose it and go backwards, which would be a huge loss.

I will make a very quick plug. With a different hat on, I am a trustee of Arts Culture Health and Wellbeing Scotland, a new charity that is trying to do a lot of that work of bringing together practice across health and social care and the arts. We have done a series of events, and I am happy to provide information to the committee on that, if it would be helpful. That also answers some of the social prescribing questions.

09:30

Dr Allan: I have a question for Alison Reeves. I declare an interest as an active participant—not very active at present, for obvious reasons—in a Gaelic choir.

I want to ask about some of the problems that Making Music has faced during lockdown, and how you are working to overcome them. A related issue, which has been brought to the Parliament's attention in the past, concerns the need to ensure that we have a supply of music teachers in schools. I am sure that someone will correct me if I am wrong but, as I understand it, the majority of those teachers are coming through the private sector rather than the state sector.

It would be interesting to hear about those two issues. What has happened to music in the community, and what has happened to music in schools?

Alison Reeves: It is great to hear that—*[Inaudible.]*

The Convener: Sorry, Ms Reeves—we lost your feed for a moment. Can you start again?

Alison Reeves: Am I back on?

The Convener: Yes.

Alison Reeves: It is good to hear that Alasdair Allan is continuing to sing occasionally. So many people continue to sing and play musical instruments as adults, and it is such a massive, vibrant and often unnoticed element of our culture and society.

Before I explain the problems with community music returning, I go back to the previous question about investment. Investment in community music making and the non-professional sector is interesting, in that it does not all come from culture funding—in fact, hardly any of it does. Some of the investment in performing arts venues, which are used by our members and by the freelance professional musicians that I mentioned earlier, comes from that source. However, a lot of the funding comes from investment in communities. It is—*[Inaudible.]*—community halls and school buildings that we currently cannot access, along with public transport and all the things that enable people to move around in their communities and use community spaces. That infrastructure props up our groups, and it is causing the biggest challenge to us returning.

The biggest and most common challenge is accessing suitable venues. By “suitable”, I mean a venue that is often bigger than the one that people were previously using because they still feel the need to physically distance. Groups are having to move from a small hall to a bigger church space, for example, to accommodate the need for physical distancing. They are very worried about ventilation, and the infrastructure of small Scottish rural halls is designed to keep heat in, so ventilation is problematic.

The ability to access those spaces is really worrisome at present, especially given that the school estate is largely closed to external lets just now. That is our biggest challenge. If we can move forward on that, investment in the public buildings and arts venues that the theatre sector representatives talked about will make a big difference to us.

I ask Alastair Allan to repeat his question about music teaching.

Dr Allan: In the past, other committees have had representations the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, asking whether there is a sufficient supply of music teachers in schools for the future.

Alison Reeves: Our organisation is a member of the Music Education Partnership Group. They would be the best people to give evidence on that particular question.

We hope that both the move to make instrumental music tuition free in schools, and the move to have music teachers register with the General Teaching Council for Scotland will make music teaching in the state sector a more desirable prospect for the people who have portfolio careers. They are also our music directors and choir directors, and they usually have a foot in that sort of career.

Dr Allan: I declare another interest—it is not a financial one. I have an interest in historic ships,

as those who know me well will confirm. I note that the submission from Museums Galleries Scotland points specifically to issues facing historic ships, and I am curious to know more about that.

Lucy Casot: Basic running costs currently present a challenge for museums, whether they are open or closed. Some of their assets are expensive to look after, and that includes historic ships. They were used in our submission to illustrate the wider point about the challenges that museums and galleries have been facing.

We put some figures in our submission regarding the degree of the challenges that we currently face. We are nearly two years into the pandemic, and a third of our museums and galleries have not opened at all during that time. They are now facing another winter as the tourist season comes to an end, and yet many of them have faced high running costs throughout the whole period.

The hit to their reserves and their ability to meet those running costs presents a particular challenge. Independent museums and charities in particular do not have the security of national ownership of their collections, so there is a particular challenge if any of those organisations fail. That is a real worry for us. Our latest survey, in mid-July, suggested that none of the museums that responded to the survey that were open were running at a profit. They made less of a loss by being open, as they could sell some tickets, but the funding that we were able to distribute last year—for which we are enormously grateful, as it has been an essential lifeline for the survival of our museums and galleries sector in the pandemic so far—ran out in June. In contrast, I know that some of the wider Creative Scotland funding for the arts sector has carried organisations through to September.

Those organisations face a real challenge in getting through and being able to start earning income again. Business is seasonal for most of the sector. We are flagging up the concerns around independent museums in particular, as the collections have no safety net of public ownership, and some of their assets are really expensive to look after.

The Convener: Sarah Boyack has a quick supplementary.

Sarah Boyack: It has been good to hear about the issue of getting more people to access the arts. The Museums Galleries Scotland submission highlights the commitment to everybody having a right to culture, and suggests the concept of a minimum acceptable standard of cultural provision.

We have a lot of fantastic museums, but the focus is on preserving them, rather than promoting

access, and a minimum standard could address that issue, although funding them might be challenging. Perhaps you could say a bit about that, because it is an interesting idea that might promote the joining up of portfolios that we have just been talking about.

Lucy Casot: We have given quite a lot of thought to the question of what sort of change might be inevitable. That was a fundamental theme in the questions that the committee asked in its consultation. If change is inevitable, are there different ways in which we could think about funding?

Even the museums and galleries sector is hugely diverse, and beyond that, the culture sector is much more so. The challenges and opportunities are very different for different parts of the sector. The issues that face civic museums are different from those that face independent museums, and both are different again from the challenges facing our national institutions.

The principle of access to culture seems to be a valuable starting point. If we establish that as a right that we are trying to achieve, it might start to point us towards a solution. That will not necessarily be a blanket solution across Scotland, because different parts of the country operate in different ways.

In some places, the local authority is strong in delivering in the museum sector, whereas in other places, there are strong independent museums. If a solution could be delivered by doing a particular thing to address the issues in either one of those areas, we would certainly want to look at that and tease it out. However, we need to start by thinking about what we are trying to achieve, which is public access to publicly owned collections—the collections that tell the story of our country. That will provide a structure around which we can consider the options for how best to achieve it. What we do not want to see is unmanaged change, with some organisations failing and others trying to fill in the gaps.

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

Mark Ruskell: I refer to Lucy Casot's points about managing assets over time, particularly in relation to future proofing, reducing energy costs, investing in buildings, and making them climate resilient. I used to sit on the trustee board of the Stirling Smith art gallery. We were going through a period of expansion and were changing the business model a bit. It was challenging to get advice, support and bespoke funding. What does that landscape look like? Is bespoke funding available now for museums, galleries and other organisations to invest in those changes, or are you looking to build that into your mainstream funding if you are going to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, say, to fund that sort of work?

Lucy Casot: There is no bespoke funding for us at the moment. That is clearly one of the major challenges that we all face and that I specifically face with my responsibilities in trying to support the museums and galleries sector. There are an increasing number of applications to our open fund. We have £1.1 million a year to distribute from the Scottish Government, but that does not go very far across 430 museums.

There is a desire from the museums to make changes. They make sensible changes for all sorts of reasons. They might be reducing their running costs by insulating their buildings properly, for instance. Although a lot of our museums, galleries and historic buildings are great in relation to embodied carbon—and it is really important that those buildings are looked after—there are some particular challenges around adapting them to meet all our obligations.

