



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee

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Dear Janet,

I am writing to you in relation to the Committee's inquiry on Creative Scotland's Regular Funding process for the period 2018-21.

### Regular Funding 2018-21

The Committee considers that funding for the arts is a matter of critical importance to Scotland and Creative Scotland plays an important role in ensuring the sector remains vibrant and sustainable.

Following Creative Scotland's regular funding announcements on 25 January 2018<sup>1</sup> and 6 February,<sup>2</sup> the Committee received an unprecedented level of communication from the cultural sector in a short period.<sup>3</sup> This is why we took evidence from yourself and Ben Thomson, former interim Chair of Creative Scotland's Board, on 22 February 2018.

After this evidence session, we decided to launch a call for views into Regular Funding for 2018-21 to give artists and organisations an opportunity to communicate their views in the public domain. The Committee received more than [50 responses](#) and we were pleased to hear from applicants who were successful in obtaining regular funding in this round, as well as those who were not. The Committee is grateful to those who responded to our call for views, as this input has been invaluable for our inquiry.

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<sup>1</sup> Creative Scotland, "Three Year Regular Funding awarded to 116 organisations": <http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/latest-news/archive/2018/01/three-year-regular-funding-awarded-to-116-organisations>.

<sup>2</sup> Creative Scotland, "Additional funds to enhance 2018-21 Regular Funding Network": <http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/latest-news/archive/2018/02/additional-funds-to-enhance-2018-21-regular-funding-network>.

<sup>3</sup> Hereafter any references to "the sector" should be read as the cultural sector unless otherwise stated.

This letter sets out a number of issues about the governance and administration of the recent regular funding round that have been raised in the evidence received. The Committee has also highlighted relevant suggestions for the next round of regular funding where these have been raised by respondents.

### **Factual inaccuracies**

Following Creative Scotland's announcements on regular funding, the Committee received communications from the sector about alleged factual inaccuracies that were contained in the assessment reports considered by the Board at its emergency meeting on 2 February. When we asked whether the Board was aware of the alleged factual inaccuracies at this meeting, Mr Thomson told the Committee that "the board was unaware of any factual inaccuracies" at this board meeting<sup>4</sup> and you explained that–

"At the time of the second set of decisions, I was unaware of the fact that there were factual inaccuracies in any of the assessments. I still do not fully understand the extent to which there may be factual inaccuracies."<sup>5</sup>

The Committee has received evidence to the contrary in response to its call for views, which asserts that Board members were in fact made aware of factual inaccuracies before this meeting. Fire Exit, for example, explained in its written submission to the Committee–

"We had raised concerns regarding inaccuracies directly with CS, and directly with each individual board member, as did other organisations, before the emergency board meeting."<sup>6</sup>

Other respondents to the Committee's call for views were also concerned by the circumstances surrounding the Board's emergency meeting on 2 February and the decision to reconsider a selection of applications that had otherwise been unsuccessful in obtaining funding.<sup>7</sup> The decision to hold an emergency meeting without communicating it to those whose proposals were identified for reconsideration, or the wider sector, was viewed by some respondents as an "unfair" process lacking in transparency.<sup>8</sup> This process appears to have undermined the sector's confidence in Creative Scotland's decision-making and underlying strategic approach to funding.<sup>9</sup>

The Committee was also told in other written evidence that assessment reports prepared by, or on behalf of, Creative Scotland contained factual inaccuracies.<sup>10</sup> Indepen-dance, for example, highlighted its experience of factual inaccuracies and expressed frustration that it was not able to correct them–

"...the assessment contained factual inaccuracies, which as there was no dialogue we were unable to correct, for example although we were recognised

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<sup>4</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 13.

<sup>5</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 14.

<sup>6</sup> Fire Exit. Written submission.

<sup>7</sup> Written submissions: Mischief La Bas; TMSA; Edinburgh Festival Fringe; Capital Theatres; Plan B; Ginnie Atkinson; Starcatchers.

<sup>8</sup> Written submissions: TMSA; Mischief La-Bas; Arika; Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

<sup>9</sup> Written submissions: Capital Theatres; Plan B; Starcatchers; Rapture Theatre.

