

## **Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee**

### **Creative Scotland – Regular Funding 2018-21**

#### **Written submission from Culture Counts**

Culture Counts asked its members through a series of conversations and written evidence to gain feedback on the RFO process. We have some suggestions, some points to note and some questions that still need answers. We hope the committee find the following insights useful.

Performing Arts and Creative Industries Infrastructure Organisations require flexible organisational models and delivery methods. Currently RFOs need to fit organisational structure around Creative Scotland themes; which is not always the best course of action for an organisation; particularly when creative business models are changing every year. RFOs fitting into Creative Scotland's themes as a business model does not create an environment for innovation, it creates an environment where everyone is operating in the same space; doing similar things. Should organisations, events or projects with a high social benefit be judged on the same criteria as organisations, events or projects that have an economic benefit?

A sector cannot flourish in such a precarious environment; plans cannot be made after the second year of operations as no-one is sure if they will still be operating past year three. Are there some organisations, events or venues that we can agree as a sector are statutory? This is not to say that they would be un-accountable; they would be accountable; though the sector could assume that they will exist past three years; just as we assume we will have Edinburgh University or the NHS?

The board of Creative Scotland should be there to make key strategic decisions and should not be making operational decisions around who should be funded. The board of Creative Scotland are appointed by the Culture Minister, allowing the board to make funding decisions conflicts with the arm's length principle. There needs to be greater clarity as to the respective roles of trustees and staff, building confidence in the sector that funding decisions are taken with the best information available. We recommend that the overall Creative Scotland approach to funding is reviewed. Options considered should include a staff-led and or sector-led approach and the use of one or more advisory committees to inform awards; while insuring no conflict of interest.

Is a 10-year strategy too long for a creative sector?

Culture Counts members would like to take the opportunity to thank the staff at Creative Scotland who we understand do a difficult job under strained budgets.