Funding will absolutely be required to come through to support museums and galleries to meet those obligations, as it will be required across the cultural estate. We would very much welcome a discussion, and we are actively considering where that funding might come from. We might talk to the National Lottery Heritage Fund about that, but it is a huge challenge.

Museums and galleries need to consider that in relation to their own estate, and they can also help with the public debate and discussion. They are trusted venues that deal with complex subjects, and they can help with informing and opening discussions with the public. We have been trying to do some of that in some of our work around the 26th United Nations climate change conference of the parties, with COP conversations happening across the culture portfolio, as well as climate beacons, as we try to identify projects that can inspire action. We are trying to tease out what that might look like.

There is no question, however: that will need investment. We are keen to identify the best way of doing those things.

The Convener: We have another question about museums. I remind people to put an R in the chat if they wish to comment. Ms Minto's question will be for Ms Casot again, I think.

Jenni Minto (Argyll and Bute) (SNP): It goes slightly wider than that, convener. Before I start, however, I refer everyone to my entry in the register of members' interests and to the fact that I am trustee of a small independent museum on Islay.

I want to widen out the conversation by considering the impact of the pandemic on the whole area of arts and culture, and how funding came to each of your organisations. What have you learned from that funding? The process to get funds out to people who needed it was far quicker in some respects.

I also want to look at this from the staycation perspective. I note the importance of not just investing in the central belt—more people are coming out to the wider parts of Scotland. From a culture perspective, how are your sectors supporting that shift of visitors and telling the story of the areas where people are visiting?

I do not know if you want to start with that, Ms Casot, or shall we give you a bit of a rest?

09:45

Lucy Casot: I am happy to start. We covered some of that in our submission. Last year, we distributed £9 million, which is in contrast to our usual £1 million. We are enormously grateful to the Scottish Government for the support that has enabled us to do that.

One of the decisions that we took early on was to support museums that are not accredited. Our funding normally goes only to accredited museums—that is, museums that meet the established professional standards for the museums sector. About one third of our museums are not accredited, but they are enormously important in their communities as community assets and—as Jenni Minto said—in telling the story of Scotland. Although they are not all in more rural places, many of them are, and many of them are run by volunteers. We think that they are such an important part of the wider museum sector and estate that we extended our funding to them. We have continued to do that this year, because they are an essential part of the sector.

Such museums are symbols in their communities—in some cases, they run the only cafe on an island. Also, the volunteering aspect has wellbeing benefits. They have been really important not just as museums, but as venues and as parts of community life. We have therefore changed the way in which we provide funding. We

hope to be able to continue to provide that funding, but that will depend on whether we continue to have the resources to do that.

Once we have that wider network of organisations, we can also support them to work towards those standards, where it is appropriate for them to do so. That has been a really important piece of learning for us.

We have been astonished by the response from the sector, by the creativity with which people have met the challenges and by the generosity of many organisations, which have, in many cases, collaborated in shifting to digital and so on.

I could say loads more, but I should probably let others come in. I am happy to answer any follow-up questions, if it would be helpful.

John McVay: I do not know much about funding for museums in Scotland. However, I commend Screen Scotland—the screen agency for film and TV—which reacted very quickly. The committee will take evidence from Isabel Davis, who is on your next panel, and I commend her and Screen Scotland’s quick response to the Covid pandemic and its impact on Scottish film and TV producers. It was able to make available significant resources, so that companies could continue to develop ideas for when the market reopened—which, thankfully, it did.

Screen Scotland was an exemplar to many other agencies across the UK, which perhaps did not do as much. Its response was very welcome. I know from my members in Scotland that they felt that they were being supported when the lights were switched off for quite a long time. Screen Scotland’s response is a good example. We worked very closely with Isabel Davis and David Smith, who were both very responsive and quick-acting.

Fiona Sturgeon Shea: I echo the remarks of the other two witnesses about the resilience and reach of the sector. It was extraordinary that it was able to pivot to digital so quickly in the middle of a pandemic and do all the other kinds of work that could not happen face to face.

On the question about what work was happening in different places across Scotland, I was aware of innovative projects in the Highlands and Islands, Dundee, Perthshire and Dumfries and Galloway. The Gaiety theatre in Ayr, for example, ran some extraordinary community and digital projects.

The reach, and the access that was provided, was extraordinary—it was a kind of extreme localism that happened, but the works were also available worldwide. I am aware of individual artists who were putting out their work digitally and getting audiences that were beyond their wildest

dreams by being able to do that. Those organisations and individuals will definitely be thinking about the lessons that can be learned and how those connections can be maintained. We have certainly been keeping an eye on that and are helping people to expand as much as we possibly can.

The youth theatre sector responded extremely well, partly because of the funding that was available from Creative Scotland, which I know that you are going to take evidence from. I have given some examples of the bursaries that were available to freelancers, which were hugely appreciated and very quickly turned around. I certainly echo some of John McVay’s comments in that respect.

Alison Reeves: With regard to what we learned about the funding of our sector during the pandemic, our groups could not meet and make music together in person for about 18 months, and funding was mainly for propping up freelancers to enable them to continue to work and, where possible, move to a digital model. That funding was excellent. The emergency funding that was available through Creative Scotland and the other ways of ensuring that those people continued to be paid meant that they could continue to work for us.

You will all remember the incredible digital response from choirs, bands and orchestras, with stitched videos, virtual performances and so on, and it was crucial that those people were still able to do those things, what with the quick turnaround times and the huge amounts of learning that had to be done. The response was phenomenal.

Also crucial for us was the availability of small sums of quick-to-access funding—those little pots of money that it did not take much to apply for but which enabled people to run small digital projects, upskill themselves, buy new software and so on. That funding is still proving to be beneficial, because people are using it, for example, to buy face coverings for the whole choir so that everyone can sing safely.

However, funding the infrastructure of venues will now be crucial, and we need to ensure that performing arts venues are open and well ventilated. Moreover, as Lucy Casot pointed out, museums and galleries can provide space for our members, who have benefited from that as well as the space provided in libraries and other community venues. It is crucial that the funding for those venues is available not just to ensure that they open but to allow them to adapt, change the ventilation and have new hygiene systems and all the other things that we need to move forward.

As for staycations in communities, music making is everywhere across the country, and the

benefit of having a very rich and vibrant community music-making culture is that the tourists who visit those areas have great access to our local culture. They want to see, for example, the Gaelic choir singing on the gala day. We have missed our gala days and festivals so much this year, and they need to come back next year so that staycationers can enjoy their own culture in these beautiful environments.

The Convener: I move to questions from Mr Cameron.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): The witnesses have covered some of what I was going to ask about in their answers about the emergency funding that they have received. I feel comforted and reassured that that is filtering down to your members and your staff, as well as to individuals and organisations.

I do not want to diminish the current challenges that the pandemic poses, but I wonder whether we can look beyond Covid to the next year or so, when, hopefully, we will emerge from it. What do you think that the sector will look like, and how should it be funded? Perhaps you can also touch on the important issue of multiyear funding.

John McVay: As I said earlier, we are experiencing a boom. I would not say that we are post pandemic, but film and TV production in the UK is at a higher level than it was pre-pandemic. I think that the recovery is well under way.

A number of things underpin that. The first is the extensive safety protocols that the industry has developed with health authorities across the UK, which have proved to be very effective. The second is the UK Government-backed indemnity fund for production insurance, which we hope will be extended and lead to further recovery. The third is that local screen agencies such as Screen Scotland have been able to continue to support and invest in growing Scottish companies, which will create employment and ripple effects in the broader creative economy. It would be very welcome if Screen Scotland could be resourced to provide multi-annual support for Scotland's film and TV sector.

