

A Culture Strategy for Scotland: Action Plan

December 2023

Ministerial foreword

Christina McKelvie, Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development

Scotland's culture is world famous. From the Borders to Shetland, our extraordinary creative organisations, practitioners and passionate communities come together to create truly remarkable work, which we know has a real impact on the whole country's social and economic wellbeing. As a Government, we take great pride in the country's culture, and we recognise the need to nurture it for the benefit of future generations.

This new Action Plan presents a series of workstreams that, collectively, aim to provide a roadmap to a strong, resilient culture sector, and support a cultural landscape where everyone benefits and gets to take part.

The Action Plan builds on the vision for culture that we set out in early 2020, when we published our Culture Strategy for Scotland. The Culture Strategy built on years of conversation and consultation across the cultural and creative sectors, public bodies, audiences, participants, academic institutions, and more. Centred around three key themes of strengthening, transforming and empowering, the Culture Strategy set out a clear vision for culture in Scotland. It made it clear we believe culture is for everybody, and our mission as a Government is to create the conditions for it to thrive, to ensure every person in Scotland has the chance to experience the life-changing potential of participating in cultural and creative activity.

We know that culture can make us happier, healthier and more prosperous, and this Action Plan aims to create the conditions to allow culture to deliver all these outputs and more – for the benefit of everyone.

Introduction

This Action Plan sets out the next steps we will take to support culture in Scotland and has been developed in collaboration with the Culture Sector.

Consultation began in late 2022 with a series of roundtables on the theme of resilience. The sessions were chaired by Matt Baker, co-chair of the National Partnership for Culture and were attended by the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture, Scottish Government Culture Officials and colleagues from across the Culture Sector. Throughout these sessions, we placed an emphasis on collective leadership and collaborative action, considering how Government, public bodies, and cultural and creative organisations can work together to effect change.

In January and February 2023, we convened working groups, including the National Partnership for Culture, the Culture and Creativity in Learning Group and the Local and National Delivery Group to develop a set of draft actions, which we workshopped with the wider sector through a series of feedback sessions in May 2023. Finally, we met with Creative Scotland and their Sector Leads group in autumn 2023 to finalise the actions and ensure they were representative of what the sector needed.

Throughout this consultation, we have heard that the guiding vision, principles and ambitions of the Culture Strategy remain relevant. However, some of its workstreams need reconsidering and reframing to bring them into the new landscape we are working in, with a focus on resilience and long-term recovery. With that in mind, we have developed this Action Plan, which builds on the Culture Strategy rather than replaces it. Some of the actions that follow are brand new, and reflect the need for a guiding framework. Other actions have been reworked, building on the principles set out in the Culture Strategy and bringing these up to date. And finally, some actions have been retained, where both the principles and details remain the right ones.

The following four chapters provide the detail of how we will deliver on the vision and ambitions of the Culture Strategy. The first chapter takes an overarching view of the need to build resilience, and features new actions. The subsequent chapters follow the three pillars of the Culture Strategy: Strengthening Culture, Transforming through Culture, and Empowering through Culture.

Chapter 1 – Overview actions: Resilience

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

We want to ensure that public sector support has the greatest possible impact. This is especially crucial in such a challenging financial situation, although our understanding of support extends beyond money, to space, resources, relationships, and more. We have heard from cultural and creative organisations and practitioners that a comprehensive overview of relevant support and opportunities is needed.

In order to be able to make consistent and well-informed policy decisions in a quickly evolving landscape, we need a broad overview of the current context and, in particular, intelligence about specific challenges. We already work closely with our public bodies and directly funded organisations to ensure emerging situations are quickly escalated. We are committed to continuous improvement in this area, making sure our reporting routes remain fit for purpose and allow the Scottish Government to gather information and be responsive where appropriate. To maximise benefits for the sector and ensure that we are aware of, and can respond to, current and emerging issues for the sector, we are reviewing our strategic engagement with the sector going forward in a way that is agile and ensures the many voices working across the sector are heard and understood.

Maximising impact is about more than ensuring support goes as far as possible, it is also vital that all eligible organisations and practitioners have the opportunity to apply for support. We will work closely with our partners to explore ways of streamlining this and, in doing so, will listen to sectoral views on what would be most useful.