<sup>10</sup> Written submissions: Dance House Glasgow; A Moment's Peace; Indepen-dance; Plan B; GMAC Film; Ayr Gaiety Partnership; Fire Exit; Federation of Scottish Theatre; Literature Alliance Scotland.

as a diverse employer, there was an error in the assessment on the proportion of staff who have a disability.”<sup>11</sup>

**When the Committee raised concerns with Creative Scotland about whether it experienced an internal communication breakdown on this matter, you committed to reviewing this issue and to report back once the review is completed.<sup>12</sup> The Committee considers it is a serious matter that Creative Scotland’s evidence appears to be inconsistent with written evidence received by the Committee. The Committee therefore considers that Creative Scotland’s review should be completed as a matter of urgency and we invite Creative Scotland to advise the Committee of the outcome of this review in its response to this letter.**

### **Touring fund**

The Committee is also very concerned by Creative Scotland’s handling of regular funding applications from touring theatre and dance companies. We note that applications for regular funding were open from 16 January 2017 to 3 April 2017 and that Creative Scotland only announced proposals for a touring theatre and dance fund in April 2017.<sup>13</sup>

Creative Scotland advised the Committee that the fund had still not been agreed by Creative Scotland’s Board and the guidance had not yet been signed off when it appeared before us on 22 February 2018.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Creative Scotland was not able to confirm when asked by the Committee whether the proposed touring fund will be an annual or longer-term fund.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, it appears that many artists and organisations were not awarded regular funding on the basis that the new touring fund would be agreed and implemented in the near future.<sup>16</sup> Creative Scotland noted in its written submission that–

“Alongside the announcement of the Regular Funding Network, 2018-21, we also announced the creation of a strategic Touring Fund, supported by the National Lottery, which would be one of our Targeted Funds for 2019/20, to support touring companies to work with venues to grow audiences. In that context, the touring companies who had previously benefited from Regular Funding but who were not recommended for the 2018-21 network, were offered 12 months transition funding to take current funding levels to the end of March 2019.

The new touring fund will support projects from April 2019 and will be open to performing arts organisations, including those not included in the Regular Funding network, and offer a further potential source of funding support, alongside Open Project funding and other Targeted funds.”<sup>17</sup>

The Committee has received written submissions from four of the five organisations that were awarded funding at the 2 February meeting,<sup>18</sup> three of whom are touring

<sup>11</sup> Indepen-dance. Written submission.

<sup>12</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. *Official Report*, 22 February 2018, Col 14.

<sup>13</sup> Creative Scotland, “A Review of Touring Theatre and Dance in Scotland: Final Report, April 2017”: [http://www.creativescotland.com/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/41374/Review-of-Touring-Theatre-and-Dance-Final-Report.pdf](http://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/41374/Review-of-Touring-Theatre-and-Dance-Final-Report.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. *Official Report*, 22 February 2018, Col 33.

<sup>15</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. *Official Report*, 22 February 2018, Col 34.

<sup>16</sup> See comments in the written submissions from Mischief La Bas; Rapture Theatre; Dogstar Theatre; The Work Room.

<sup>17</sup> Creative Scotland. Written submission.

<sup>18</sup> Written submissions: Catherine Wheels; Dunedin Consort; Lung Ha; Visible Fictions.

theatre companies.<sup>19</sup> The Committee has also received submissions from all three touring companies that were awarded transition funding to the end of March 2019.<sup>20</sup>

Artists and organisations have been very critical of Creative Scotland on this issue in the evidence received by the Committee. For example, Dogstar noted in its written evidence—

“There is no doubt in my mind that CS have moved the goalposts for independent theatre companies by making a decision, after applications were submitted, to shunt nearly all of us out of Regular Funding and into the ‘Strategic Touring Fund’ which, as you’ll know, doesn’t even exist yet.”<sup>21</sup>

The Committee also received evidence about how these decisions were being communicated to the sector in assessment feedback and why some applicants were under the impression that they were unsuccessful because the touring fund will shortly be implemented. For example, Mischief La Bas’ assessment form contained the following feedback—

“Although the application was recommended for support by the Assessing Officer and the Theatre Team, a strategic decision was taken that the Theatre RFO network should focus organisations which support and develop the wider sector and that the network would be complemented by a new strategic fund supporting the creation and touring of work. Within this context, other applications demonstrated better alignment with the intended goals of the Theatre RFO network. The strategic fund will open for applications later in 2018.”<sup>22</sup>