I know that local authorities and the Scottish Government are considering setting up film and TV studios in Scotland. Due to the boom, we have a shortage of studios in the UK. That is leading to cost inflation, which can often be detrimental to smaller domestic producers that cannot afford the rates that studios charge. We are experiencing that in the south-east of England.

Those are the critical structural issues that need to be addressed to maintain growth in the audiovisual economy in Scotland. They are long-term issues, so they cannot be addressed through single-year funding. Long-term investment is

needed to facilitate cultural activity, training, education, skills and growth in local economies. I encourage the Scottish Government to look at those long-term issues.

I hope that what I have said echoes what my colleagues in other sectors have said. There has been too much short-term funding for culture and the arts under successive Administrations across the UK. We are the fastest growing part of the UK economy, so we should have long-term support and planning that allows people to become more innovative, to take broader investment decisions and to plan for growth, rather than having to run short-term projects.

Fiona Sturgeon Shea: I concur. The main point to make is that it will be incredibly challenging. The crisis is not over; we are still in it. Although the emergency funding that was provided was an absolute lifeline, an important point that we make in our submission is that we need to be able to plan and have the resources that we need for the future, which the emergency funding does not provide.

The headlines from our submission are about the possible need for additional relief and recovery funding. We must acknowledge that. We do not have workable and affordable insurance or confirmed emergency funding if the situation worsens.

There must be investment in restart and renewal, which goes back to the point that many of our members made about there having been a lot of investment in emergency funding but not a lot in storing up for the future, so reserves are very much at risk.

Ms Boyack asked me about freelance support. Investment in skills development will be really important and, to echo what John McVay said, so will long-term increased support to achieve maximum impact. There definitely needs to be support for long-term projects rather than short-term projects.

Alison Reeves: I agree with Fiona Sturgeon Shea that, for the non-professional music sector, we are very much in the middle of the crisis. Our members are really struggling with the amount of additional—mostly voluntary—work that they are doing to get their groups running again, and with increased costs. When we looked at our renewals in January, we found that we lost very few members last year, but we expect the number to increase this year because reserves are being eaten up. None of our groups makes a profit—they break even—so, when there are challenges, it is really problematic.

I hope that we might also see some growth. There has been a real interest in music making—it is something that people took up or revisited

during lockdown periods. The high profile of the choirs, orchestras and bands that have been working digitally increased the want and need to take part in music. I hope that we might see some new groups forming, as well as an increase in the size of existing groups.

10:00

However, the groups are very vulnerable. What will benefit us is the funding of the infrastructure that I keep talking about. Multiyear funding would absolutely help the performing arts venues that we use and help freelancers in their professional careers. We would always want the professional sector to benefit from multiyear sustained investment because the knock-on effect for people making music in their leisure time is crucial.

Lucy Casot: I agree with all that. The situation will have a long tail, particularly for those who are normally reliant on international tourism for the bulk of their visitors, because some organisations will take longer to recover than others. Organisations are going into the next few years with very low reserves and lack the ability to invest in maintenance and so on.

However, there has also been quite a lot of learning from the situation—new ways of working and collaborating, as well as new opportunities for reaching audiences in different ways, have come from that. Multiyear funding is an opportunity to get away from short-term funding equalling short-term thinking. That would allow people to look more at collaborative working. There have been some great examples of that, including Museums and Heritage Highland, which has held joint exhibitions digitally. Using resources in a smarter way will be essential, as everything will be tight over the years to come.

The ability to think for the longer term makes collaborative and partnership working more realistic possibilities, because it is easier to make the investment in time to develop a collaborative approach if you know that you have a three-year funding deal than if you are just trying to get through the next 12 months. We would very much welcome the opportunity to do that, to make the most of the opportunities that the new ways of working bring and to smooth things out in any adaptations that we are able to make collectively as a sector. At the same time, some additional support, so that we are able to invest in the venues and in the adaptations that are required, is essential if we are to get through, survive and thrive on the other side of this period.

The Convener: Mr McVay, the news from the screen industry is very positive, which is something that we do not hear a lot of just now with regard to post-Covid economic recovery. I

want to understand some of the challenges around filling the gap of 30,000 jobs in the sector. Those jobs could never be filled purely by people who are currently living, studying and working in Scotland. Do you have people coming from Europe and beyond to work on the productions? Has Brexit had any impact on that? Has that been a challenge for you?

The committee also heard that many people have left industries in which there is a reliance on short-term and freelance contracts, because of the lack of job security. Is the sector remodelling how it might work with regard to job security?

John McVay: There are quite a lot of issues bundled together in that question. Clearly, during the pandemic, it was difficult to bring in non-UK workers because of the criteria for quarantining and so on. An exemption was brought in, which was then suspended. However, that has just been reintroduced, which means that we can bring in talent—particularly if they are lead actors from America—without having to go through the full quarantine process. Under our protocols, they can arrive and go into our Covid production bubbles, because, generally, production is, in effect, a closed environment.

Pre-Brexit, we brought in crew from other European countries, which was very easy, but it was never a big thing—we did not bring in many people. We are not getting a lot of feedback from our members that that is a big problem.

The real issue is how we as an industry, and others, invest in the skills and talents that we have to fill those 30,000 jobs. We surveyed our members across the UK and found that 80 per cent of them went through the process of putting freelancers on furlough, even if they did not have to. Given the boom that we are experiencing, I imagine that the vast majority of those people are now back working, which is what we wanted when we set up the restart fund—the indemnity fund for insurance. We explained to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it was much better to get people back to work, rather than have them sitting on furlough and not being productive. That has led to unprecedented levels of production. Rates have gone up, so I cannot imagine that anyone is leaving the industry. In some jobs, we are seeing a 70 per cent premium on pay rates. Everyone is trying to get back to work and put money back in their bank accounts, quite understandably.

If I think of my colleagues in the theatre sector and one production in Yorkshire in particular, I know that there are people from that sector who were furloughed because they could not get back to work who have now retrained to work in film and TV. We have a first-world problem: we need a lot of talented, skilled people. It is a huge opportunity for audiovisual economies across the UK, and it all

leads to further growth and development, which would be a good thing.

The Convener: I do not think that anyone else wants to come in on that issue, but I wonder whether Ms Sturgeon Shea wishes to comment on the possibilities of cross-co-operation. Would it worry you if a lot of people in theatre were leaving to work in the screen industry?

Fiona Sturgeon Shea: I think that that has already started happening—and I know that you have had evidence from my colleague at BECTU. It is a massive issue for us, and we have written in our submission about the skills gap that that might leave. It is not a competition, and it is great that freelancers are being supported in other ways. They have always worked in different areas, either in areas adjacent to theatre or in completely different areas. Alison Reeves talked about portfolio careers. The skills development part of our submission is very much focused on that. We need to retain, and we definitely also need to attract and support new talent. It must have been a really difficult time to be leaving education or trying to enter an industry that was effectively closed for nearly two years. We have a massive challenge ahead.

The Convener: I do not see anyone else indicating that they wish to contribute. The concerns from the different areas of the sector have been well voiced this morning. Thank you very much for your contributions. I suspend the meeting while we have a changeover of witnesses.

10:08

Meeting suspended.

