



Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution
cabinetsecretaryforfinanceandconstitution@gov.scot
By Email

JM/KM
8 December 2017

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Cross Party Group on Culture, ahead of the publication of the Scottish Government's draft budget, to highlight concerns about the devastating impact any cut to the culture budget would have upon Scotland's arts, screen and creative industries.

Creativity is fundamental to the lives of people, communities and places. From small villages through to our cities, cultural events and activities bringing people together to make the most of their community's unique assets and helping to make Scotland an exciting place to live, work and play. Indeed, 88% of people agree that Scotland is a creative nation.

Culture and creativity enable Scotland to deliver its goals of being a progressive, flourishing and inclusive society, with a strong and growing economy. In March 2017, a Scottish Opinion Survey from TNS showed that 92% believe it is right that there should be public funding of arts and cultural activities in Scotland.

Culture is not only an intrinsic good - Scotland's creative industries are estimated to contribute £4.6 billion annually to the Scottish economy, represent 3% of GVA and supporting 84,000 jobs.

Importantly, the arts and creative industries contribute significantly to the tourist industry (a further 3% of GVA, and 8.5% or 200,000 of Scotland's jobs). Within the creative industries, the screen sector alone represents £225m of GVA or 5,800 jobs in Scotland directly. The evidence is clear: the creative sector is a powerful contributor to driving the Scottish economy.

In a rapidly changing economy we need new kinds of thinking to maintain employment and meaningful activities. In this context artists and creatives will be profoundly important. The digital economy has allowed creativity to flourish, and encourages risk taking, collaborative working and entrepreneurial thinking.

Moreover, cultural participation has been shown to have a positive influence on individual's health and upon educational attainment.

The Scottish Government's own report - 'Healthy Attendance? The Impact of Cultural Engagement and Sports Participation on Health and Satisfaction with Life', found that those who participate in culture or attend cultural places or events are more likely to report good health and life satisfaction than those who do not. In addition, the Cultural Learning Alliance has found that participation in structured arts activities increase cognitive abilities, and taking part in structured music activities improves attainment in maths.

Spending on culture is already low, relative to other areas. In 2017/18 the Scottish Government Culture Budget of £152 million is 0.5% of the total Scottish Government budget, and around 0.27% of total identified spending in Scotland.

Concerns have also been raised about declining revenue from the National Lottery. Both the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs and the Chair of Creative Scotland have written to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport calling for action to be taken to offset the trend of year-on-year decline.

Against this backdrop, Scottish Government funding for culture would need to increase to maintain current levels of provision across the arts, screen and creative industries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan McAlpine', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joan McAlpine MSP
Convener
Cross Party Group on Culture