"The key message from this report is that the government and the Cultural and Creative Industries need to take a united and coherent approach that guarantees equal access for everyone to a rich cultural education and the opportunity to live a creative life.”

Vikki Heywood CBE

This report has been informed by a substantive body of research and analysis by cultural and academic leaders. Its scope is the cultural and creative life of the UK, its interconnectedness and its impacts across all dimensions of society including on the economy, social cohesion and well-being. The Commission set itself the challenge of “crafting a blueprint for greater cultural and creative success – towards a national plan for how culture and creativity can further enrich Britain”.

It sets out a number of desired outcomes and seeks changes not only to public policy at UK level but also challenges the sector itself to adapt to a more diverse society and one in which there is less public funding available.

Central to the report is the concept of the Cultural and Creative Ecosystem which highlights the interdependencies of the creative and cultural sectors, its activities, people, products and services.

The Commission refers to the dynamic flow and exchange between different parts of the Cultural and Creative Industries, vital to success and where the sum is greater than the parts and each part makes its contribution to the whole.

It states:

“The Cultural and Creative Industries make a significant contribution to the British economy and are the fastest growing industry in the UK. The Gross Value Added (GVA) of the sector was estimated by DCMS at a global £76.9bn in 2013, representing 5.0% of the UK economy.

1 Most of the Commission’s focus is on England and Wales, and many of its recommendations are specific to those nations.
As well as specialising in creative activity, all of these industries shape reflect and develop our culture and embody our creative and consumer responses to changing trends and technological advances. Within the Cultural and Creative Industries, sub-sectors such as Music, Performing and Visual Arts, Film and TV, and Museums, Libraries and Galleries are significant employers and contribute to the UK’s reputation as a world leader in standards of cultural production and, more widely, to making the UK attractive internationally to tourists, students and investors.

These sub-sectors have also traditionally relied on public investment to survive and flourish. In a time of austerity and diminishing public resources, it is important to stress the interdependence of the economically successful parts of the creative industries with these publicly supported sub-sectors. The Commission is particularly keen to raise awareness of the extent to which the success of the Cultural and Creative Industries as a whole is dependent on the talent development, R&D, networks and career opportunities that have been supported by public investment.

In this context, the proportion of public spending on the arts, culture and heritage is infinitesimal compared to their GVA and their contribution to the economic success of the broader Cultural and Creative Industries. The direct spend on arts, culture, museums and libraries, for instance, is only around 0.3% of the total public spend. It is therefore a grave mistake to think that any further reductions in levels of public investment will only affect the reach and impact of the arts, culture and heritage. They will also impact negatively on the quality and diversity of the content and talent that is the wellspring of the UK’s Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem”.

The report makes strong arguments which are congruent with Culture Counts’ principles, and reinforces our beliefs that the value of culture is core to Scotland’s people and our future. Taking part in cultural life is a human right and that cultural value should inform all policy areas and can be expressed in terms of human, social and economic value and impact. Both the UK and Scottish governments have an important role to play in supporting culture at this crucial time and in realising its value in Scotland’s future.