

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Cultair agus Cùisean an Taobh a-muigh  
Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs

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Sir Sandy Crombie  
Chair, Creative Scotland



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Dear Sir Sandy

Firstly may I re-iterate my sincere thanks to everyone at Creative Scotland for your dedication, enthusiasm and hard work in carrying out what is a very extensive remit. It is inevitable that there are challenges in delivering a new model for cultural provision alongside such a wide range of stakeholders and partners. The Creative Scotland Board have responsibility for governance, appraisal and oversight of the internal operations as the organisation progresses in this role.

Let me re-assure you that the Scottish Government supports Creative Scotland's review of its flexibly funded organisations and is confident that the process has been rigorous, thorough and in line with the commitments in your corporate plan. The priority now is to ensure that the creative sector, and in particular your key partners, understand that the restructure is to allow greater flexibility for future investment to reflect the rebalancing of funds.

It is important that Creative Scotland continues to be open and responsive to the sector in discussing specific concerns. I know that you have already taken measures to address some of the issues by involving these organisations in the design of the final FXO process, adjusting the pace of change to allow more dialogue and to stimulate wider engagement and consultation on the sectoral reviews.

I understand that the wide consultation on the theatre review has been praised by the FST and that the other sector-leads are keen to be similarly involved in collecting evidence and facilitating dialogue for the remaining sectoral reviews. I would encourage you to maintain this inclusive approach which will demonstrate the rigour and credibility of the process.

A number of questions were raised in my recent meeting about the restrictions on Lottery funding and it would be helpful to the sector to have a better understanding of the ways in which Lottery funding can be used to support revenue activity I would ask Creative

Scotland to respond to these concerns by providing information on the circumstances under which lottery funds can be used on revenue expenses; how other Lottery distributors provide revenue support (such as in heritage or sport); and on whether applicants can apply more than once.

I am also keen to provide clarity on the matter of Creative Scotland's role with regard to commissioning. Creative Scotland's primary role is to invest in artists and talent and quality production of the arts and film in a way that increases public engagement with arts and culture and helps both artists and all forms of creativity thrive in and across Scotland. The majority of your budget is spent on cultural organisations and in funding applications from artists, film makers and others who want to realise their creative ideas for the benefit of Scotland.

I recognise and support the ambition in Creative Scotland's business plan to strategically commission programmes of work that help fill gaps in cultural provision, build on existing strengths or meet a specific objective, for example to support the Theatre Review recommendations. Creative Scotland also has a role in the coordination and commissioning of large cultural programmes such as the Cultural Olympiad and the Commonwealth Games. The success of the London 2012 programme and projects such as the Michael Clark 'Barrowlands' project demonstrate the benefits of your expertise in helping cultural agencies produce world class ideas and projects. I know you will consider carefully the correct balance between the range of commissioned and open access funding for artists and cultural organisations. It may be that the use of the term 'commissioning' is causing confusion, since it has such a broad definition – this something you may wish to review, and clarify in your updated corporate plan.

We both know it is crucial that Creative Scotland is seen to be knowledgeable about, listening and responsive to the concerns of the creative sector. It would be helpful to have more transparency about the use of Creative Scotland's extensive in-house expertise in analysing and evaluating evidence and making decisions in each sector. As this is understood and appreciated more widely than at present, it may help to strengthen relationships and build trust. I have asked the sector leads to contact Creative Scotland directly regarding any outstanding concerns and I hope that they will work constructively with your staff to suggest solutions and achieve the best possible outcomes for artists, creative practitioners and for the people of Scotland.

**FIONA HYSLOP**