

Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) is an umbrella body for organisations working in the built environment in Scotland. Drawing on extensive expertise in a membership-led forum, BEFS informs, debates and advocates on the strategic issues, opportunities and challenges facing Scotland's existing built environment. BEFS is a supporting member of the [Climate Heritage Network](#).

Other relevant consultation responses from BEFS can be seen below, as many issues overlap and demand associative consideration:

- [Budget scrutiny 2023-24: Funding for culture](#)
- [BEFS overview: Scottish Government Budget 2023-2024](#)
- [Built Environment Forum Scotland Submission to Inquiry into Budget Scrutiny 2024:25: Funding or Culture](#)
- [Call for Views: Advisory Group on Economic Recovery 29th May 2020](#)
- [Visitor Levy Bill – Call for Views \(15/09/2023\)](#)

BEFS will be responding only to relevant questions of the consultation, as below:

**1. How should planned budget increases for the culture portfolio in Budget 2025-26 be prioritised to support improved cultural outcomes?**

BEFS statement in our [blog](#) assessing the 2023-2024 budget more widely remains relevant for the 2025-26 budget scrutiny. BEFS stated:

'the modest increases for HES sit within a wider portfolio facing at best economic stasis (and real-terms cuts), and at worst a raft of significant budget reductions – from Creative Scotland, across Cultural Collections, to the National Records of Scotland. These cuts come in the context of the Government response to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee scrutiny, "the Budget maintains funding for the culture sector into 2023-24. The Government will consider setting multi-year planning figures for cultural organisations within the increased fiscal challenges presented by the UK Government's Autumn Statement'

In the 2024-25 budget HES was allocated £74.2m, a £2.6m increase as the year before, however the increase from 2023-2024 was 3.8%, whereas the 2024-25 budget was 2%. This can be contrasted to the positively stark increase from the 2021-22 to the 2022-23 budgets, where there was a 25% (£14.2m) increase.

The importance of examining the budget is not just to look at what is within the cultural portfolio - but to understand how our cultural heritage can be eroded through a lack of investment in data, in planning, and in regeneration; many of the aspects that help to support genuine place-based approaches.

BEFS 2021 [response](#) to the committee remains relevant. We then stated:

'There needs to be a greater understanding across Scottish Government directorates of what cultural heritage can deliver; exploring a cultural capital approach. Supporting early years cultural heritage interventions makes future champions for cultural heritage - and supports a more sustainable future; as well as greater wellbeing, and skills development for those involved. BEFS will continue to highlight that the traditional skills are as essential to delivering net zero as they are to maintaining our cultural heritage.'

Relevant to this is BEFS response to the call for views on the Visitor Levy Bill in September 2023 emphasising the central role that the historic environment specifically – and the built environment more widely - play as a direct contributor to the cultural tourism offer of Scotland.

The historic environment can be directly impacted by tourism; the economic, cultural, environmental, and social value of Scotland's places, sites, and landscapes being appreciated by visitors comes at a price. As BEFS has noted previously, our places can suffer from a lack of appropriate infrastructure and related facilities to appropriately facilitate the best experiences for both those local to, and those visiting, our cultural heritage. Ensuing revenue from a levy must be part of a wider conversation towards a successful management plan to simultaneously celebrate and protect our built heritage.

BEFS notes the view of BEFS trustee that *'a definitive hypothecation of a portion of the revenue is the only way to ensure the appropriate funds are allocated to mitigate the impact of tourism on our precious and treasured heritage. Additionally, the establishment of an infused revenue stream for heritage-based assets can provide the opportunity to fund more local projects and reduce the stress of current grant-based funding.'*

BEFS concludes that the state of uncertainty for our cultural-heritage continues year-on-year because of the uncertainty of how our places can be supported through planning, tourism, culture, regeneration, and the data we need, to plan for the future.

**2. To what extent does the Culture Strategy Action Plan deliver the Committee's recommendation that it should "provide a clear and strategic sense of how the Scottish Government is working to ensure a more sustainable future for the sector"?**

BEFS echoes comments from Culture Counts:

*'Policy development, such as the International Culture Strategy and Culture Strategy Action Plan Refresh focused on the creation of new policies without additional resource as yet being identified. With the sector already so lean, there is a risk that these policies will not have the desired impact.'*

**3. How should the Culture Strategy Action Plan inform the budgetary decisions of the Scottish Government, and the priorities and spending decisions of other partners in the culture sector?**

BEFS considers that the Culture Strategy Action Plan cannot sit in isolation and must be cognisant of the wider policy landscape within which it operates – and should be implemented and considered in alignment with other relevant strategies such as the Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment, ['Our Past, Our Future'](#) and the [Skills Investment Plan \(SIP\)](#) for the Historic Environment.

