

**CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**ARTS FUNDING INQUIRY**

**SUBMISSION FROM: John Scott MSP**

**What are the major threats to sustainable funding of the arts in Scotland?**

Public funding for arts organisations seems to have been on the decline for some time. The biggest challenge seems to be the sharp drop in funding from Councils. In Ayrshire the funding for any form of arts organisation or support for artists has fallen considerably over the past few years.

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**What are the main challenges for artists and cultural freelancers in obtaining funding in Scotland?**

I have been made aware that there is a high level of bureaucracy in securing funding for the arts from Creative Scotland in general. But more importantly it is clear that funding is made available primarily for organisations and artists working in the Central Belt. Arts organisations and artists in Ayrshire, in common with most areas outside the central belt, receive very little financial backing. In the last round of Creative Scotland 'RFO' funding, only 21 of 32 Council areas had at least one organisation receiving such funding. Not one of the three Ayrshire Council areas did. So there is a major geographical barrier.

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**What measures could the Scottish Government take to ensure a sustainable level of funding for the arts?**

Any Government funding should be made available in a way that supports and encourages other forms of funding – including helping artists create art that generates income directly from the general public. At present it seems that most public arts funding goes to an arts elite. If, as at present, most people in Scotland don't benefit from arts supported by Government funding, it surely can't be sustainable to carry on this type of funding?

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**How could Scotland be innovative in attracting greater funding for the arts?**

I am not sure that Creative Scotland in its current form is well suited to be innovative. It seems to be an organisation mostly concerned with processing grant applications. I suspect it needs to be substantially reorganised. I would suggest some form of 'hub and spoke' arrangement with a series of more local arts organisations with secure funding supporting and developing artists in their area.

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**How should public money be made available to support artists and cultural freelancers in Scotland, including any relevant international examples of best practice?**

Any system put in place must aim to overcome the recent problems with the RFO funding process. A mechanism more based on discussion and developmental support than bureaucratic funding application processes might be more suitable.

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**What factors should be considered and how should decisions be made about which artists or cultural freelancers should obtain public funding in Scotland?**

Some of the things it has been suggested to me that should be considered, and with which I agree are:

- What is such funding for – is it to “support artists” or is it to achieve Scottish Government policy objectives?
- How to make arts funding accessible to artists and audiences on lower incomes.
- Ensuring there is a good geographical distribution of funding.
- Making sure that public funding influences other funding – including the public buying tickets and entry fees.