We are working closely with analytical and social research colleagues to deliver this action. Aspects of this are already underway, for example, we have developed new questions to be used in YouGov polling to obtain a snapshot of behavioural trends.

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

This action requires a clear line of sight between the sector and Scottish Government to understand the details of specific pressures. Through our roundtable discussions, it was clear that tax relief for culture organisations was a high priority for the sector.

Following lobbying by the Scottish Ministers, the UK Government has agreed to extend the tax relief available to the Culture Sector until April 2025. We will continue to lobby for this high rate to be extended beyond this date as we are aware of the important role these tax reliefs play to organisations. We are already engaging with the UK Government to deliver appropriate tax and energy relief schemes; engaging with other Scottish Government teams to ensure schemes, such as domestic rates relief, are understood by the culture and events sectors; and engaging with relevant Scottish Government teams to ensure there is an understanding of challenges for the sector.

Other issues emerging through our engagement with the sector include increases to rental rates and high energy prices. While these are not unique to the Culture Sector, there are excellent examples of cultural organisations maximising resources via collaboration, space sharing, or operating creatively from derelict or unused places – which, in turn, has a positive impact on the local setting. We will amplify and learn from these examples of best practice.

R3: Explore and develop alternative and additional income streams.

Along with the need to maximise existing support and reduce pressures wherever possible, we recognise that securing new sources of funding will allow the sector to be supported to the fullest extent possible.

We will develop a ‘Percentage for the Arts’ scheme, which will generate revenue for the sector by requiring that a small percentage of spending on all new public buildings and spaces is channelled into support for culture and community art commissions. We will share more information on progress with this commitment in line with our broader reporting mechanisms on this Action Plan.

Additionally, the Scottish Government has introduced the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill. If passed, the Bill will give local authorities a discretionary power to apply a levy on overnight visitor stays in accommodation across their local area. This will be a discretionary power, for a local authority Council to use if it chooses to do so and if it can demonstrate it is right for their local authority area. The proceeds raised from the levy can be used to fund relevant local activities and services which support and sustain the visitor economy. Local authorities will be obliged to consult local communities and business, and give significant notice, before a visitor levy can be applied.

Overall, we know that maximising the range of income streams available to the sector will support and build long-term resilience. Many organisations across the sector already successfully utilise a mixed funding model. We will consider how learning from this approach can maximise the impact of public funding.

R4: Collaboration for effectiveness and impact.

The Scottish Government cannot operate alone in this space, we must work in collaboration towards the recovery and renewal of the Culture Sector.

Cultural organisations and practitioners found innovative and additional opportunities for collaboration throughout the pandemic, for example, through the creation of more flexible funding arrangements such as the Culture Collective and the Youth Arts Emergency Fund. This action seeks to maximise the learning from this period: firstly, by seeking ways to create the conditions for more collaboration across organisations; and secondly, by increasing collaboration between funders to ensure public funding provides flexibility.

This action needs to be delivered over the long term, and we will work closely with the Culture Sector to support this. However, collaboration extends beyond the role of

the Scottish Government and we encourage the Culture Sector to consider how they can help achieve this action.

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

Throughout the roundtable discussions, collaboration was highlighted to be vital at a local, regional and national level, alongside the importance of proactive communication and advocacy for the sector. The Scottish Government will do more to promote the return on investment offered by the Cultural and Creative Sectors, building on good practice already seen through the connection between Culture and Health at policy, practitioner and community level.

To deliver this, we are renewing our commitment to work collaboratively with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, under the auspices of the new Verity House Agreement. Together, we are working on plans for a joint Cultural Value Summit, which we expect to take place in 2024. The Summit will demonstrate the positive outcomes culture can achieve across a range of policy areas, to the benefit of communities across Scotland. Through the Summit, we will explore ways of mainstreaming culture alongside fostering creative thinking, closer collaboration and problem solving in line with the sector's priorities, while still considering the challenging financial landscape.

