

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: Live Music, HC 733

Wednesday 5 December 2018

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 5 December 2018.

Watch the meeting

Members present: Damian Collins (Chair); Clive Efford; Julie Elliott; Julian Knight; Ian C. Lucas; Rebecca Pow; Jo Stevens.

Questions 359 - 445

Witnesses

I: Margot James MP, Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; Darren Henley OBE, Chief Executive, Arts Council England.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Arts Council England](#)
- [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Margot James MP and Darren Henley OBE.

Q359 **Chair:** Good afternoon, welcome to this further session of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, as part of our inquiry into live music. We are very pleased to welcome Margot James, the Minister for DCMS and Darren Henley, the Chief Executive of the Arts Council to our evidence session this afternoon.

Before we start the session I would just like to record for the record—and this is not relevant to today's hearing so it is not something we will be bringing up as part of the hearing—the Committee has agreed that we will publish a selection of documents that the Committee acquired by order of the American technology company 643. A selection of those documents are now available for reading on the Select Committee website. They have been ordered to be published by the House and have been published. Anyone who is interested in that issue I would direct them to the Committee web page. As I said, those documents are not relevant to the proceedings today so it is not something we will be discussing with the Minister or with Mr Henley.

I will start the questioning. We have had evidence from people right across the music industry and profession as part of this inquiry and I think a consistent theme of that has been a general concern about the underlying health of the music sector and whether it gets the support and attention it deserves, given that it is something of hugely important cultural significance to the country. Some people are concerned that as an art form it may not get the support that other art forms do. Could you give us an overview of how you see the strength of the music sector in this country and what you see as being any particular priority areas for support. Minister.

Margot James: Shall I start? Thank you very much indeed for inviting me here today. Music is a hugely important part of the economy. Live music itself contributes almost £1 billion to GDP and that is just the live part of the sector. We are aware that if you look back over the last 10 years there has been a substantial decline estimated to be around 35% in the number of grassroots venues, which is obviously very concerning. We have taken a number of measures to reverse that decline and support the thriving live music panoply where it still exists.

The Live Music Act, which was passed in 2012, we believe is working broadly as intended. There is a lot of scope for greater co-operation between local authorities and other stakeholders in preserving live music and also balancing the interests of musicians, venues and residents. The agent of change principle that we have just introduced into the national planning policy framework we hope will have a reinforcing effect of the rights of musicians and live venues.

Darren Henley: I would agree with the Minister, there is a wide and varied landscape and we have worldwide reputation for quality and



innovation right across the music sector. For the Arts Council I just want to make it absolutely clear, we are very passionate about all areas of the music world—pop music, jazz, world music and then also internationally renowned orchestras and opera companies as well.

Our investment obviously is only part of the picture and it is quite a complicated ecology but we are really interested in ways that we can support meaningfully and appropriately with public money, areas such as innovation and diversity and access. Also I am very aware of some of the challenges we are now seeing, particularly in those smaller live pop music venues. That is something that we are interested in working with the individuals who run those organisations up and down the country to see how we can sensibly invest with them. I am also interested in reflecting today on what the live music venue of the future looks like as well. I think it is really important that we have venues that are technologically linked and they are producing work that is happening in front of people but also work that can go out more widely as well. We are really interested in working with those venues to see how we can appropriately invest in making that happen in the future.

Q360 Chair: One of the concerns that has been raised to us as well is that the state of live music as a sector is considerably worse outside of London than it is within London, even though London has its changes. Minister, you quoted a figure of 35% for the decline in the number of live music venues, do you know how that figure looks excluding London, whether the percentage of closure is higher outside London than it is in London?

Margot James: I do not have that data but I would readily accept the assertion behind your question that the decline has been sharper outside London than in London. In fact, UK Music's most recent report "Wish you were Here" from last year estimated that the number of grassroots venues in London stabilised for the first time in a decade in 2017, which is welcome development. Yes, I think the situation is worse outside of London.

Q361 Chair: Does the Department gather statistics on that? Would it be possible for the Department to write to the Committee with a breakdown?

Margot James: I will ask my officials to interrogate the statistics we have more from a regional perspective and write to you with any information that is informative.

Q362 Chair: Yes, certainly if it is possible to break down by the nations and regions.

Margot James: Absolutely, I am sure it is and I will write to you with any information that we can identify.

