

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 5 MARCH 2026

REPORT ON: THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS – CULTURAL SECTOR GRANTS AND UNESCO

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR, LEISURE & CULTURE DUNDEE

REPORT NO: 60-2026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report outlines proposed funding allocations for cultural organisations for the financial years 2026/27.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to:

- a) agree to reduce the funding for the DCA and Rep in 2026/27 by a total of £35,000 and provisionally a further reduction in 2027/28 for the DCA and Rep, not exceeding a total of £40,000, which would be determined by the Executive Director of Corporate Services;
- b) approve the allocations of funding set out in the table at para 4.1 for 2026/27 and note the provisional allocations for 2027/28 for the DCA and Rep;
- c) note the support in place in addition to the revenue grants set out at paras 4.5 – 4.7 and contractual agreements in place for Dundee Science Centre and V&A Dundee at para 4.4; and
- d) agree to continue the £60,000 contribution for UNESCO in 2026/27 and remits the Director, Leisure and Culture Dundee to secure further funding for UNESCO staffing and activities.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Executive Director of Corporate Services has confirmed agreement of these recommendations will result in:

- a) recurring savings of £35,000 for the Chief Executive's Service. These savings will be assumed within the final Revenue Budget 2026/27. Further recurring savings of up to £40,000 would be reflected in the 2027/28 Revenue Budget.
- b) additional one-off costs of £60,000 for the Chief Executive's Service. These costs will require to be included within the final Revenue Budget 2026/27.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The Council has provided revenue funding to four cultural sector organisations listed in the table below for many years and subsequently then added support for V&A Dundee. The Council's grants account for, in total, less than 4% of their combined annual income (ranging from 8% to 0.7%). This proposal reduces the grants to two organisations by 7% in 2026/27. The total revenue funding for the sector will reduce by 4% in 2026/27.

Name	Current Grant 2025/26	% of Income*	Reduction 2026/27	Funding 2026/27	Reduction 2027/28	Funding 2027/28
Dundee Contemporary Arts	£209,000	8%	£15,000	£194,000	£17,000	£177,000
Dundee Rep	£286,000	7%	£20,000	£266,000	£23,000	£243,000
Dundee Heritage	£26,000	1%	£0	£26,000	TBC	TBC
V&A Dundee	£350,000	4%	£0	£350,000	TBC	TBC
Dundee Science Centre	£15,000	2%	£0	£15,000	£0	£15,000
Overall Total	£886,000		£35,000	£851,000	TBC	TBC

*grant as a % of their total income in 2024/25

- 4.2 Each organisation has a range of alternative grant funding and commercial income opportunities that significantly outweigh the Council's grant. Council officers will continue to work with the cultural sector to deliver inclusive economic growth. Visitor numbers and overnight stays have been increasing in Dundee so the sector also needs to do all it can to attract more of these visitors to visit and spend in their venues also.
- 4.3 Taking account of the ongoing financial outlook for Council funding, it makes sense to signal that in future the sector cannot factor in an annual revenue grant from the City Council, except for any contractual agreements in place.
- 4.4 The non-statutory funding requires to be kept under review and totals £521,000 of the above revenue funding. For clarity the current contractual agreements are as follows:
- When establishing the Dundee Science Centre in 2000 and seeking support from the Millennium Fund it was agreed that, in lieu of setting aside a capital sum to provide an endowment income, the Council would commit to a minimum grant level of £15,000 per annum.
 - In the business case for establishing the V&A Dundee, the Council committed to a minimum grant level of £350,000 for 10 years from opening in 2018.
- 4.5 In addition to the grants paid there are also a range of other 'in kind' benefits the Council has provided. This includes three properties effectively rent free (V&A, DCA & Discovery Point), car parking income collection and capital funding to support key developments. The additional support was circa £1M in 2024/25 and capital investment of circa £4.5m. See more details at paras 4.6 and 4.7.
- 4.6 The other annual support costs, excluding the above noted property leases, are set out below:
- DCA – Property costs covered total £459,411 includes water, gas & electricity costs.
V&A – Property costs covered £446,714, Development Officer £69,000 and Others £29,654 and this totals £545,369.
- 4.7 Given the DCA is over 25 years old now significant investment is also being made by the Council to secure the future of the facility, and this is expected to be from 2024/25 to 2027/28 £4.5m of capital investment will be made. This work will see the replacement of mechanical and electrical infrastructure as part of energy efficiency and carbon reduction for the project (where practicable) reflecting the intention of the specific city council investment to tackle climate change.
- 4.8 Two of the organisations funded have been advised that they will receive an increase in their multi-year funding from Creative Scotland as set out below:
- DCA increased £666k in 2024/25 to £1m in 2025/26 then further increases to £1.47m
 - Rep increased from £1.9m in 2024/25 to £2.6m in 2025/26 then further increases to £2.86m