Following this, we will publish a Culture Partnership Agreement, which will align with the Verity House Agreement principles and will seek to further set out ways of working together around our joint ambition to highlight the intrinsic value of culture and its ability to deliver beneficial outcomes across Scotland's communities. In developing both the Summit and the joint agreement, we will ensure a clear line of vision, with parallel work on developing a National Events Strategy 2023-25, led by VisitScotland, which is expected to be published in the spring of 2024.

Chapter 2 – Strengthening Culture

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

Fair Work First criteria have been applied to over £4 billion of public sector funding since 2019 – driving fair work practices across the labour market. On 6 December 2022 we announced the strengthening of our conditionality approach, and from July 2023, recipients of public sector grants issued from that date are required to pay at least the Real Living Wage and provide appropriate channels for effective voice. All direct recipients of Scottish Government grants currently pay the Real Living Wage and recognise channels for effective workers voice. We are also working closely with our public bodies who distribute grants on behalf of Scottish Government to ensure that all their grant recipients pay the Real Living Wage and recognise effective workers voice.

Through the [Fair Work Action Plan](#), the Scottish Government will develop a communications strategy to highlight and promote the benefits of Fair Work and a diverse workplace to employers including: tackling the gender pay gap; and recruiting, employing and supporting disabled people and workers from racialised minorities.

Fair Work is central to the strategies of our agencies. The wellbeing economy is a priority of Our Past Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland’s Historic Environment – with an outcome that: “The historic environment provides Fair Work”. Museums Galleries Scotland lists inclusivity as a driving force, with workforce being a thematic strand with an aim to “ensure jobs and workplaces are effective, fair and fulfilling for all.”

Fair Work is one of Creative Scotland’s three strategic priorities and one of their funding criteria. Creative Scotland have worked with creative practitioners to produce and publish guides for employers including the Fairer Recruitment Guide produced by Creative and Cultural Skills and the [Illustrated Fair Work Guide for Employers](#) by Culture Radar.

In 2022, a [Review of Fair Work in the creative and cultural sectors in Scotland](#), conducted by Culture Radar and commissioned by Creative Scotland, was published. The key recommendation for the Scottish Government was to establish a Creative and Culture Sector Fair Work Task Force. This recommendation aligns with the Programme for Government commitment to introduce: “sectoral Fair Work agreements, and improving outcomes by delivering the Fair Work Action Plan.” The Scottish Government therefore will establish a task force with the remit to set the direction of implementing Fair Work in the sector, potentially through agreeing sector standards through development of a Fair Work Charter.

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

Following engagement with the National Partnership for Culture's Measuring Change Group and the Scottish Culture Evidence Network, we have updated the National Performance Framework indicators for culture. The data for the renamed indicator 'People working in arts and culture' is now sourced from the Office of National Statistics Annual Population Survey, allowing for better coverage of freelancers and disaggregation by socio-economic and protected characteristics. We can see examples at a regional level that extend our understanding of the sector. South of Scotland Enterprise have developed a mapping tool on the creative economy to assist policy development and service delivery, and Creative Informatics have produced an interactive visualisation that allows creative freelancers to add themselves to a map of the Edinburgh region, asking them to identify the Standard Industrial Classification code with which they most closely identify.

We will work with sector partners to make improvements and respond more broadly to the recommendations set out by the National Partnership for Culture with a view to reviewing existing evidence and data sources in liaison with key stakeholders to produce a baseline review which will inform research priorities for the sector going forward. We will also support the sector to develop and agree common methodologies and standardisation of data collection and how best to enable data sharing going forward. These two key building blocks will provide firm foundations on which to agree genuine research priorities for the sector. This will enable a central repository for sector data and research to be established, presented, interrogated and aggregated to present an ongoing national picture of the state of culture in Scotland, and inform policy and funding priorities as well as evidencing the value and impact of culture across portfolios and society as a whole.

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

In their review of Fair Work in the sector, [Culture Radar](#) highlighted "freelancers, disabled workers, under 25-year-olds, women, parents, and workers from low socio-economic background" as priorities for Fair Work and COVID-19 recovery. The work undertaken by the Fair Work Taskforce that we have set out in S1, will look at existing barriers to fair pay, seen as crucial to achieving greater diversity in the creative workforce. The membership of the taskforce itself will be examined to ensure it reflects the sector and society.