Mischief La Bas explained to the Committee how this feedback was received—

“We found poor communication in the outcome letter – no explanation of what the touring strategy might encompass, we found ourselves trying to gather extra details and information from the press.”<sup>23</sup>

Starcatchers echoed these concerns, noting that some artists and organisations that were rejected for regular funding may not in fact be eligible to apply for the new touring fund—

“There is concern about the introduction of a new strategic touring fund during the Regular Funding assessment process, as this initiative was introduced late in the process. Organisations are being recommended to look to this funding stream as a mechanism for support, however the fund has not actually been created as yet. Whilst we do not object to the potential for additional funding streams, it is impossible to plan based on a fund that does not currently exist and has no set parameters. Whilst it may provide a welcome means for additional support, it is also possible that when these parameters are set our organisation is not eligible to apply to it. This then serves to continue the ongoing uncertainty and frustration for the sector.”

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<sup>19</sup> Written submissions: Catherine Wheels; Lung Ha; Visible Fictions.

<sup>20</sup> Written submissions: Mischief La Bas; Fire Exit; Rapture Theatre.

<sup>21</sup> Dogstar. Written submission.

<sup>22</sup> Mischief La Bas. Written submission.

<sup>23</sup> Mischief La Bas. Written submission.

The Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST) expressed concerns in its written evidence that the decision to apparently exclude touring theatre and dance artists from this regular funding round was also made in the absence of wider published strategies for theatre and dance. FST commented–

“The introduction of a Strategic Touring Fund, as noted above, is welcomed as a potential opportunity to support the sector; however Creative Scotland currently has no published strategy for theatre or for dance, and has not done so for several years.”<sup>24</sup>

The Touring Network also questioned why the fund will be introduced without a pilot or trial period in the following terms–

“I was part of the working group who made recommendations to Creative Scotland regarding touring funds, but this new fund was announced with no clear remit or idea of how it would work. Surely a pilot or trial period would be advised before announcing a major new development which has such a significant impact on how organisations are funded?”<sup>25</sup>

Rapture Theatre expressed concern about the amount of funding that has been committed to the touring fund, on the basis that–

“...The figure of £2 million as a budget for the Touring Fund, which was due to replace both the allocation from Open Project Funding and RFO Funding was therefore inadequate from its inception as it actually constituted a significant reduction in the budget for touring theatre, in real terms, of approximately £1.1 million. The decision made subsequently to reverse the original RFO Funding decisions, for four of the above RFO companies, meant that some money for touring would then be made available within RFO funding. However, even with this change, there is still a reduction in gross allocation, for touring theatre, within the Touring Fund of £300k as the allocation for touring has been reduced from £2.3 million to £2 million, not an increase, as has been suggested.”<sup>26</sup>

The apparent lack of a strategic approach to this issue led some stakeholders to speculate in written evidence whether the touring sector had been “cherry picked to provide a solution to the lack of funds.”<sup>27</sup> Others expressed frustration about the lack of communication with the touring sector before the RFO outcomes were announced.<sup>28</sup>

When the Committee asked Creative Scotland to explain why it took the decision to award funding to five additional applicants at the Board meeting on 2 February, Ben Thomson explained that the Board had “a robust discussion about touring” and the outcome of the meeting was that four of the five companies that were awarded funding were touring theatre companies.<sup>29</sup> In practice, this appears to have further undermined confidence in Creative Scotland’s decision-making process.

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<sup>24</sup> Federation of Scottish Theatre. Written submission. See also written submissions from Ayr Gaiety Partnership and Visible Fictions.

<sup>25</sup> The Touring Network. Written submission.

<sup>26</sup> Rapture Theatre. Written submission.

<sup>27</sup> Ginnie Atkinson. Written submission.

<sup>28</sup> Katrina Brown. Written submission.

<sup>29</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 17.