10:10

On resuming—

The Convener: We move to evidence from our second panel. I welcome Iain Munro, who is chief executive of Creative Scotland, and Isabel Davis, who is executive director of Screen Scotland. I remind everybody to try to be succinct, as we want to get in as many opportunities for questions as possible. I invite Donald Cameron to start.

Donald Cameron: Good morning to our two panel members. My first question, which is for Mr Munro of Creative Scotland, is on the funding awards to local authorities. The committee has been provided with a useful table that shows the awards to all the local authorities in Scotland. It is quite hard to draw out any patterns from that, but it seems to be clear that the City of Edinburgh Council and Glasgow City Council take a large amount of funding, and it also appears that the five local authorities with the lowest per capita funding

from Creative Scotland all share a boundary with either Edinburgh or Glasgow. Do you have any comments about the spread of funding across Scotland by local authority? Any observations would be welcome.

Iain Munro (Creative Scotland): Good morning, and thank you for inviting us to give evidence. It is good to have a conversation this morning.

On local authorities, there are a number of dimensions. I will start with the overall context. It is important to recognise that Creative Scotland works across the geography of the 32 local authorities in a variety of different ways. Sometimes that work is at a policy and strategic level, and sometimes it is through funding interventions and so on.

The other bit of context concerns the patterns in what we call the ecology of support, which exists across the country. They reveal that organisations that work in the creative sector are predominantly centred around the higher population centres. Those are the main cities—in particular, but not exclusively, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

It is important to recognise that that does not mean that those organisations limit themselves to operating and delivering programmes of activity only in those particular areas. As a simple illustration, three quarters of the 121 organisations that we currently support through our regular funding programme work beyond the geographic base location in other—and in some cases, all—parts of Scotland. A pure arithmetic analysis of the data in tables gives us only part of the picture of where the impact and reach are actually felt.

Another point is that audiences do not operate within local authority boundaries. People will go to where there is activity or work that they want to see, experience and be part of, so they may travel across geographic locations. There are some areas of the country in which we want to see more progress on local opportunities for activity.

We work in a very targeted way beyond open application processes, such as those for the emergency funds, which naturally generate applications from local areas. We look at all the data and identify areas in which we might carry out more targeted activity and be a bit more active on the ground by attending funding fairs or working with local authorities and local groups.

10:15

We also have some strategic programmes around, for example, our place partnership work, in which we work with not only the local authorities but cultural organisations in a variety of areas to build their capacity, make them more confident

about what they want to see or do in their communities, and find ways of enabling that strategically. That can lead to project-based activity or growth of the kind of local activity that we can support in various ways.

The equation is complex, but we are doing our very best to understand that landscape, and we are working as hard as we can to enable access and spread the benefits of that funding support. As well as that, as part of our development role, we work with and through people in local areas so that they can do what they want to do.

Donald Cameron: Thank you for that, but I want to drill down into the detail a bit more. I fully accept what you say about being wary of reading too much into the data, but I note that, as far as successful awards are concerned, over half of the local authorities are below the 50 per cent mark. Is there a reason for that?

Iain Munro: Sometimes—though not always—it comes down to the volume of applications coming forward, which can be a result of capacity challenges and confidence in the local area to allow people to make those applications in the first place. I go back to my previous answer about our getting to understand and intervening directly with our presence in a local area, including, where appropriate, with funding. We can talk to people in an area about funding opportunities that we can make available alongside others, or we can bring some areas into a strategic programme such as the place partnership programme or, indeed, the recent culture collective programme, which is funded through the emergency funds and is investing in local communities, particularly those that are hardest to reach or which have been less well served as far as their funding patterns are concerned.

Donald Cameron: One example that I was very struck by was that of Aberdeen city. Although it is one of Scotland's major cities, its funding per capita was £4.67 compared with Edinburgh's at £51, Glasgow's at £34 and Dundee's at £21, and its number of applications per 1,000 people was relatively small compared with the others. Aberdeen, as one of our major cities, strikes me as a bit of an anomaly there, but is that because it is putting in fewer applications?

Iain Munro: Yes, but our experience in a number of areas in which the number of applications might be low is that the success rate for those applications tends to be high. In other words, although fewer applications come in, those that come in tend to be successful in securing resource.

We are only part of the ecology of support for organisations in local areas. Local government, in particular, plays a key role in working alongside

any resources that come from us as the national body to different local areas. As another illustration of that, I point out that our average intervention rate across the 121 regularly funded organisations in the current programme is a quarter of the turnover of those organisations. Of course, that will vary with the different kinds of organisations funded in that programme, but the average is, as I have said, a quarter, which means that three quarters comes from a combination of public and private sources and earned income through ticket sales, bar catering, retail, participation income and so on. Local support is as important as national support, and it is the whole picture taken together that becomes important.

Donald Cameron: For my final question, I want to step away from that and look at multiyear funding. Time and again over the past few weeks, organisations that have appeared before the committee have talked about the need for stability, security and long-term planning, particularly because of the pandemic. I am interested to hear the views of Creative Scotland and Screen Scotland on multiyear funding. Is it feasible? Do you support it?

Iain Munro: We definitely support it. We are encouraged by the programme for government commitment and the election manifesto commitment in that regard. If there is time, I can expand on Creative Scotland's budget construct and provide a bit more of an explanation, because it also involves the national lottery.

In relation to Scottish Government funding, as with many other public bodies, Creative Scotland has had annual budget cycles—more so than we would like. The move towards multiyear funding will enable all of us to look forward with more confidence, to meet our ambitions, and to support the sectors that we work with in order to deliver for the Scottish public to better effect than is possible under the current annual funding cycles.

In her submission, Lucy Casot from Museums Galleries Scotland, who was a witness in the earlier session, makes the point that short-term budgets can lead to short-term thinking. That is the unfortunate reality. If longer-term commitments are provided through the budget-setting process, we will be able to translate that funding into the hands of the people and organisations that we work with in the sector.

Isabel Davis (Screen Scotland): Thank you very much for the question, deputy convener. I wholly concur with Iain Munro in relation to screen. If we think about companies in that space and unpack the issue a little, we can start with cinemas. It is absolutely the case that multiyear funding allows for multiyear strategy. During the pandemic, we have seen acutely the need for innovation in business models and the need to

build an audience. The upside of the need to go digital during the pandemic is that that has allowed us to reach out across a far wider—[*Inaudible.*]

The Convener: We have a bit of a problem with the connection. Can we switch off Ms Davis's camera? I hope that we will then be able to hear her.

Are you still with us, Ms Davis? We lost you for a while.

Isabel Davis: [*Inaudible.*]—audiences. My video goes. I am sorry about that.

Cinemas would certainly benefit from multiyear funding, as some do under the current regular funding mechanism.

As John McVay highlighted, another huge issue for the screen industry is training and skills. There is a need for long-term thinking from our strong community of local training providers in Scotland. We would welcome that.

Sarah Boyack: My question follows on from the one about multiyear funding—although it is also about the level of funding—and is for Creative Scotland. The written evidence that we have received from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and the Accounts Commission highlights the extent to which culture funding has been cut. The large number of charities that deliver cultural services at local level have been very badly hit during the pandemic. The Accounts Commission highlights the extent to which culture has borne the brunt of service cuts in recent years. Are we underfunding the culture sector? We have had lots of great evidence about jobs, the sector's impact in the community and cultural wellbeing.