We will learn from existing examples of good work such as that of the National Galleries of Scotland. [Engender](#) commends the transparency of the National Galleries of Scotland around its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitments, pertaining to governance, culture, decision-making and curation. The National Galleries of Scotland Mainstreaming Equalities Report reviews ongoing delivery of its

Equality Outcomes, including self-monitoring of Board positions and proactive engagement with the Scottish Government's Public Appointments Team to diversify its membership.

[A Fairer Scotland for All: An Anti-Racist Employment Strategy](#) acts as a call for action and a guide to address the issues and disadvantage experienced by people from racialised minorities in the wider labour market in Scotland. The [Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit](#) can be used to improve the diversity of a workforce by recruiting more people from minority ethnic backgrounds. We will make connections with these and other relevant Scottish Government strategies to ensure national policy takes effect within the Culture Sector.

At a sector specific level, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is one of Creative Scotland's three strategic priorities. Their website hosts a range of resources and toolkits. Practitioners from the Culture Collective programme, funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Creative Scotland, have recently produced [Our Voices: A Diverse Artists' Guide](#). We will learn from the insights in this publication and adapt our approach going forward.

Scotland's revised Strategy for the Historic Environment 'Our Past Our Future' sets out as one of its nine priority outcomes that "The historic environment is more diverse and inclusive". Historic Environment Scotland has set out its vision to tackle inequalities and increase access to and participation in Scotland's historic environment with publication of its Equality Outcomes for 2021-25. The plan outlines the actions the organisation will take to deliver its equalities commitments and continue to challenge inequality and discrimination; celebrate diversity and inclusion; and realise its vision of 'heritage for all'.

Screen Scotland launched the [British Film Institute Diversity Standards](#) – Screen Scotland Pilot in April 2022, for an initial 12 months. The pilot has now been extended for a further 12 months until April 2024. This will allow time for a complete evaluation of the pilot, ensuring that the final version of the British Film Institute Diversity Standards – Screen Scotland best represents and delivers against our commitment to equalities, diversity and inclusion within the Scottish screen sector.

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

A successful system of skills development is already recognised as crucial to delivering a wellbeing economy in Scotland in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

As part of delivering the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, an independent review of our lifelong education and skills system made a case for change and highlighted the need to reflect on lessons learned as we rebuild and reshape the ways in which this system works. The Scottish Government's [Post-school education, research and skills – purpose and principles](#) sets out the framework for decision making for post-school education, skills and research to ensure the system is fit for the future, delivering the best outcomes for learners, employers and the public investment we make.

We will work with colleagues across government, the skills system, and industry, to ensure that tangible and intangible creative and cultural skills are recognised and embedded within Scotland's education and skills systems, while also ensuring the Creative Sector is considered as a rewarding career.

The demand for skilled workers in the creative industries is only predicted to grow. Skills Development Scotland estimate in their latest Sectoral Skills Analysis that in the mid-term (2023-2026), the number of people in employment in the sector is forecast to grow by 4.0% (4,300 people). This is a larger percentage growth than is forecast overall across Scotland where employment is predicted to rise by 2.2%.

Enabling the creative workforce to keep pace with continuing digital innovation is a priority. We will consider learning from the Creative Digital Initiative to support the development of a skilled and resilient creative workforce and meet the needs of the future. We will work closely with our Digital Economy Directorate, and partners including the enterprise agencies, Creative Scotland and Skills Development Scotland, as well as the wider sector, to understand future requirements.

We also must ensure we have the right traditional skills to sustain our historic environment and progress our journey to net zero. Historic Environment Scotland continue to champion traditional skills and are working with stakeholders to address traditional skills gaps to help ensure Scotland's historic buildings can thrive as part of the country's sustainable future.

S5: Work to tackle modern-day racism by reinterpreting aspects of our hidden or contested heritage.

On 10 June 2020 a motion was passed in the Scottish Parliament showing solidarity with anti-racism, with an amendment that Scotland should 'establish a slavery museum to address our historic links to the slave trade.' We will respond to this, and have partnered with Museums Galleries Scotland and race equality and museum sector stakeholders to identify the ways we can reinterpret aspects of our hidden or contested heritage, to present a more accurate, complete picture of the past.