**The Committee considers Creative Scotland’s handling of the regular funding decision-making process in relation to touring theatre and dance companies fell well below the standard that is expected from a non-departmental public body. Creative Scotland should have made a decision about touring companies’ eligibility for regular funding before applications were opened and communicated its decision clearly to the sector. The failure to do so has meant that artists and organisations have committed staff and financial resources unnecessarily to complete regular funding applications. This approach has hampered the sector’s trust in Creative Scotland and added to ongoing uncertainty for the sector at a time when the funding pressures on the sector are already high.**

### **Strategic priorities, communication and funding criteria**

When Creative Scotland appeared before the Committee on 22 February, a number of admissions were made about the fact that Creative Scotland has been struggling to deliver a strategic approach to its functions in a way that is clear and accessible to staff and the sector. In this regard, Creative Scotland told the Committee—

“I completely accept that we need to be clearer and maybe more focused in relation to how we deploy strategy. We began a process of doing that with the board in October, led by Ben Thomson, and we all agreed that we need to be more focused in future in how we work...We said last year that, before we made decisions on RFOs, we would go through a process of strategy review and funding review, and that had to happen in the middle part of our 10-year plan. We always knew that that was going to be the case.”<sup>30</sup>

Mr Thomson also reflected on this issue when he explained to the Committee—

“When I became interim chairman in August, I recognised that the system was very complicated and that we needed to do more to empower the people who speak to the organisations and sectors, so that they are able to do things differently with a clearer set of priorities and items. They were working with six columns, 15 pillars and four interlocking themes, and how to prioritise all that became quite complicated.

We want to move to a much simpler base in which the ultimate justifications across the organisation will be around the benefits of each decision on cultural, social and economic grounds. We discussed that, with background papers, for a whole day in October. Given that we are in the middle of the RFO process and that the RFO strategy has already been set, and given that I was only the interim chair, the board decided that it would move that decision to 2018, when a permanent chair would be in place and the RFO process would be completed.”

The strategic issues Creative Scotland had already identified were not addressed by the time decisions were being made about regular funding. According to many respondents to the call for views, this was compounded by the fact that Creative Scotland’s communication strategy with the sector has not been working well. Dunedin Consort’s comments in its written submission provide an illustration of some of the concerns that were raised in this regard—

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<sup>30</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 23.

“...the criteria by which recommended applications were ultimately prioritised was made were entirely unclear...*Since the last funding round, priorities for the music sector appear to have shifted.* The rationale for this shift, the expected outcomes and discussions on how it would impact funded organisations have not been communicated to the sector. These include the desire to bring more non-classical music into the RFO portfolio and the very strong emphasis on outreach work and EDI provisions, over and above all else, and a further emphasis on supporting sectoral development agencies.”<sup>31</sup>

Specific concerns that were raised in the written evidence about Creative Scotland’s communication with the cultural sector included dissatisfaction with the quality of feedback for applicants,<sup>32</sup> and a suggestion that it was difficult to understand how Creative Scotland’s strategic aims informed individual funding decisions.<sup>33</sup>

Respondents also raised concerns about the clarity of the criteria being used in the assessment of regular funding applications, such as how the indicators (satisfactory, strong etc.) were weighted or measured;<sup>34</sup> and how ‘optional’ materials would be assessed and weighted.<sup>35</sup> It was also noted that the communication of funding decisions could have been more personalised, such as by giving applicants advanced warning of funding decisions under embargo in recognition of the high-profile of many of the organisations involved and the impact that decisions would have on their organisation and reputation.<sup>36</sup>

When Creative Scotland gave evidence to the Committee on 22 February, Mr Thomson explained the strategic approach to decision-making undertaken by the Board at its 18 January meeting—

“...we had an hour’s presentation looking at each of the art forms, the strategies behind them and why decisions had been made on each of them; we also looked at the whole portfolio in aggregate, to consider how it looked in terms of shape, geography, youth and EDI—equalities, diversity and inclusion—for example. The board then had a rigorous two-hour debate, challenging the executive on its decisions and strategies. At the end of that process, the 116 organisations that had been recommended to the board were approved for funding.”<sup>37</sup>

A common criticism in the written evidence is that the Board’s funding decisions do not appear to have delivered on a number of strategic fronts, including aligning with other national priorities, such as the Year of Young People and reaching young audiences;<sup>38</sup> balanced provision of funding across different art forms;<sup>39</sup> and recognising organisations within the sector that are particularly strong on equalities and diversity.<sup>40</sup> Some respondents suggested that Creative Scotland should take measures to ensure parity of funding for the different art forms in the sector and

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<sup>31</sup> Dunedin Consort. Written submission.