Festivals Scotland told us that its members have had in effect a 25 per cent cut over the past decade. Have we been underfunding the sector generally, even before the pandemic? I think that Creative Scotland's budget is 0.2 per cent of the total Scottish budget. Do you have any comments on not just multiyear funding but the level of funding? Are we even at the races? Is the level too low?

Iain Munro: The value that is delivered is enormous, but is relatively modest compared with what we could achieve were more funding to be made available. We know that the Scottish Government is supportive. What flows into us from direct culture budgets is 0.2 per cent. I know that we could do so much more. A relatively modest proportional uplift to that 0.2 per cent would be transformational for us in stabilising a sector that has been very fragile not just before the pandemic but—as has been writ large—during it.

I, too, share worries about looking to the future. No doubt there will be questions on that as part of

this evidence session. I will certainly be happy to talk about it.

We have to take care of the core foundations, which are fragile. As a public development body, we do our very best in handling and passing on public funding for public benefit. However, the businesses and companies—and individual freelancers and artists—that we support are all in fragile financial situations and would undoubtedly benefit from more stable funding. From such a foundation, a springboard could be created for delivering and unlocking even more potential in opportunities that are beyond culture itself, such as social and economic value and the wider policy context surrounding health and wellbeing, the environment, education, creative learning and skills. There are many touch points for which value could be unlocked exponentially through modest further financial investment.

We have to take care. The pandemic is on-going. We know that the culture sector more broadly is one of those that has been hit most immediately and most deeply, and that it will be hit for the longest period. The pandemic is on-going and recovery is going to be slow.

There are lots of challenges in that but I am also interested in concepts of renewal. Despite the adversity and the challenges that we must take care of, there is an opportunity to understand the extent to which culture and creativity have been turned to and valued in the everyday lives of people during the pandemic. Our research tells us that 96 per cent of the population have valued culture and creativity. How do we harness that as an opportunity and place it into the heart of the future, as part of a wellbeing economy? As I have said, that goes beyond cultural value in itself and into those other social and economic value policy spaces. It would genuinely be transformational.

I will talk about Screen Scotland as an exemplar. Screen Scotland was launched as part of Creative Scotland just over three years ago, in August 2018. A lot led up to that moment, but the journey of success for that part of Creative Scotland has been enormous and should be celebrated. I use it as an illustration of what can be achieved with a combination of a set of factors that have unlocked that potential. The first of those is an overt and direct political will and backing, and a determination to make a difference. The second is the right people with the right knowledge and expertise and expert focus, which we have right across Creative Scotland and particularly in screen. The third is a modest financial enhancement; there is an additional £8.5 million from the Scottish Government, on top of the £10 million that Creative Scotland contributes, to enable the unlocking of the potential of the screen industry. An additional element in screen is

currently the favourable global market conditions, particularly in relation to the streaming platforms and high-end film and television.

10:30

The experience of the screen sector illustrates that the combination of overt political will and backing; the right people, skills, knowledge and expertise and focus; and a modest financial uplift could be replicated more widely across the portfolio of sectors with which Creative Scotland works in order to achieve the exponential growth that we are currently seeing in screen. That is an important example to illustrate the opportunity that I am talking about, but we have to take care of the on-going and long-term challenges of the pandemic.

One concept that I sometimes speak of is the risk of cultural long Covid. The sectors with which we work will take a long time to recover from the ramifications of the pandemic, so we have to take care of the core as well as thinking about how we can support change, through additional resources, so that the sectors can adapt to a new and different future.

Isabel Davis: I agree in respect of our ability to bring into Screen Scotland people from the sector who have, over the past two and a half or three years, been highly dedicated to their particular field. They come into the sector with very strong relationships, and we have been able to create a range of initiatives and bandwidth that have enabled us to really support the industry.

John McVay was kind enough to point to the speed with which we were able to get emergency funding, and subsequent funding rounds, out of the door from the start of the pandemic, in comparison with our cousins across the nations. That was down to both the in-house expertise and bandwidth and the broader Creative Scotland body corporate, which has huge expertise across funding.

On skills and training, that bandwidth has allowed us to work incredibly quickly throughout the pandemic, including on retraining workers from theatre, working with Skills Development Scotland, through the national transition training fund. We have been able to work with the Lyceum, for example, to put theatre workers on to shows such as "The Rig". There is a benefit to people with any one skill set if they can work across both areas. The mobility of the workforce, be that across performing arts, live events or gaming, will be a feature for the future in any case. Broadly, that has been a real positive, and I am sure that others would concur with that.

Sarah Boyack: I have a follow-up question for Mr Munro about what the transformational

difference would be. As you say, it is currently about getting through Covid. Your submission is powerful, stating that

"Scotland's Creative Industries contribute £4.6bn to the Scottish economy each year, supporting 90,000 jobs".

What is the priority in upping the investment that you put in? We have heard a lot about training, and issues around investment in buildings, not just to get through Covid but because a lot of our venues and theatres are quite old. What additional funding do we need, not only to keep things going but to invest in the buildings and the people that we need in our communities to ensure that the sector is with us in the future?

Iain Munro: We need to try to be sure-footed, as best we can, in a world that is still quite foggy. We need to find a way through the on-going pandemic, but recovery is slow.

I will give a wee bit of context in order to answer your question properly. At this juncture, in September, we are at a confluence of a number of pressure points. I am really concerned about that, and about the implications for whether we are able to move forward confidently into the future without seeing major parts of the sectors that we work with collapse. That is still a distinct risk, because people have depleted all their financial resilience, reserves and so on, and they have already accessed a lot of the available support.

In essence, we swung into action on delivery of that from day 1. I want to thank the staff of Creative Scotland for all their on-going hard work and dedication to enable that to happen. We knew that we wanted to provide—and we have provided—support for individual artists and freelancers as well as organisations. We wanted to provide a combination of completely open-access, strategically targeted measures as well as investment to address issues of hardship and to stabilise the situation. Importantly, we also wanted to think about a new and different future and to support people to change in looking to that.

That future is uncertain, because we are seeing the prospect of patterns of cultural production, presentation, distribution and audience engagement changing. In that, nothing is bigger than digital, which works only on certain occasions for some. It is certainly no compensation for or alternative to the live arts experience, which it remains very important to support.

Therefore, there is a broader context, but there are six things that I am very worried about, which are adding to the mix. One is the end of furlough; the second is repayment of business loans commencing; the third is on-going and increasing inflation in the broader economy; the fourth is the retreat of public and private funding, sources of which include local government, other local

fundings, private business, philanthropy and so on; the fifth is the slow-to-return audience base, which is about not just participation and audiences but income streams; and the sixth is a commitment to fair pay, which we must address unequivocally but which adds another dimension into the mix that puts pressure on the core budgets, which are already very thin. There is no financial resilience left in the budgets that we hold, let alone those that we are able to pass on to the organisations that we work with. That sounds like a heady cocktail of challenges.

The measures that need to be on-going include further stabilisation, coupled with support for change and adaptation for the future across five different areas. One is supporting organisations in particular, but also people, to think about their business models. The second is to build existing and new connections with audiences. The third is the role of digital. We have been doing some work in those areas. The fourth is around capital, which is about Covid adaptations but also climate change. The fifth is around supporting organisations that might want to fundamentally restructure themselves with a different kind of vision or mission for the future or, indeed, those who might feel that, for whatever reason, they are unable to continue. I would rather that that was all supported and managed strategic change with the best outcomes intended than a reactive situation, which has seen some parts of the sector collapse—we have had to intervene to try to recover some of the lost ground.