The project '[Empire Slavery and Scotland's Museums: Addressing Our Colonial Legacy](#)' formed an expert group led by Sir Geoff Palmer which delivered recommendations in June 2022 concerning our hidden past and how to take forward work to consider a national museum. The independent group which made these recommendations was made up of a diverse group of people, from varied backgrounds and disciplines.

As an initial step, we provided £68,000 to MGS in 2022-23, as the museums development body in Scotland, so that they can begin to support the sector to address these recommendations.

We will provide £250,000 to help Museums Galleries Scotland support the delivery phase of the 'Delivering Change' project from September 2023 - September 2026, covering four financial years. This project also received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. 'Delivering Change' aims to support between 70 and 100

museums from across Scotland to implement fully equitable approaches and to support them to represent previously unheard voices in Scottish museums. At the end of this project, we expect to see clear changes in the ways in which participating museums work, especially around how they use participatory approaches to involve communities. The project will take a Human-Rights based approach determined by an expert advisory group working with a Programme Manager and a Museum Galleries Scotland-based project team and will develop more equitable and inclusive practice across under-represented communities including all protected characteristics.

S6: Publish our International Culture Strategy.

We will publish an International Culture Strategy next year to support the international aims and ambitions of Scotland's cultural and Creative Sector. The strategy will set the direction for international cultural exchange, in order to share experience and explore common challenges. Taking this strategic approach, we aim to open new markets and develop new audiences, supporting the Culture Sector's financial resilience.

Earlier this year we undertook a public survey exploring stakeholder views on the International Culture strategy. Emerging themes and challenges raised by respondents have been outlined in the recently published International Culture Strategy consultation analysis report, which will help inform the development of the strategy.

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

Through our discussions with the Culture Sector in developing actions, it was clear that there is a need to foster the links between wider Scottish Government priorities, as set out in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

The Scottish Government has embraced the internationally recognised Community Wealth Building approach to economic development as a key tool to transform our local and regional economies. Supporting the ownership of local assets - whether these are business, land or property - provides communities with a greater stake in the economy and supports economic resilience.

Community Wealth Building encourages actions that support local economies to be resilient and thrive by developing local supply chains, stimulating procurement opportunities, supporting the flows of finance, offering businesses the opportunity to grow, and ensuring fair employment opportunities are available for people. The model promotes actions to support community ownership of assets and employee ownership of businesses, helping to keep wealth local.

These Community Wealth Building actions, and the wider economic transformation it offers, can support areas to retain and attract people to their localities. In doing so, this provides a framework for harnessing local economic opportunities to address a range of challenges linked to addressing depopulation, regardless of whether affected communities are found in rural and island areas, or urban.'

There is a clear link with the principle of creative placemaking, which we know has tangible benefits for communities. For example, [The Stove Network's work across the south of Scotland](#), funded by the Scottish Government via the Culture Collective project 'What We Do Now', connects artists and community organisations to co-develop creative plans for the future of local places. We will learn from the outputs of this work and consider ways of scaling up the approaches taken.

Chapter 3 – Transforming through Culture

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

We will engage across government to mainstream culture in policy making, prioritising health and education in the first instance. Our work will recognise the transformational power of culture and value the contribution it makes to achieving key policy outcomes. This commitment reaffirms our aim to place culture as a central consideration across all policy areas, making clear how it can deliver on a range of priority outcomes; improving health and wellbeing, supporting a thriving economy, raising educational attainment, tackling inequality and realising a greener future.

We will prioritise cross-policy working with both health and education portfolios, as reflected in the actions set out in this plan, whilst continuing to work across government to agree future areas for priority engagement.

The upcoming Cultural Value Summit, which we will take forward in partnership with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities early next year, will frame some of this work, in terms of the role of culture in a wellbeing economy.

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

As the Scottish Government continues to work towards net zero, it will work closely with the Scottish Culture and Creative sector. These sectors play a unique part in exploring and communicating the impacts of climate change and the necessity and opportunities involved with achieving net zero. For example Creative Scotland have developed a Climate Emergency and Sustainability plan setting out how culture can help address the climate emergency.