<sup>32</sup> Written submissions: A Moment’s Peace; Travelling Gallery; Indepen-dance; Sound; The Touring Network; Dunedin Consort.

<sup>33</sup> Written submissions: Sound; Starcatchers.

<sup>34</sup> Written submissions: Sound; Rapture Theatre; Mischief La Bas.

<sup>35</sup> Written submissions: A Moment’s Peace; Indepen-dance.

<sup>36</sup> Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Written submission.

<sup>37</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 6.

<sup>38</sup> Written submissions: Starcatchers; Catherine Wheels; Imaginate; GMAC Film; Graham Main.

<sup>39</sup> Written submissions: Robert Livingston; Norman Bissell; YDance.

<sup>40</sup> Written submissions: Arika; Travelling Gallery; GMAC Film; The Work Room.

some considered that ring fencing could be used as a means to achieve this outcome.<sup>41</sup>

The sector's concerns about the overall balance achieved in the portfolio of funded artists and organisations appears to have been subsequently recognised by the Board, as Mr Thomson noted that "The board asked to look at EDI and youth considerations in making the additional decision, and that was subject to a large discussion" at the emergency meeting on 2 February.<sup>42</sup> The Committee understands in this regard that two Board members subsequently resigned. The Committee also notes Creative Scotland's evidence that the decision taken by the Board at its meeting on 18 January was not unanimous, as originally recorded in the minutes—

"I want to clarify the use of the word "unanimous". Since Ben Thomson has stepped down, our new chair recently chaired his first meeting, where the board considered the use of the word "unanimous". The meeting at which the RFO decisions were taken was in January. The board reflected on the minute of that meeting and amended it to say "majority decision", and that change was made after the meeting."<sup>43</sup>

**The Committee is disappointed that the strategic issues identified by Creative Scotland were not recognised at an earlier stage so that they could be addressed before applications for regular funding were opened. The failure to do so left a significant element of the cultural sector in a very challenging position and has ultimately had an impact on the sector's confidence in Creative Scotland's regular funding process. The Committee recognises that a significant proportion of the submissions received by the Committee were from applicants who did not receive funding from Creative Scotland. Nevertheless, these issues must be urgently addressed by Creative Scotland so that a revised strategy is in place before applications for the next round of regular funding are opened. The Committee intends to scrutinise Creative Scotland's plans for a refreshed strategy.**

### **Diversity**

Creative Scotland states in relation to regular funding that "our aim is to ensure that the cultural provision we fund offers a powerful mix of different types of high quality work that reflects and encourages a better understanding of the significant diversity of Scotland's population."<sup>44</sup>

The Committee received a submission from an artist, Anita Govan, who expressed concerns about the extent to which the regular funding process is accessible to artists who are non neuro-typical—

"Presently 40% of artists across creative industries are Non Neuro-Typical (NNT) (dyslexic, dyscalculia, ADHD, ASD etc.) and I believe are disadvantaged within this process because the system does not, takes their needs into account."

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<sup>41</sup> Catherine Wheels. Written submission.

<sup>42</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 19.

<sup>43</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 7.

<sup>44</sup> Creative Scotland, "Equalities, diversity and inclusion - Regular Funding 2018-21": <http://www.creativescotland.com/funding/latest-information/funded-organisations/regular-funding-2018-21/overviews/equalities-diversity-and-inclusion>.



Ms Govan noted that she set up a meeting between Creative Scotland and Dyslexia Scotland to discuss this issue but is not aware of what action Creative Scotland has subsequently taken to address the issues discussed.<sup>45</sup>

This view was echoed by other respondents who commented that the regular funding application forms could be made more accessible.<sup>46</sup> For example, artist Jennie Macfie noted in her written submission to the Committee—

“Despite extensive and expensive consultation, the application forms for both RFO and OP funding are not clearly written (it would be helpful to all if CS adopted the Campaign for Plain English guidelines) and are full of jargon and bureaucratic language. This is an unnecessary barrier to those who are, for example, dyslexic, or for whom English is not a first language; it is mind-numbing for those for whom it is.”<sup>47</sup>