UNESCO

- 4.9 Separately, Leisure & Culture Dundee manages and hosts the UNESCO team. Report No [316-2025](#) to City Governance Committee on 27 October 2025, updated elected members on the evaluation of Dundee's Quadrennial Membership Monitoring Report for 2020-2024 to UNESCO and provided an overview of the proposed strategic priorities and action plan of Dundee's City of Design designation for the period 2026-2029.

4.10 It also highlighted the revenue funding support from partners for 2025/26, including Dundee City Council, totalling £102,500 to support staffing costs. Currently this financial support is committed on a year-by-year basis and the contributions were as follows:

- Dundee City Council: £60,000
- Abertay University: £15,000
- Northwood Charitable Trust: £27,500

4.11 The proposed activities of the Action Plan 2026-2029 averaging £250,000 annually will be sourced through external fundraising as successfully achieved in previous years.

4.12 Dundee City Council will continue with its £60,000 contribution for 2026/27 and remits the Director, Leisure & Culture Dundee to secure the remaining funding needed to cover the annual staffing costs from partners and/or new funding streams.

5.0 BUDGET CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

5.1 As part of the Budget Consultation carried out in November/December 2025 views were sought regarding the discretionary expenditure for the three organisations that there was scope to reduce their funding by up to 100%. The feedback received is summarised below:

Dundee Heritage Trust - There were 3,122 responses (3,369 in 2024) with the overall average impact rating suggested as medium 3.04/5.00 (2.78/5.0 in 2024) and for Dundee residents only the impact rating was 2.97. More detailed feedback was received from 864 people.

Dundee Contemporary Arts - There were 3,387 responses (3,424 in 2024) with the average impact rating suggested as medium 3.43/5.00 (3.56/5.0 in 2024) and for Dundee residents only the impact rating was 3.27. More detailed feedback was received from 1,411 people.

Dundee Rep - There were 3,515 responses (3,390 in 2024) with the average impact rating suggested as medium 3.59/5.00 (3.44/5.0 in 2024) and for Dundee residents only the impact rating was 3.4. More detailed feedback was received from 1,439 people.

5.2 The common themes for the sector included:

- Many respondents believed that reducing funding for these cultural organisations would negatively impact community services, limiting access to arts, education, and social activities, supporting those with disabilities and mental health issues.
- There were concerns that funding cuts could harm Dundee's economy and tourism, as these organisations attract visitors and contribute to the city's cultural appeal. A sense that reducing funding could lead to the closure of these cultural institutions, which was stated as likely to be a substantial loss for the city.
- Some respondents suggested exploring alternative funding sources to mitigate the impact of reduced council funding with some stating that cultural organisations should explore ways to become more self-sufficient and less reliant on council funding. There are suggestions to look for other sources of income, such as private funding, grants, and donations. This could include charging higher fees for those who can afford it while offering lower rates for those with lower incomes. It was felt that this could help generate additional revenue without significantly impacting accessibility.

5.3 When asked what level of reduction to funding for the above organisations would be suggested, in all three cases the highest individual response rates were for a 0% reduction, with the next highest response being 10-20%.

5.4 In addition, to the consultation feedback an annual return is requested from each of the above all five cultural organisations in autumn each year. This return gathers: financial information including reserves balances, staffing levels and commitment to the Scottish Living Wage, visitor numbers and how they support the City's priorities.

