

MSP wants long term funding for culture in communities

Foysoł Choudhury MSP, Scottish Labour's Spokesperson on Culture highlighted the importance of providing sustained funding for local community groups in the arts and culture sector.

The debate included discussion of the challenges faced, and opportunities to be found, in delivering a place-based approach to culture.

This followed the conclusions and recommendations made in the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee's Report, *Culture in Communities: The challenges and opportunities in delivering a place-based approach*. The report found that the ongoing impact of budgetary challenges placed limits on the ability of cultural organisations to "deliver place-based and participatory cultural projects with communities".

Mr Choudhury said: "Scotland's cultural sector hangs in the balance, especially for community arts and culture organisations.

"We need long-term funding for a successful place-based approach to culture in communities.

"Without it, community organisations cannot plan ahead, commit to cultural events or ensure progress for culture in their communities."

The Lothians MSP said that whilst commitments from The Scottish Government to boost arts and culture funding by 2028 are welcome, key questions regarding sustained funding still remain, as he says was made clear by the committee's report.

Earlier on Thursday, Mr Choudhury had used Portfolio Questions to ask The Scottish Government what action it is taking to help schools to support children who wish to pursue a career in the arts and culture sector. Mr Choudhury said that whilst the recent funding announcement of £6.68 million for the culture sector in 2023-24 was welcome, long-term and sustained funding for courses and qualifications must come hand in hand with this to ensure that the culture sector has the skills and talent it needs to be sustained.

Mr Choudhury wants a transfer of decision-making power back into the hands of local communities.

He said: "A place-based approach must acknowledge the unique cultural heritage and history of individual communities, giving them the sufficient funding and freedom to cultivate their own cultural landscapes in ways appropriate for their needs.

"We must recognise the multicultural heritage and make up of many communities across Scotland and work towards meeting the needs of the many, not the few.

"Decentralisation will put decision making closer to home and give communities a choice in shaping the cultural life of their communities, helping to strengthen and improve multiculturalism and Scotland's rich cultural heritage. "

Culture in Communities: The Challenges and Opportunities in Delivering a Place-Based Approach Report:

<https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/CEEAC/2023/9/14/4c816e37-a817-4de7-b22e-4b4c924d81fd>



Foysoł Choudhury, MBE, MSP