The issue of equalities and diversity in regular funding was also raised by Neo Productions, who expressed concerns about whether black and minority ethnic artists face barriers in the regular funding process—

“We think the barriers in the funding system for black & minority ethnic artists and groups need to be examined. We have asked Creative Scotland for more details about the proportion of funding, success of achieving funding, and levels of funding which black & minority ethnic groups and individuals have received. We have still not had any responses to the questions posed...”<sup>48</sup>

**The Committee is concerned to learn from stakeholders that when they have raised concerns about accessibility directly with Creative Scotland these do not appear to have been followed up. The Committee invites Creative Scotland to respond to the relevant issues highlighted in the written evidence and to advise what action it is taking to respond to individual concerns that have been raised directly with Creative Scotland on this issue.**

### **Network organisations**

Some respondents to the call for views also raised concerns that both artists and network organisations were eligible to apply for regular funding and that the amount awarded to network organisations was relatively high (£4.7 million in total). According to many of those who raised this issue, their main concern is that the regular funding process makes network organisations compete for funding with the artists they represent.<sup>49</sup> The Federation of Scottish Theatre commented in this regard that it does not “...support a process which requires us to compete directly with our members for funding”. Visible Fictions’ comments below also serve as an illustration of the nature of the concerns about this issue—

“In this last RFO funding round, it appeared that approximately £4.7 million was moved directly to organisations which might be broadly described as ‘second tier’, umbrella or development organisations. It is greatly concerning to see so much public funding departing from the frontline of artistic-delivery.

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<sup>45</sup> Anita Govan. Written submission.

<sup>46</sup> Written submissions: Norman Bissell; Dogstar Theatre; Plan B; Jennie Macfie.

<sup>47</sup> Jennie Macfie. Written submission.

<sup>48</sup> Neo Productions. Written submission.

<sup>49</sup> Written submissions: Arika; Ginnie Atkinson; Graham Main; Visible Fictions; GMAC Film; Anita Govan; Dudendance Theatre.

Creative Scotland is hugely important because they are rare in funding the direct production of art in our country - and it is unclear how this strategy will improve and strengthen theatre and performing arts production in Scotland.”<sup>50</sup>

When Creative Scotland gave evidence to the Committee, Mr Thomson noted “...there was a very strong debate about the relative measures of networked organisations versus direct organisations...”<sup>51</sup> at the Board meeting on 2 February. Creative Scotland also explained to the Committee that–

“I am clear that the board exercise on returning to the budget took into account the fact that we had included sector development organisations in the initial set of recommendations. We had not moved the budget over at that point, because we had said that we would always base the budget on the same figure that we used for 2015 to 2018. In the event, the board elected to extend the budget to account for an extra £1 million a year to accommodate the spend on sector development organisations in order to allow some additional arts-producing and touring companies back into play.”<sup>52</sup>

Whilst we acknowledge the evidence provided on this matter, the Committee considers that more could be done to address this issue. **The Committee therefore invites Creative Scotland to give consideration to an alternative model for the funding of network organisations going forward.**

### **Geographic spread**

Another issue raised in the submissions was the geographic spread of funded artists and organisations. The Committee understands that the provision of regular funding for 2018-21 spans 21 local authorities and that this figure is unchanged from the previous funding round. Creative Scotland said in evidence to the Committee that there were no applications from 8 of the remaining local authority areas.<sup>53</sup>

Some respondents called on Creative Scotland to re-evaluate its strategic approach to arts provision across Scotland to ensure that it is more evenly spread across a larger number of local authorities.<sup>54</sup> A number of submissions highlighted suggestions for how this issue could be addressed, including: introducing mapping analyses,<sup>55</sup> use of targets,<sup>56</sup> and ring-fencing.<sup>57</sup>

Creative Scotland explained in its evidence to the Committee that a new Head of Place, Partnerships and Communities has been appointed who will be working very closely with local authorities.<sup>58</sup> **The Committee therefore seeks an update from Creative Scotland on what action it is taking to address its engagement with all local authorities, particularly the 8 areas from which no applications were made in the current round, in its response to this letter.**

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<sup>50</sup> Visible Fictions. Written submission.

<sup>51</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 11.

<sup>52</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 9.

<sup>53</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 16. NB: Unsuccessful applications were made from the remaining three local authority areas.