UNESCO

- 5.5 There were 3,012 responses (3,241 in 2024) in relation to UNESCO with the average impact rating of 2.36/5.00 (2.54/5.00 in 2024), nearing medium and for Dundee residents only the impact rating was 2.3. More detailed narrative feedback was received from 558 people (1079 in 2024) and common themes included:
- Respondents stated the UNESCO City of Design status brings economic benefits particularly in relation to tourism and matched funding for projects.
 - It was however suggested that alternative funding could be sought to reduce reliance on council funds.
- 5.6 When asked what level of reduction to funding for UNESCO would be suggested, the highest individual response rate was 31.7% for a 0% reduction; however, the majority of respondents suggested some level of reduction could be made. The next highest responses being 22.4% for 10-20% and 20.3% for 100%.
- 5.7 Whilst the same level of funding is being provided to UNESCO for 2026/27, the Director, Leisure and Culture Dundee will review this to seek alternative funding to allow the contribution from the Council to be set at the same average level as the other partners going forward.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment to identify impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. An impact, positive or negative, on one or more of these issues was identified and is noted within the Appendices. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. A copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment showing the impacts and accompanying benefits of/mitigating factors for them is included as Appendices to this report.
- 6.2 A separate appendix is included for each of the two organisations who will receive reduced funding, being Dundee Contemporary Arts and Dundee Rep.
- 6.3 Given the overall level of support and other funding/income streams each of these organisations have there should be no or limited overall impact on provision. Each will be asked to ensure the impacts on outreach work and to vulnerable groups and communities are minimised.
- 6.4 Whilst general concerns were expressed regarding the risk of securing funding if the Council is reducing its discretionary funding, it is clear given the scale of the full support - revenue, property provided, property costs covered and others, that there remains a commitment from the Council to support this sector that they can reflect in any funding bids.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

GREGORY COLGAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

JUDY DOBBIE, DIRECTOR, LEISURE & CULTURE DUNDEE

ANDREA CALDER, HEAD OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SERVICE

27 FEBRUARY 2026

Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: 60-2026

Document Title: Third Party Payments - Cultural Sector Grants - DCA

Document Type: Other

Description: The report outlines proposed funding allocations for cultural organisations for the financial year 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Intended Outcome: The report forms part of options to contribute to the achievement of necessary Revenue budget savings to allow the Council to set a balanced budget for 2026/27 and future years, whilst continuing to invest in the cultural sector in Dundee.

Period Covered: 01/04/2026 to 31/03/2028

Monitoring: Annual Follow the Public Pound questionnaire. Council represented on their Board.

Lead Author:

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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights **Impacts & Implications**

Age: Negative

The proposed reduction in funding may impact negatively on programmes delivered for children and young people. As the overall reduction is less than 1% of the DCA's budget any impact is likely to be minimal.

Consultation respondents believed that reducing funding for these cultural organisations including the DCA would negatively impact community services, limiting access to arts, education, and social activities, including supporting those with disabilities and mental health issues.

Potential mitigations include requiring funded organisations to prioritise inclusive and accessible programming, protecting free/low-cost activities for low-income residents, maintaining concessionary offers. Outreach activity should be protected as far as possible, and organisations supported to diversify income to minimise negative effects on vulnerable groups including those with disabilities.

It also has several commercial opportunities and is in an advantageous part of the city centre to attract trade.

Disability: Negative

The proposed grant reductions may have differential impacts on equality groups and low-income communities due to potential reductions in outreach, accessible programming, and subsidised activities. This may disproportionately affect disabled people.

For reasoning and mitigations, see comments under 'Age' above

Gender Reassignment: No Impact

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No Impact

Pregnancy & Maternity: No Impact

Race / Ethnicity: Negative

The proposed grant reductions may have differential impacts on equality groups and low-income communities due to potential reductions in outreach, accessible programming, and subsidised activities. This may disproportionately affect this group.

For reasoning and mitigations, see comments under 'Age' above

Religion or Belief: No Impact

Sex: No Impact

Sexual Orientation: No Impact

Are any Human Rights not covered by the Equalities questions above impacted by this report? No

Fairness & Poverty **Geographic Impacts & Implications**

Strathmartine: Negative

Lochee: Negative

Coldside: Negative

Maryfield: Negative

North East: Negative

East End: Negative

The Ferry: No Impact

West End: No Impact

Consultation respondents believe that cutting the funding from cultural organisations such as the DCA may reduce free/low-cost activities which might have a disproportionate impact on communities in regeneration areas.