Q363 Chair: I would be interested to know as well, are there any other cultural sectors that have seen a similar decline in the amount of cultural space, public space that is available? This seems to be a very steep decline and in terms of the Committee's work I think it is one of the most compelling



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arguments that has been raised around the concern at the decline in performance space.

Margot James: I would not be aware. Music is really the only performing art that comes under my particular area of responsibility but I will definitely find out whether there are other areas of live arts that are similarly afflicted. I don't know whether you would have any information?

Darren Henley: I think one of the areas with a model we can transfer across is we have done a lot of work with pub theatres, for example, and they have become quite successful at coming in and applying for funding from us. There is probably some learning from there we can take into the sector and see how they have been able to make their spaces more available.

The other thing that is quite interesting is some of the business models for these live venues, where they become community interest companies and they are using their space differently during the day times. Those things are quite interesting. What I am hearing is there are challenges—and I am sure the Committee has heard this—around alcohol sales, around planning issues, around changes in local authority support. These are some of the factors there. I do not think there is a one-size-fits-all, in each case it is quite different and we need to build relationships on a one-to-one basis almost to see how, with our local teams around the country, we can be most useful in making a difference to those venues.

Q364 **Chair:** One of the issues that was raised with us at earlier hearings on this was whether the UK should look at doing what happens in other countries, particularly in France, where effectively there is a levy on performance venues, which means that larger ones help to subsidise the work of smaller ones by redistributing some of that funding. Has either the Arts Council or the Department ever considered introducing some form of levy to support music venues?

Margot James: We are not considering that at the moment. I would be quite happy to look at the French experience to see if there are any lessons that we could apply from there. I am hopeful that what Music UK found to be the case in London shortly after the new measures took effect, we could start to see happening elsewhere in the country. There are also learnings to be had from some of the more successful live music venues around the country and looking at the reasons for their success. Sometimes it is to do with how well they connect into their local communities. What else do they do in addition to facilitating live music.

If I might be permitted to plug an area in my own constituency of Stourbridge. We have a fantastic resource called Base Studios who have taken on hundreds of young people who were previously not in education, training or employment and they have brought them in on a formalised programme of work experience leading to real jobs across the whole music production business, opening young people's eyes to opportunities and careers, not just from a performance perspective but all the backup



that goes into a good performance. That has put them on the map. They have generated more revenues from different forms of funding streams. Things like that, if that can be replicated around the country, live venues becoming a greater community asset than just for the consumption of music, that can help.

Darren Henley: There are many examples that we do invest in but one I went to quite recently was in Sunderland. Pop Recs in Sunderland, which has a fantastic group of young people—younger than me—in their 20s who are running that and we are investing in the work they are doing in outreach in terms of bringing free space to very young performers. One of the things I would observe is that, as with many parts of the world that we deal with as the Arts Council, working with good leadership on a local basis is very strong. One of the things I would like to see as part of a package that we could put together in terms of investment is about helping them become more sustainable businesses and having all processes in place.

It is interesting that the business model that meant that these organisations were sustainable in the past is not there. We know that there is a lessening of guitar based rock in terms of sales, we are seeing that very strongly. I am of an age where I bought “(What’s the Story) Morning Glory” the bestselling album of 1990s, that is my generation but that guitar based rock is not there. It is interesting, I was in Holmfirth at the weekend at the Picturedrome seeing Showaddywaddy. It was a 400-seater and it was sellout. That is privately owned, it gets no funding from anybody and it is a sustainable business. These things can work but we need to work out what are the models that we can take that mean they are more likely to work in more places.

Q365 **Chair:** Just two final questions from me. I share your enjoyment of Oasis, that album ages us both. Noel Gallagher has raised a point during this inquiry that he does not believe that you could start a band like Oasis in the way it was started now, because the amount of rehearsal space is not available in the same way and the performance based small venue is not available in quite the same way. That has to be a big concern, doesn’t it, if major artists are saying something?

Margot James: If I could just interject. There are other ways, and new ways, for starting a band now, aren’t there? Stormzy, I believe, started online. In a way it has morphed into much more of a digital world and that has opened up and democratised the starting of music in a whole new way. It is not necessarily automatically bad that you cannot start band like you could in the 1990s when there are so many new ways of starting a band now.