<sup>54</sup> Written submissions: Norman Bissell; Sound; Federation of Scottish Theatre; Plan B; Ayr Gaiety Partnership; Katrina Brown; Starcatchers.

<sup>55</sup> Federation of Scottish Theatre. Written submission.

<sup>56</sup> Plan B. Written submission.

<sup>57</sup> Norman Bissell. Written submission.

<sup>58</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. [Official Report](#), 22 February 2018, Col 20.

## Application resources and timing

The amount of resource required to complete the regular funding application process was another common concern for many respondents to the call for views.<sup>59</sup> It has been suggested to the Committee in the evidence received that the process appears to favour larger organisations that are more likely to have the capacity to dedicate considerable staff time to preparing an application.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, respondents considered that any application process should not unnecessarily take time away from artists' ability to deliver the artistic work that they are being funded to produce in the first place.

GMAC Film provided a detailed illustration of the level of resource required to complete the regular funding application process—

“...we estimate that various members of staff, and members of the board were working on elements of the application for approximately four to five months between the call for applications in November 2016 and the deadline in April 2017. The application also requires a full business plan, and we employed a company to collaborate with us on producing a very well researched business plan – taking account of the feedback that we had received on our previous application. The consultant cost was £10,000. We estimate that the cost of the staff time was in the region of £12,000 - £15,000. Therefore, a total of £22K – £25K was invested by us in this exercise. We were applying for £330,000 over three years (less than 0.029% of the total amount distributed by CS)...”<sup>61</sup>

The timing of the regular funding announcement was raised by many respondents as another key issue of concern.<sup>62</sup> The Touring Network's comments about timing widely reflected the concerns raised by other stakeholders in the evidence received—

“The deadline for the most recent round was set way in advance of the end of current funding packages (more than 1 year) to enable unsuccessful applicants, or those with significant changes to their funding, to plan changes in how they operate or how they are supported. This failed dramatically as the actual announcements were made in January 2018 (2 months ahead of the end of current funding packages). I understand that these were partly due to budget announcements from Scottish Government, but there was a further 4-week delay in Creative Scotland announcing their plans.”<sup>63</sup>

The significant delay between the application stage and the announcement appears to have detrimentally affected the sector in a variety of ways. Respondents to the Committee's call for views explained that it meant that evaluations from recent work could not be included in funding proposals;<sup>64</sup> stakeholders struggled to forward plan and commit to projects in the next financial year and beyond;<sup>65</sup> and overall the sector experienced a prolonged drop in productivity.<sup>66</sup> Some respondents considered that

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<sup>59</sup> Written submissions: Arika; Fèis Rois; Travelling Gallery; Catherine Wheels; Indepen-dance; Robert Livingston; Edinburgh Festival Fringe; Plan B; GMAC Film; Red Note Ensemble; The Touring Network; Rapture Theatre; Starcatchers.

<sup>60</sup> Written submissions: Fèis Rois; Arika; Travelling Gallery; Indepen-dance; Robert Livingston; The Touring Network; Starcatchers.

<sup>61</sup> GMAC Film. Written submission.

<sup>62</sup> Written submissions: TMSA; Arika; Jennie Macfie; Vanishing Point; A Moment's Peace; Indepen-dance; Robert Livingston; Capital Theatres; GMAC Film; Katrina Brown; The Touring Network; Culture Counts; Rapture Theatre; YDance.

<sup>63</sup> The Touring Network. Written submission.

<sup>64</sup> YDance. Written submission.

<sup>65</sup> Arika. Written submission.

<sup>66</sup> Capital Theatres. Written submission.

introducing a staged application process would alleviate some of these issues.<sup>67</sup> **We therefore invite Creative Scotland to give consideration to this issue and the suggestions highlighted above in the written evidence.**

### **Next steps**

The Committee invites Creative Scotland to give evidence to the Committee when the Parliament resumes sitting after the summer recess. This will provide an opportunity for Creative Scotland to explain what action it is taking to address the issues identified in the Committee's inquiry. In the meantime, we look forward to receiving Creative Scotland's written response to this letter by 31 August.

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

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee

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<sup>67</sup> Written submissions: Starcatchers; Norman Bissell; A Moment's Peace; Plan B; Dogstar; Vanishing Point; Dunedin Consort.