That is about stabilisation and change in the context of thinking about opportunities to bolster and enhance core culture budgets. We need to work collaboratively across portfolios in other policy areas to unlock those opportunities. Where there are mutual benefits, those portfolio budgets could also provide resource to the culture sector.

Finally, when I talk about the culture and creative sector, I need to be absolutely clear that Creative Scotland is not all of the culture sector. I am sure that that is understood by the committee, but just to be absolutely clear about that, we do not work directly with museums and galleries, historic—[*Inaudible.*]

Jenni Minto: I was interested in what you just said about the various challenges, and I would be interested to hear more about the work that you hope to do on climate emergency and the sustainability plan.

I was struck by something else in your evidence. It goes against what you have just said about different funding streams, but you give the example of the Creatives Rebuild New York initiative and the philanthropy that came into that. Is that something that you are looking to explore through creatives rebuild Scotland? As Ms Boyack

said, the amount of economic benefit that the creative industries put into Scotland is large. I am interested to hear about those two slightly diverse things in relation to forward planning and finance.

Iain Munro: I will start with that second point—and you will need to remind me about the first one when we come to it. I go back to my proposition that we need to take care of the core first and foremost, and that would merit enhanced, additional financial resources to create a confident platform, which we could then supplement with other income in order to unlock the wider opportunities. Some of that is about the cross-portfolio working that I have talked about, and some of it is about where there might be new and different financial mechanisms, which have a role to play in and alongside the core subsidy. That is undoubtedly a core requirement for the sectors that we work with in the large part, as we look to the longer term.

What I am saying is that there is an enhanced need at the moment. We have done a lot of work through our creative industries team in particular to consider new, complementary forms of finance that can play a role. Crowdfunding would be one, and social investment would be another. There are different mechanisms.

However, we can get people into that space only when they have stopped worrying about the survival of the core and are channelling that energy into how they can deliver public programmes that are of public benefit.

Your first question was about the climate emergency and the environment.

Jenni Minto: That is right.

Iain Munro: That is enormously important; there is nothing more so. By way of macro context, we have been reflecting in our own strategy on the three tectonic plates, as I call them, that are moving around us at the moment. One is the pandemic, which we have been largely focusing on. There is of course EU exit, with its implications and ramifications still unclear and uncertain—but it is definitely problematic already. The third is none greater than climate change.

Those have all been in our thinking when we have considered how to rebuild our refresh strategy. It has four areas of priority. One is equalities, diversity and inclusion; the second is sustainability, which includes the climate emergency and the environment; the third is fair work, which includes fair pay, terms and conditions, and skills and employment; and the fourth is the international dimension, which is very important for thriving cultures globally. Cultures thrive domestically when they are in an international context of import, export and exchange. Those are the four priorities: EDI,

sustainability, fair work and international. They are the core things that we are focused on in looking to the future.

We can calibrate and recast different programmes—development programmes as well as funding programmes—in alignment to all of those, and with more clarity. That is our intention. Addressing the climate emergency is an elevated priority, and we have done a lot of work over the past 10 years with the sectors that we work with, in partnership with a key organisation that we helped to establish some years ago called Creative Carbon Scotland, which is working with us at the moment as we look towards our next environmental action plan for the five years from 2022. We have the long term in our sights.

The work that we have done so far has involved some important changes within the sectors that we work with and support in a really positive way. However, that has involved what I would call the low-hanging fruit of change, and some of the thornier issues are harder to tackle in themselves. I know that climate finance will be one of the major measures, and not just for the sectors that we work with. The economy more widely will need to have that in place in order to effect change.

10:45

Through the work that we do and enable, we are determined to play a role that will make a positive difference in addressing the challenges of climate. There are three dimensions to it. First, there are the improvements that Creative Scotland needs to make in the operation and delivery of our core work for our business models. That includes our renewables, our—[Inaudible.]—energy consumption and travel and so on. Secondly, there is how we can influence change in those whom we work with directly. For example, we have worked hard to get environmental action plans into core organisations that we support. Thirdly, there is what those organisations can then go on to translate on to stages and through music, books and literature, visual arts programmes and so on to influence public opinion and behaviours at large. It is a three-layered approach: us, those whom we can influence directly in the sectors that we work with, and how they go on to influence the public at large.

Jenni Minto: I will ask a slightly different question. Your submission mentioned the importance of research and development spend to allow the creative industries to come up with ideas. John McVay of the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television mentioned that as well. What has been the success rate of that, if that is a fair question?

The Convener: We will go to Ms Davis first, as I am conscious that Mr Munro has been talking for a long time.

Isabel Davis: I think that John McVay was talking in his report about the UK Government's R and D tax credits, which sits outside of our purview. The role of R and D in the screen sector—in film and TV—would translate broadly to the development process, which is how ideas come about. In the factual space, it might be lots of ideas coming together quite quickly; in the film space, it will possibly be a more cerebral and longer-term effort. It is absolutely critical to the way that we work.

Now that we have Screen Scotland and a broader base of executives, one of the developments is working in a much more integrated way with the production companies on the work coming forward, where that is appropriate and where we are needed—which, typically, is in the film side of the space. If we are working to support scripted projects that will be commissioned by broadcasters or one of the streamers, we know our place, and we will allow the commissioners to take that role.

If you are asking about conversion, that is a really difficult question to answer, because it—deliberately—varies so much. Lots of things get thrown at the wall. That is certainly true in the unscripted space in TV, but also true of development.

We are seeing things come through faster, and we are also looking at the way in which we can play a much more proactive role in bringing forward work as a production financier as well as a development financier. In the film space, this year we have backed—with BBC film and the British Film Institute—four first feature films. That sort of number is pretty unprecedented when we look at recent years.

We are also looking at how we can more proactively be the first financier to a film. Although we can technically do that now, the industry needs us, as a national agency, to stand behind particular projects more. The issue will be that, if we are making financial commitments earlier on in the process, we will not be able to do it for everyone. It comes back to that question of what the material is and what we feel can and should go forward. However, I am afraid that it is not a precise science in terms of conversion.

Jenni Minto: That was very helpful—thank you very much.

Iain Munro: In the broader arts space, research and development is at the heart of artistic development and innovation. It leads to new creative ideas being explored not only across the work of individual artists, freelancers and

practitioners, but in how that then moves into public programmes with audiences. Supporting individuals to unlock the potential of that through research and development is therefore an important dimension of keeping a thriving artistic and creative culture in the country.

Jenni Minto: Indeed. We heard last week from the Stove Network in Dumfries about support not just for culture that is already here but for new culture that is just being created, so I think that your comments just there were helpful, Mr Munro.

Mark Ruskell: I will start with a question for Isabel Davis. You might have noticed that the recent co-operation agreement between the Green MSPs and the Scottish Government commits to

“additional resources to Screen Scotland for the purpose of facilitating year-round engagement between the Scottish and international film & television industries, with a particular emphasis on the USA.”

What is your reaction to that? What should the priorities be to ensure not only that the best of Scottish talent is working internationally but that we start to bring some productions into Scotland, too?

Isabel Davis: As you can imagine, that paragraph on page 7 was very welcome and pleasing news. It is very prescient to see international production as such a tool of growth. Productions coming into Scotland, which you have highlighted, have been a real success story during the pandemic, and Scotland’s fortunes have changed extraordinarily for the better since production reopened in July last year and with the opening in Leith of a new major studio for Scotland. That studio has already housed “The Rig” and has “Anansi Boys” gearing up for production, but I also point out that “Good Omens” and a range of other major film productions have been shooting across the whole of Scotland over the past 12 months.