This impact could be mitigated by requiring grant-funded organisations to prioritise maintaining outreach and inclusive programmes, even with reduced grants.

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Looked After Children & Care Leavers: Negative

The proposed grant reductions may have differential impacts on household groups, particularly those with a low-income due to potential reductions in outreach, accessible programming, and subsidised activities.

Potential mitigations include requiring funded organisations to prioritise inclusive and accessible programming, protecting free/low-cost activities for low-income residents, maintaining concessionary offers.

Carers: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Lone Parent Families: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Single Female Households with Children: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Greater number of children and/or young children: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Pensioners - single / couple: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Unskilled workers or unemployed: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Serious & enduring mental health problems: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Homeless: No Impact

Drug and/or alcohol problems: No Impact

Offenders & Ex-offenders: No Impact

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Employment Status: No Impact

Education & Skills: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Age' above.

Income: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Caring Responsibilities (including Childcare): No Impact

Affordability and accessibility of services: No Impact

Fuel Poverty: No Impact

Cost of Living / Poverty Premium: No Impact

Connectivity / Internet Access: No Impact

Income / Benefit Advice / Income Maximisation: No Impact

Employment Opportunities: No Impact

Education: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Age' above.

Health: No Impact

Life Expectancy: No Impact

Mental Health: No Impact

Overweight / Obesity: No Impact

Child Health: No Impact

Neighbourhood Satisfaction: No Impact

Transport: No Impact

Environment

Climate Change Impacts

Mitigating Greenhouse Gases: No Impact

Adapting to the effects of climate change: No Impact

Resource Use Impacts

Energy efficiency & consumption: No Impact

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling of waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport Impacts

Accessible transport provision: No Impact

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment Impacts

Air, land & water quality: No Impact

Biodiversity: No Impact

Open & green spaces: No Impact

Built Environment Impacts

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: No Impact

Is the proposal subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Corporate Risk Impacts

Political Reputational Risk: Negative

With any proposed reduction in funding there is a risk of negative publicity and so reputational risk.

The overall reduction represents less than a 1% reduction in the organisation's annual expenditure. The Council will still be providing grant funding, meeting significant property costs and rent-free use of the building.

Economic/Financial Sustainability / Security & Equipment: Negative

The overall reduction in the grant represents less than a 1% reduction in the organisation's annual expenditure. The Council will still be providing grant funding, meeting significant property costs and rent-free use of the building.

It also has several commercial opportunities and other sources of funding. It is also in an advantageous part of the city centre to attract trade given the visitors numbers and overnight stays have been increasing in Dundee.

Social Impact / Safety of Staff & Clients: No Impact

Technological / Business or Service Interruption: No Impact

Environmental: No Impact

Legal / Statutory Obligations: No Impact

Organisational / Staffing & Competence: No Impact

Corporate Risk Implications & Mitigation:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are "business as normal" risks and any increase to the level of risk to the Council is minimal. This is due either to the risk being inherently low or as a result of the risk being transferred in full or in part to another party on a fair and equitable basis. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant impact

Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: 60-2026

Document Title: Third Party Payments - Cultural Sector Grants - Dundee Rep

Document Type: Other

Description: The report outlines proposed funding allocations for cultural organisations for the financial year 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Intended Outcome: The report forms part of options to contribute to the achievement of necessary Revenue budget savings to allow the Council to set a balanced budget for 2026/27 and future years, whilst continuing to invest in the cultural sector in Dundee.

Period Covered: 01/04/2026 to 31/03/2028

Monitoring: Annual follow the public pound questionnaire and membership of the organisation's board.

Lead Author:

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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights **Impacts & Implications**

Age: Negative

The proposed reduction in funding may impact negatively on programmes delivered for children and young people. As the overall reduction is less than 1% of the Dundee Rep's budget any impact is likely to be minimal.

Consultation respondents believed that reducing funding for these cultural organisations including the Dundee Rep would negatively impact community services, limiting access to arts, education, and social activities, including supporting those with disabilities and mental health issues.

Potential mitigations include requiring funded organisations to prioritise inclusive and accessible programming, protecting free/low-cost activities for low-income residents, maintaining concessionary offers. Outreach activity should be protected as far as possible, and organisations supported to diversify income to minimise negative effects on vulnerable groups including those with disabilities.