Darren Henley: On one level there is a greater democratisation for young people to be able to get a worldwide audience through the internet. Having said that, it is very important that we still have opportunities for people to live perform in front of others and do not lessen that.



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Q366 Chair: It is not about either or. Social media in particular is a really important way of growing your audience but you still need to be able to perform.

I know Rebecca wants to come in on this, but a final question from me on the use of technology to promote artists. There is a lot of concern that the remuneration, even for quite established artists, pay per play on social media, particularly YouTube, is very poor and that people are struggling to make money out of that. This is something the Government have looked at before but I wonder if you could give us a comment on whether you are satisfied with the current level of remuneration that social media platforms like YouTube offer to artists based on the amount of times their music is played?

Margot James: No, I am not. There have been improvements. I know that YouTube has now got a deal that they have put a lot of thought and investment into and it is better than it was without a doubt for the artist. I think government policy has improved the situation, certainly with Spotify artists are remunerated. I am very concerned at the way the European copyright directive has been represented somehow as an assault on artistic freedom when in my opinion it is the very opposite and it is a means of getting artists greater remuneration and greater control over their rights. To that extent I welcome it. It is still in a state of flux. It is getting in the right direction but it is a long way from where it was.

Q367 Rebecca Pow: It is not where I am meant to come but just on some points that were raised. I have been contacted by a number of young people as a result of doing this inquiry, one of whom is a chap called Olly Toomey. He was a brilliant musician and for two years has tried to get into the music scene. He would take absolute issue that social media is not necessarily helping all of those smaller, young people. It is culturally incredibly difficult for them to use market to actually make a living and then what they said their experience was after trying to so hard for two years, it ties into this lack of venues. They tried to go touring but there were few places to go in this country. They cannot tour in Europe anymore because the structure has gone. To play at a festival, while the big festival owners earn a deal of profit, they themselves have to give up two days of whatever job they are doing to go and perform for £50. It is completely unviable.

I would say to the Minister, I do think we need to look at this somehow because we are stifling the talent at the bottom of the pile. We had that fed into us, didn't we, in some of the other evidence that we received. It is all very well to talk about social media is going to help but I think for a lot of these people it is not.

Margot James: I accept it is not a panacea and there is probably the element of luck, good fortune, super talent that enables some people to break through via social media but it is not the panacea for everybody. To a certain extent it was ever thus. I do agree we need to work harder, do more to cultivate the base of musical talent in the country and give it



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space to thrive. One area, which is perhaps more Darren's area than mine, it is noticeable that the Arts Council do not get very many applications for funding from music venues yet they are open to such applications. I would encourage local musicians and venues to look at the Arts Council. It is a fundable area as far as you are concerned, is it not, and more applications would be welcome?

Q368 Rebecca Pow: That was one of our questions. Why do think you do not get those smaller venues applying?

Darren Henley: We recognise there is a challenge here and what we are doing is actively going out and talking to those venues. Our south-east team, to give an example, have a relationship working with 22 venues that have not applied to us and are trying to develop them to get to application stage.

One of the things that we do need to do, because we are investing public money in this, is to see the social good. That is one of the things that is important for us there. They are, in many cases, small private entities and have not been used to the funding culture. We are very keen to work to make sure that there is not a hole here that gets worse.

The other part of your earlier question around talent developments, some of the things that surprised people that we do do, for instance, we have an urban music academy that is developing talent in urban music. We are working with youth music, funding £9.6 million of national lottery money with youth music every year. They are specifically working in some of these areas that are more hard to reach and trying to bring people, particularly from tougher social economic backgrounds as well who may not have the opportunities into the music industry. Stormzy has been used as an example already and through British Underground, who we do a lot of international work, we took him to South by South West for his first gig over there when grime was first starting. Rag'n'Bone man and Rizzle Kicks are working with Audio Active, which is a development agency in Brighton. They got their first outings there. I am sure you are all listeners to Let's Eat Grandma who are supporting Chvrches at the moment. They worked with the creative east development fund as well.

We have these people who are working around the country to develop new talent and that is something that is really important to us. The talent pipeline is something we care very passionately about across the whole of the arts sector. We are really interested in finding new models and ways of investing in that.

Chair: We are going to come on to funding a bit later on. Quick question from Jo.

Q369 Jo Stevens: Thank you. I was just interested, Minister, in the example you gave in your constituency about hundreds of young people getting involved. Can you tell me a bit more about what that involves? How long do they go there for?