Recognising the interconnected relationship between the creative arts and heritage sectors, while bridging the skills gap, should be a priority in the way the Culture Strategy Action Plan informs budgetary decisions.

**4. What progress has been made in the last 12 months on taking forward innovative funding solutions?**

Several initiatives and funding strategies have been introduced to the sector landscape during 2023-2024, for example:

1. Creative Scotland's Multi-year funding programme launched, but BEFS will highlight comments from Culture Counts regarding the constraints of this programme:

*“Applications to the Multi-Year Funding programme were received from 281 cultural organisations with a total ask of £87.5m per year were received at Stage Two. This compares to the 285 organisations which were successful at Stage One of the process, with an annual financial ask was £87.4m. The current available budget stands at around £40 million, leaving huge uncertainty for cultural organisations awaiting these vital decisions”.*

Culture Counts acknowledge the immense pressure on Creative Scotland to deliver in this funding stream, but the problematic constraints raise questions about the consequences for the sector when, as it stands, roughly 50% of applicants may not receive the funding they applied for, or the applicants may receive a 50% cut in the funding they applied for. While a multi-year funding programme does provide some financial security for the recipients, such a programme must be delivered sustainably.

2. The National Lottery Heritage Fund’s Heritage 2033 programme was launched with the first £250,000 awards given in 2023-24. The Open Programme, part of the Heritage 2033 project, has been developed during this time with a focus on skills, and children and young people.
3. The Historic Environment Scotland’s Heritage and Place programme (H&PP) and Partnership Fund opened for their second rounds in 2023. The Grants Programme launched in 2023.
4. The Culture & Business Scotland Fund launched their Business Sponsorship Programme in 2024, where each £2 investment by a business is invested with £1 by C&BS.

BEFS also refers to comments made above relating the need for revenue from a Visitor Levy to benefit culture and heritage activity as a key driver of Scotland’s tourism offer.

### **5. How successful has the process of implementing Creative Scotland’s Multi-Year Funding Programme been thus far in delivering longer-term clarity and confidence for the culture sector?**

BEFS would again echo Culture Counts’ message around the efficacy of the multi-year funding programme:

*‘Organisations currently in receipt of regular funding from Creative Scotland face uncertainty as the organisation moved to its new, Multi-Year Funding programme, replacing its Regular Fund, Open Fund and Targeted Fund from 2025 onwards.*

*285 organisations which were successful at Stage One of the process, with an annual financial ask was £87.4m. The current available budget stands at around £40 million, leaving huge uncertainty for cultural organisations awaiting these vital decisions.*

*However, they have also indicated that due to standstill budgets and rising costs for organisations, that they anticipate funding a smaller number of organisations, making it inevitable that some of those organisations currently supported, and some new applicants, will not receive funding under the new framework.*

*The decisions that Creative Scotland will be taking at the end of October on the Multi Year Funding Programme are likely to have significant repercussions for Scotland’s cultural landscape.*

*The current available budget situation leaves huge uncertainty for cultural organisations awaiting these vital decisions. We welcomed ministers’ commitment to invest at least £100 million more annually in arts and culture by 2028-29, but bringing more of this funding forward now and the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland aligning their planning in October, would enable*

*strategic planning and vital investment for Creative Scotland, the sector it supports and the communities they serve across Scotland, when it is most urgently needed.'*

### 6. What progress has been made in delivering fair work across the culture sector and what should be the priorities for further progress?

Scotland has set out to become a Fair Work Nation by 2025. BEFS recognises the value of the Culture Sector Fair Work Task Force being established to develop recommendations for actions to further implement Fair Work First in the culture sector, but we emphasise the importance of including heritage and the historic and built environment sector in this work. The Culture Sector Fair Work Task Force meeting minutes have recorded that HES absence in the group has been raised, and the intention to invite HES seems like a positive development.

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BEFS responses to a number of Consultations in relation to the Built Environment can be found at:  
<https://www.befs.org.uk/resources/consultations/>

#### RESPONDENT INFORMATION

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference: **Publish response with name**

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise? **YES**

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy. **I CONSENT**