Disability:

The proposed grant reductions may have differential impacts on equality groups and low-income communities due to potential reductions in outreach, accessible programming, and subsidised activities. This may disproportionately affect disabled people.

For reasoning and mitigations, see comments under 'Age' above

Gender Reassignment: No Impact

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No Impact

Pregnancy & Maternity: No Impact

Race / Ethnicity: Negative

The proposed grant reductions may have differential impacts on equality groups and low-income communities due to potential reductions in outreach, accessible programming, and subsidised activities. This may disproportionately affect this group.

For reasoning and mitigations, see comments under 'Age' above

Religion or Belief: No Impact

Sex: No Impact

Sexual Orientation: No Impact

Are any Human Rights not covered by the Equalities questions above impacted by this report? No

Fairness & Poverty **Geographic Impacts & Implications**

Strathmartine: Negative

Lochee: Negative

Coldside: Negative

Maryfield: Negative

North East: Negative

East End: Negative

The Ferry: No Impact

West End: No Impact

Consultation respondents believe that cutting the funding from cultural organisations such as the Dundee Rep may reduce free/low-cost activities which might have a disproportionate impact on communities in regeneration areas.

This impact could be mitigated by requiring grant-funded organisations to prioritise maintaining outreach and inclusive programmes, even with reduced grants

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Looked After Children & Care Leavers: Negative

The proposed grant reductions may have differential impacts on household groups, particularly those with a low-income due to potential reductions in outreach, accessible programming, and subsidised activities.

Potential mitigations include requiring funded organisations to prioritise inclusive and accessible programming, protecting free/low-cost activities for low-income residents, maintaining concessionary offers.

Carers: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Lone Parent Families: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Single Female Households with Children: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Greater number of children and/or young children: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Pensioners - single / couple: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Unskilled workers or unemployed: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Serious & enduring mental health problems: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Homeless: No Impact

Drug and/or alcohol problems: No Impact

Offenders & Ex-offenders: No Impact

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Employment Status: No Impact

Education & Skills: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Age' above.

Income: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Looked After Children & Care Leavers' above.

Caring Responsibilities (including Childcare): No Impact

Affordability and accessibility of services: No Impact

Fuel Poverty: No Impact

Cost of Living / Poverty Premium: No Impact

Connectivity / Internet Access: No Impact

Income / Benefit Advice / Income Maximisation: No Impact

Employment Opportunities: No Impact

Education: Negative

Potential impacts and mitigations are as described under 'Age' above.

Health: No Impact

Life Expectancy: No Impact

Mental Health: No Impact

Overweight / Obesity: No Impact

Child Health: No Impact

Neighbourhood Satisfaction: No Impact

Transport: No Impact

Environment **Climate Change Impacts**

Mitigating Greenhouse Gases: No Impact

Adapting to the effects of climate change: No Impact

Resource Use Impacts

Energy efficiency & consumption: No Impact

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling of waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport Impacts

Accessible transport provision: No Impact

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment Impacts

Air, land & water quality: No Impact

Biodiversity: No Impact

Open & green spaces: No Impact

Built Environment Impacts

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: No Impact

Is the proposal subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Corporate Risk Impacts

Political Reputational Risk: Negative

With any proposed reduction in funding there is a risk of negative publicity and so reputational risk.

The reduction in the grant represents less than a 0.9% reduction in the organisation's annual expenditure. The Council will still be providing significant grant funding.

Economic / Financial Sustainability / Security & Equipment: Negative

The reduction in the grant represents less than a 0.9% reduction in the organisation's annual expenditure. The Council will still be providing significant grant funding.

The Rep changes ticket prices, has other income generation and funding sources. It is also in an advantageous part of the city centre to attract trade given the visitors numbers and overnight stays have been increasing in Dundee.

Social Impact / Safety of Staff & Clients: No Impact

Technological / Business or Service Interruption: No Impact

Environmental: No Impact

Legal / Statutory Obligations: No Impact

Organisational / Staffing & Competence: No Impact

Corporate Risk Implications & Mitigation:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are "business as normal" risks and any increase to the level of risk to the Council is minimal. This is due either to the risk being inherently low or as a result of the risk being transferred in full or in part to another party on a fair and equitable basis. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant impact