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Margot James: I can tell you what I know. I visited Base Studios probably 10 times in the last seven or eight years. They have a formal programme. They have had funding—I cannot remember whether it was Big Lottery but it was one of those sorts of funders that have given them funding to start a formal programme of training young people in all of the ancillary skills, as well as giving them studio space, if they are performers. As well as that, there is also a training programme that they have worked with local colleges to develop in terms of lighting and other aspects of production.

Q370 **Jo Stevens:** Are they paid as performers, though, when they do that?

Margot James: If they are a new band in the area, and it is quite a wide area of talent that goes there, they are not charged. It is a fantastic facility so it attracts talent from far and wide and these bands and musicians can go there and perform for nothing. I do not know the system with regard to payment.

Q371 **Jo Stevens:** Sorry, the question is are they paid?

Margot James: I don't know. When I am talking about the training that is another matter because it is not only performance related, they are being trained in lots of other production techniques and encouraged to look at music as a broader career choice. You do not have to be a performer to have an interest and career in music. That is their thesis.

I would have to find out. I am visiting them next week so I can find out and see whether they are paid if they are performing. I know they also perform online across the world so it is an export as well. I am sure that in a future inquiry that the Committee might like to undertake I could get the CEO to come along and give evidence. I am sure he would be only too pleased to do so.

Q372 **Ian C. Lucas:** Town centres, important music venues, I am sure, Minister, that you have the experience of more empty shops than you would like in our town centres. Music venues are one of the ways in which we could rejuvenate our town centres. One of the major problems that we have at the moment in town centres is business rates. In the evidence that we have heard in the sessions from the music industry, one of the issues that they have raised with us is business rates and the detrimental effect that is having on new venues or existing venues continuing. Have you had any discussions or would you have discussions with other relevant Departments to make the case for a more sympathetic approach for venues?

Margot James: Yes. I know our officials have been in discussion with Treasury officials and the Business Department about the move to liberalise high streets to encourage more mixed usage on high streets to revive town centres. That is an agenda that has great promise. Although business rates are a problem to some music venues, as it is indeed to other forms of high street users, in the last budget the Chancellor has built on previous exemptions and raising of thresholds with regard to the



application of business rates and we are waiting to hear how the latest budget 2018 exemptions from business rates will be applied in practice. Any venue with a rateable value of obviously less than 51,000 there is a substantial exemption, which will catch some music venues, but of course not the large ones.

Q373 Ian C. Lucas: It does seem to me, if we think about smaller venues in the town centre, we should be providing massive encouragement. Certainly in my constituency we are having street festivals and other performance events to bring people into the town centre, and I know a lot of other colleagues are doing the same. It seems to me we have an antiquated system. With respect, all of the things that you mentioned are important but they are Elastoplast over bigger issues. Do you not think we need a much more fundamental reassessment of the rating system so that looking at our town centres in a different way and using performance venues to bring people into the town centres can be encouraged by fiscal and taxation measures rather than just simply extending reliefs and so on? This is across the party political issue, right across Parliament, and you would be really popular if you seized that agenda.

Margot James: I have no doubt about that. As you know, this is a Treasury area but what I would say is I do think the efforts that have been made by the Chancellor amount to more than a sticking plaster. Since 2016 the new retail discounts on business rates has been worth £13 billion, 2016 and over the next three years. Over 650,000 small businesses, including music venues, now pay no rates at all. I think this is more than a sticking plaster.

It is not only about business rates. I appreciate that you make the point that it is a wider issue. There is the high street fund that was announced at the budget as well of £675 million. We can encourage venues to apply for that when we know more about the criteria about how applications will be evaluated. There is a lot being done. I totally agree with you that it is the right direction. Music can play a huge part, as indeed can other performing arts in the revitalisation of our town centres and high streets.

Q374 Clive Efford: Mr Henley, can you tell us what you think the public's opinion of the Arts Council is?

Darren Henley: Some of the public connect with us quite a lot and some of them connect with us less. One of the things I am very keen to do is that we are an Arts Council for the whole of England across all art forms. I spend half of every week travelling around the country and I have done for the last four years. I see all sorts of places and all sorts of work. We are in the middle of doing a big piece of work right now looking at our 10-year strategy from 2020 to 2030 and—we are still listening, people are able to talk to us about that—I believe very passionately that we should be an Arts Council for everybody, investing in all sorts of art forms, recognising all sorts of creativity in people's lives. That is something that is really important.