Additionally, as the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment, Historic Environment Scotland launched the Green Recovery Statement for Scotland's Historic Environment on 26 April 2022. It is a vision for how the historic environment can be the keystone for Scotland's green recovery. Historic Environment Scotland have also published their [Guide to Energy Retrofit of Traditional Buildings](#).

Cultural organisations and creative practitioners engage with a wide range of people, harnessing the power of culture through their cultural assets, programming and content. This engagement informs public debate on the climate emergency and enables subsequent behavioural change across society.

We will work with the Culture and Heritage Sectors to utilise and advocate for the potential of the arts and heritage to raise awareness of climate change, its impacts and the need for action in a way that is relevant to communities at their local level.

T3: Scope the creation of another Youth Arts Strategy

In 2013, we launched [Time to Shine](#), a strategy setting out a ten year vision for youth arts in Scotland. In 2023, the period covered by Time to Shine comes to an end. Drawing from the experience of 'Time to Shine', we will work with Creative Scotland and stakeholders from across the sector to consider the most appropriate form for a follow-up strategy, which will be centred on embedding children and young people's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) principles, and including the voices of children and young people at its core.

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

The National Partnership for Culture, through their recommendations, set out that the Scottish Government should improve access to formal and informal creative learning opportunities for children and young people. We have established a new Culture and Creativity in Learning Group. The aim of this group is to formalise the relationship between key actors in the context of arts, cultural and creative learning in school and beyond, and cement areas of common focus and mutual benefit into work streams and actions. We will use this group to bring together organisations, experts, practitioners and young people to improve experiences for children and young people in accessing cultural opportunities and creative careers.

The Culture and Creativity in Learning Group aims to co-ordinate the Scottish Government's links between education, culture and relevant stakeholders, involving the voices of both young people and practitioners. This concerns supporting the delivery of action T4 in this Action Plan, and will allow the group to highlight the transformative power of culture in achieving other outcomes via education.

We are working closely with the Culture and Creativity in Learning Group to establish a workplan for 2024. We will ensure the group considers where additional expertise or a more diverse range of voices can be brought in to provide input. As part of this, the group will bring in key partners to ensure that areas like skills and workforce training are included in the conversation, to improve the experience of learners, teachers and practitioners in Scotland.

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

The Scottish Government will prioritise working across the Health and Wellbeing portfolio to ensure the potential of culture is maximised in achieving key cross-policy outcomes in this area. To achieve this, we will formalise cross-government connections between Culture and Health officials via our recently established Scottish Government Culture and Health working group.

This group will expand the cross-government understanding of initiatives and research taking place within the culture and health space in Scotland, actively taking forward learning from these where possible. This will involve ensuring the vital work that cultural organisations do in this space is understood and acknowledged across

the health and wellbeing portfolios and networks and will allow cross portfolio areas to advocate for the transformative power of culture in achieving priority outcomes.

The Culture and Health Working Group will play a significant role in advocating for increased representation of the arts and cultural activity within ongoing Scottish Government physical and mental health and wellbeing initiatives and policy development discussions. The work of the group will be guided by the recommendations set out by the National Partnership for Culture in this area, as well as ongoing engagement with Arts Culture Health and Wellbeing Scotland and our co-delivery partners across the Culture Sector.

Chapter 4 – Empowering through Culture

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

The Scottish Government will continue to work closely with the Library Sector, including our main libraries stakeholder, the Scottish Library and Information Council, to advocate for and develop the important and multifaceted role public libraries play in strengthening and empowering communities across Scotland. This includes libraries' role as warm spaces and hubs for net zero, health and wellbeing, co-working spaces, and taking forward the ambitions of 'Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy'.

As well as general revenue funding to local authorities, we provide an annual £450,000 Public Library Improvement Fund to support new projects in libraries. The fund, which has been awarded annually since 2006, is administered by the Scottish Library and Information Council on behalf of the Scottish Government.

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

Following the National Partnership for Culture recommendation that there should be increased links between local and national initiatives, we have established a Local and National Delivery Group, which provides an opportunity for the Scottish Government to work in partnership with local authorities, and local networks and COSLA to realise local outcomes across Scotland.

Our intention is that the group will advise on how local government interacts with national funding or how funding can be used most effectively. The group will also work collaboratively to align priorities and focus on practical steps around key mainstreaming areas discussed earlier in this Action Plan such as health and wellbeing, education, and net zero.