The international remit and the focus on the US are key to that. Scotland’s ability to build on that picture has strengthened certainly the infrastructure side but also the skills side of our offer to the US. We have mentioned that already, but we could go into far greater detail about how that goes across every skills grade and every part of the value chain for film and TV, right from early doors. If there were time, I could talk about film education, even at school level, which I think is incredibly important. In fact, with hindsight, I should have mentioned the issue in response to a previous question. Innovation has to start with creative thinking in schools, and we are actively pursuing that.

Staying on point, however, I think that staying competitive on the skills front will be a big part of attracting production into Scotland, but we also

need to build relationships and our offer in relation to more locally originated content. That is an absolute must. We will build resilience and sustainability not simply by becoming a very successful service industry for US production but by enabling our Scottish TV and film production companies to build stronger content themselves. That side of the international picture is about ensuring that intellectual property rights are developed in Scotland, are owned by Scottish companies and are used to hit the international market either through partnership with a streaming platform or by selling the rights territory by territory internationally for broadcast or theatrical release elsewhere.

In order to have a successful growth model, we are committed to—and, indeed, are—developing material that can travel and developing relationships through providing broader resource for producers. That relates not only to the scale of what they can deliver but to, say, the number of times that they can travel per year. Relationships really matter; they are not simply about personal connections but about truly understanding what a commissioner is looking for, having exposure to them and their having a really good understanding of your work. After all, that is what will determine how confident they feel in the pit of their stomach about what you can deliver in future. That is how people get commissioned.

There is plenty to do, and we are keen to know how much resource we might have to play with. Nevertheless, we have already started to plan for how it might work across what you might call the skills development piece, exports, inward investment and co-production. I should also mention that we are committed to working with Europe; we see all sorts of broadcast and film opportunities there. In fact, in early November, we will welcome to Scotland about 100 independent European producers for their annual conference, and they will meet the Scottish production sector in a show of warmth and strength with regard to Scotland’s future intentions towards Europe.

Mark Ruskell: Great—thank you for that. I turn to what Iain Munro said earlier about the big challenges that we face as a society and how those are reflected in Creative Scotland’s objectives, because I am curious as to why your annual plan does not mention the word “regeneration” anywhere. You talked earlier about the pandemic and climate change. One of the consequences of the pandemic is that our high streets and towns are dying, because there are lots of empty spaces, but some creative groups are coming in to repurpose our high streets and draw more people back into our places. Where does what we traditionally call regeneration sit within your plan? How many of the projects that

you fund each year are about urban, community-based regeneration?

Iain Munro: The word that I am using is “renewal”, which is in the same territory but is broader and includes what you describe. I mentioned earlier that the future is still unclear with regard to how the world has changed, but it has undoubtedly changed and there is no going back to the status quo. The importance of how culture and creativity in local communities come to life in different forms is emerging. We are very interested in how we can support those opportunities in new and innovative ways. Some of that is about audience response, and what local communities want is more important than ever. Things are changing, and the opportunities that you talked about in that regeneration space are definitely part of what we imagine will, increasingly, be part of the new and different future. However, that is in addition to some of the core cultural assets that already exist, such as theatres, galleries, workshops and music venues.

There are lots of opportunities, and you will see some of them coming through in the culture collective programme, which is getting under way, having had £6 million from the Scottish Government to kick-start it earlier this year. That programme is working with 26 different projects and communities across Scotland, so it is very much about local, community-rooted projects. Earlier, Jenni Minto mentioned the Stove Network in Dumfries, which is a classic example of what you refer to as local regeneration.

Mark Ruskell: As part of that renewal, do you see the creative sector leading that public participation? Previously, councils or particular agencies might have tried to lead that process. How much involvement do you see the creative sector having? You said that there has been £6 million for one fund. Is that funding particularly for high street regeneration work? Does it involve participatory conversations with communities to regenerate areas?

Iain Munro: Yes, that is a key part of it. Through that programme, we are connecting all those different communities—communities of artists as well as the local population—so that they can learn, share and exchange their experiences, which will inform other programmes and projects. The creative communities programme is not explicitly just about community regeneration in local areas, but that is a key component of what will be achieved. More can be done in that area, because we have seen the importance of local communities feeling that they have a democratic cultural voice that informs what happens in their areas. That is more important than ever. It is about channelling that by working with the local community and with local artists and cultural

institutions to unlock an area’s potential. However, what that ends up being and looking like will be bespoke to individual communities.

Many aspects of the culture collective programme have enormous potential to benefit us by helping us to understand communities. We can share that understanding more widely, so that it can influence other programmes and projects in the future.

11:00

Sue Webber: You have answered some of the questions that I was going to ask in responding to other members, but I have a follow-up question relating to the fact that your organisation has no capital budget. We have just heard from Mr Ruskell about the renewal programmes that are needed for the industry and the sector. How will the lack of capital impact your ability to kick-start that renewal?

Iain Munro: Earlier, I said that capital is one of, I think, five areas in which enhanced resources are required in order to adapt and change as part of that renewal as we look towards the future. It is needed for Covid compliance measures at venues and for climate change measures, for example, but it is also needed to support the ambitions to enable local communities to have the spaces and opportunities that they want and need, so that they have the best local cultural offer that not only satisfies them but becomes vital to individual wellbeing in communities across Scotland.

In previous years, we have funded capital spending largely from our national lottery budgets, but we now have no financial headroom in our overall budgets to fund capital programmes. We have a small number of residual capital projects from previous years that are finishing, but we have no current financial headroom and, therefore, no plans to provide capital funding. However, it will be an important component of the overall ecology of support in the future.

Sue Webber: For all the other organisations with depleted reserves and no financial resilience, that is often where some small capital investment would have taken place. Ms Davis, is that relevant to Screen Scotland?

Isabel Davis: The first thing that comes to mind is that, in relation to the role that we have been able to play with regard to infrastructure for Bath Road, there is no doubt that, without a modest amount of support, that project would have stumbled. For all the extraordinary growth that we have seen in the production sector, the studio sector still has a degree of market failure, so our support for that project was incredibly important.

Another example, which touches more closely on the issue of retail, is the redevelopment of Kelvin hall in the city centre of Glasgow. It is a historical building that is very worthy of public support, and it has had lots of support from Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government. We are looking at how that project will play out in terms of the redevelopment of its central space as an entertainment shiny floor venue, which will draw audiences into the centre of Glasgow. In addition, it might very well co-host or have proximate to it training associations so, as well as acting as a shining beacon of creativity in the heart of Glasgow, it will bring footfall to that part of town. There will be repercussions—the ripple effects that we have talked about this morning—elsewhere.

The Convener: I want to ask some supplementaries on the back of that theme. A wellbeing economy and its meeting expectations in local communities is one of the Scottish Government's stated goals. We have also heard a lot of evidence about placemaking, the importance of culture being relevant to the community, and its being in every community and area. Responding to the audience and what people choose to spend their leisure time doing is also important.

It is not unusual for Creative Scotland's funding models to come under scrutiny and to be controversial, but two particular areas have been highlighted during Covid: what we might call the night-time economy and, in particular, comedy club and music venue performance spaces. We have heard that, independent as they are, they got Government support for the first time ever, because of Covid. However, the funding model might lead to Creative Scotland grants being outwith the capacity of a lot of those organisations, and a smaller funding model or grant might be available to support smaller projects. That has a geographic and rural element, as well. Will consideration be given to how the money is developed and the level of support that can be given to change that placemaking in communities?

Isabel Davis: Placemaking is a pertinent concept when it comes to building around centres of production. For example, we have co-commissioned with Scottish Enterprise work that looks at how the economy around Leith going all the way up to Granton on the east coast can be developed as a consequence of a film studio, and we are doing likewise in Glasgow. We are looking at how we can bring together those elements, how we can support local businesses to take advantage of that, and the whole supply chain and value chain.

It is interesting to look at what we hope is the helpful tension between building critical mass across the central belt and the wider effect across Scotland. Again, I think that the screen industry is

very alive to that. I give the example of "Good Omens", which is sited fully in Scotland and is wholly made here. The showrunner, Douglas Mackinnon, deserves huge credit for bringing that show to Scotland and for the way in which he wants to work with new entrants into the business through traineeships across the whole of Scotland. We are extremely supportive of that model. Obviously, co-funding through various means is needed, as well. There is absolutely a benefit from placemaking, looking strategically, and working with local authorities and local industry on the range of training that can go on.

I go back to the subject of the Kelvin hall. We have just set up what is called a format lab, which is a training programme to ensure that that building facility is employed by shows that have primarily come out of Scotland, as far as we can possibly help that. The way in which that will happen is about not only having the building but ensuring that the pipeline from Scotland is fully developed and commissionable. Putting resource and expertise into the business of creating new shows that could go on there is one of the key contingencies that will make the place flourish in Scotland's best interests.

Iain Munro: In earlier answers, I referred on two or three occasions to examples that are in part a response to placemaking—for example, the place partnership programme and the culture collective fund. I want to clarify that, for some of the emergency funds, certain parts of the night-time economy are not in our traditional bailiwick in terms of Creative Scotland's brief. For example, we would not anticipate being in any way part of the longer-term support provided to nightclubs, unless there was a cultural outcome attached to the funds that we operate that they could address. It is the same for other, wider parts of the night-time economy that have previously been able to access support.

It is about how we can cast future funding programmes that enable people to see and understand what the intended outcomes from those programmes are and to understand how they can make a contribution. However, I have to be honest and say that, in certain instances, particularly where private business enterprises are involved, we ask for some fundamental information in funding applications around financial matters, business plans and so on, because public funding has to be accounted for. Understandably, some private enterprises are reluctant to share that and therefore cannot satisfy the requirements of those funding applications.

On the broad point about placemaking, I referred earlier to the importance of ensuring that communities are more empowered to feel that they have a stake and a say in what they want to

see in their area. The cultural sector needs to be in tune with that and to be able to work with communities to ensure that that can happen.

As I mentioned earlier, one of our core priorities is the equalities, diversity and inclusion agenda. That recognises the fact that, pre-pandemic, society was unequal and in many ways unjust, and that those inequalities have widened and deepened during the pandemic.

We are determined, now more than ever, along with those whom we will be supporting, to ensure that access and inclusion issues in communities throughout Scotland are at the heart of the equation. Ultimately, however, unless there is growth in resources, it will be more difficult for us to deliver against those agendas, and it will be more likely that we will have to make tough choices that will undoubtedly be sensitive and controversial. It is important, in our commitment to the equalities, diversity and inclusion agenda, that we see that through with all seriousness and conviction.

Dr Allan: I appreciate that some of these issues will have been covered but, as Columbo would say, I have just one more question. It is possibly relevant to both witnesses.

Iain Munro mentioned the potential for inequalities to deepen as we come out of the experience of Covid. I am curious to know whether that means that you will have to rethink specifically what you do in your relationship with schools. That is where efforts to overcome inequality through public policy usually begin, although I suppose that they may begin pre-school.

Iain Munro: Again, the extent to which the world has changed around us has still to clarify itself, but I absolutely agree that a lot of work starts with children and young people, not just in school but through informal education and learning. We provide an awful lot of support for that in a variety of ways, but there is more to be done.

We have “Time to Shine: Scotland’s Youth Arts Strategy For Ages 0-25” from before the pandemic and a national youth arts advisory group, which has made it clear that the voice of children and young people must be more at the heart of policy making and decision making. We absolutely respect that, and we want to see that. Those ideas and aspirations for the future count now more than ever.

We provide a lot of support through funding, but we also work in our development role, in partnership with bodies such as Education Scotland, to understand how, together, we can support in-school teaching practice, in support of the curriculum for excellence. We will continue to understand what more can be done to support that kind of work to ensure that creativity and a

creative education are a key part of what we can enable through the work that we do.

That will continue to be work in progress, but it is undoubtedly an important dimension of what we want to do and see for the future.

Isabel Davis: I agree that access and inequality issues underpin a lot of our work. We know that there is more to do. For example, we are working with the Glasgow Media Access Centre on bringing more diverse applicants of high school age into the system through making short films. Across all our funded projects—in cinema, for example—we are looking for EDI activity and a proactive route into underrepresented communities.

The point about schools is extremely well made. Scotland is in the slightly odd position of being the one nation in the UK that does not have a school-level qualification at national 5 level that deals with film as an expressive art. That seems odd for a country that has such a rich heritage and such ambition for innovation in the future. It feels key that young people of school age are not only switched on to the idea of film or TV as a career of some sort, but are exploring their own creativity and expression, which may have manifold applications in later life. In thinking about what kind of country we want to be and how we go forward, it feels incredibly key that that should be built into the education system.

11:15

I go back to something that John McVay said earlier about his desire for STEM to become STEAM. It is about having the arts and creativity taken seriously and being seen not just as something that is nice to have but as an area that underpins the UK’s economy and which is very much a growing part of it. In Scotland, we have seen that that can be us too—with the right investment in infrastructure and skills, we can and should be part of that. We absolutely agree that that approach starts at school and that there is more to be done.

Iain Munro: I will make a very quick point. I want to note something that is relevant to many of the questions that have been asked today. A couple of weeks ago, we launched the new Our Creative Voice initiative, which is an important advocacy programme that we developed in partnership with people from across the sector. It is a central repository, which we want to speak to the general public as well as to politicians and the broader sectors and stakeholders with which we work. In that repository, people can find case studies of what culture and creativity means to the people of Scotland in all the different policy areas and all the different values that it can express.

There is a range of materials in there, such as toolkits for people to use, but the storytelling at the heart of it is a powerful body of work that we will build over the many months and years ahead.

I point people towards seeing that as a central repository and as the go-to place to find out more about the broad diversity of the area and the great things that already happen around the country and across the policy spectrum. It also contains a lot of material to support the need for data, knowledge and research that sometimes comes up—for example, health was mentioned in the previous session. An awful lot of material already exists in the initiative, and we will build on that. We will take a thematic approach. We are currently moving on to the environment, given that COP26 is upon us in a couple of months, and we will move on to children and young people next year.

I ask the committee to take the opportunity to look at that initiative and engage with it, because it is powerful to read and hear about the work that is currently going on. That goes back to my earlier point. If that is what we can achieve with the current levels of resource, we should imagine what would be possible with just a little bit more and what we could unleash by way of a positive contribution to the country, culturally, socially and economically.

The Convener: That is a positive note on which to end. I thank Mr Munro and Ms Davis for their attendance this morning. We will now move into private session.

11:18

Meeting continued in private until 11:30.

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