The Local and National Delivery Group will shortly produce their workplan for 2024, and will also consider how to bring in the best possible expertise and range of voices for input throughout the process.

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

The output of our consultation conversations with the sector set out clearly that there is a need to understand the current provision of culture in local authorities. Delivery of this action will involve working with Creative Scotland and Community Leisure UK,

as well as other partners, who will undertake work to map local authority support for culture and help explore future models of collaboration between national and local bodies.

Community Leisure UK and Creative Scotland will be collaborating on this piece of work, which will look at culture and leisure services delivered by Scottish local authorities and arms-length external organisations across Scotland and will be completed by spring 2023. It will inform the framework for engagement on how the local and national initiatives work together. This will further strengthen our efforts to work better together in partnership with local authorities, developing a wider understanding on all aspects that contribute to a healthy cultural ecosystem at the local level.

This is directly linked to our ambitions as outlined in S2, Strengthening Culture, further highlighting our intention to work together to ensure that the appropriate data and intelligence is utilised to inform decision making at the policy level, as well as for the sector.

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

We will work closely with the Scottish Library and Information Council, Museums Galleries Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, and other stakeholders, to promote key messages from their strategies.

Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025, published in August 2021 and developed by the Scottish Library and Information Council, builds on the successes of Ambition and Opportunity: Scotland's public library strategy 2015-2020. The Scottish Government supports Forward, which articulates a national vision for libraries and explores libraries' multifaceted role in ensuring a stronger post-pandemic future, delivering a wide range of benefits with tangible links to policy areas across government, while placing communities at the centre of its focus. Forward, clearly marks the direction of travel for Scotland's public libraries; it builds on the collective desire for a sustainable future for public libraries, in line with the key ambitions set out in this action plan around a resilient Culture Sector, and a vibrant cultural landscape.

Our Past Our Future, Scotland's revised Strategy for the Historic Environment sits alongside, and will work with, the Culture Strategy for Scotland, Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy, and with other nationwide plans. A strategy steering group, comprising of key stakeholders and leaders drawn from diverse sectors across Scotland, will be responsible for oversight and reporting on the strategy's delivery.

Similarly, the three strands of Museums Galleries Scotland's strategy of Connection, Workforce and Resilience link closely with our ambitions in strengthening and empowering communities. We will work with Museums Galleries Scotland to explore these shared priorities in more depth.

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

The Culture Conveners group is co-chaired by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and is comprised of councillors from each local authority who have culture within their remit. The Culture Conveners group has recently begun meeting again for the first time in many years in response to a specific action in the Culture Strategy and we will continue to bring the group together.

During the Culture Conveners meetings so far, there has been a shared recognition of the importance and value of culture, both for itself and its place in communities, but also for the contribution it can make to wider policy outcomes. We will work closely with the Culture Conveners in the development of the Cultural Value Summit which will be held in April 2024.

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

The Verity House Agreement, sets out our vision for a more collaborative approach to delivering our shared priorities for the people of Scotland. Throughout our consultation with the sector, it was clear that there is a need to set out what the Verity House Agreement means for Culture. Therefore, we will develop a specific Culture Partnership Agreement between the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government to provide a formal framework for how we work in partnership.

Born out of the principles of the Verity House Agreement, the partnership agreement will articulate our joint endeavours and commitment to realising shared aspirations around the value of culture and its ability to deliver a range of positive outcomes in other areas, across Scotland's communities.

Summary of Actions

Chapter 1 – overview actions: Resilience

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

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

R3: Explore and develop alternative and additional income streams.

R4: Collaboration for effectiveness and impact.

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

Chapter 2 – Strengthening Culture

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

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

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

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

S5: Work to tackle modern-day racism by reinterpreting aspects of our hidden or contested heritage.

S6: Publish our International Culture Strategy.

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

Chapter 3 – Transforming through Culture

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

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

T3: Scope the creation of another Youth Arts Strategy

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

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

Chapter 4 – Empowering through Culture

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

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

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

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

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

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



© Crown copyright 2023



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83521-819-8 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, December 2023

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1399774 (12/23)

W W W . g o v . s c o t