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Q375 **Clive Efford:** Is it a problem that 62% of your funding goes to opera?

Darren Henley: Not a problem but there is balance in what we do.

Q376 **Clive Efford:** You call 62% balanced?

Darren Henley: In terms of opera it is a very expensive art form to do. If we look at the Royal Opera House, for example, probably 300 people a night are involved in each one of those productions. There are a lot of people who work out in Thurrock in the buildings that build the scenery, there is an orchestra of 100 people, there will be 50 people in the chorus and so on. It is a very expensive art form.

Q377 **Clive Efford:** I think 8% goes to pop music from your fund, doesn't it, and 62% to opera? What proportion of the 62% goes to the Royal Opera House then?

Darren Henley: I could not tell you the exact proportion, I would have to come back to you with an exact answer.

Q378 **Clive Efford:** Half? A quarter? All of it?

Darren Henley: Not all of it, no. It is the biggest single investment that we make in the country but then we have orchestras up and down the country, we have ballet companies. The Royal Opera House also has the Royal Ballet—

Q379 **Clive Efford:** In your four years in post has that changed at all?

Darren Henley: Yes, it has been reduced. We reduced it 3% in the last investment round. From 2018 to 2022 there has been a reduction in the Royal Opera House's investment.

Q380 **Clive Efford:** How far into your consultation on your 10-year strategy are you?

Darren Henley: We are in listening mode, everybody can input into it right now.

Q381 **Clive Efford:** Are you able to say what sort of representations you are getting from, say, the pop music sector about what seems to be an imbalance in the funding?

Darren Henley: Right across the piece we are still in the analysis mode and we are still listening, we have not published a draft strategy and we will not do that until the first half of next year. We are literally in the process of processing the data.

Clive Efford: We have just heard that in the last 10 years 35% of small music venues have closed. In response to that what action has the Arts Council taken?

Darren Henley: We are now working very closely and one of the things we want to do—



Q382 **Clive Efford:** Since when?

Darren Henley: Over the last couple of years probably we have started to talk to people. We have funded international venue day every year for the last four years, we gave the initial funding to the Music Venues Trust to develop their business model and we are working directly with organisations up and down the country.

Q383 **Clive Efford:** Would you say you have been able to stem that tide or do you still see that as a problem? Is that one of your priorities to address in the—

Darren Henley: I do not think we have stemmed the tide, clearly from the numbers you say we have not but it is a priority. For us, it is important that we invest in all parts of the music sector. One thing I would observe is that we are not the only funder. We are not the only investor. It is a £4.4 billion industry. That is 12 times our entire grant investment annually. This is a big sector. We want to be part of the solution but we cannot be the only part of the solution.

Q384 **Clive Efford:** What was wrong with the Momentum Music Fund that you stopped funding?

Darren Henley: We funded the Momentum Music Fund through legacy Olympic funding. We have evaluated that and one of the things we now want to do is see what we can do to create a new fund that works with live music venues and musicians from this area to make sure that we can make that work. One of the challenges was that a lot of the money was not going across the country, a lot of the funding was going only into London and we wanted to make sure it was a more wide-ranging fund as well. We will learn from that and then we will be putting a new programme in place.

Q385 **Clive Efford:** In your time at the Arts Council, what have you done to widen the engagement of socioeconomic groups and diverse audiences in the workforce and leadership of the arts?

Darren Henley: One of the things we are most proud of is a programme called Creative People and Places, which goes up and down the country. There are colleagues on this Committee who have these programmes in their constituencies and they are all about going to the places with the lowest engagement, often with the highest indices of social deprivation, to work with them to co-create meaningful arts programmes from the ground up and putting infrastructure in place to make that happen.

We also have a programme that is called Elevate, which was about going and looking at diverse leadership and people who were outside of our funding mechanism. We invested in 40 organisations and 20 of them we have brought into our National Portfolio at this time.

Q386 **Clive Efford:** How do we measure the success of those initiatives?



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Darren Henley: In the end it will be more people from more backgrounds engaging with publicly funded arts.

Q387 **Clive Efford:** How do we measure that? How do we as a Committee assess whether those initiatives that you have just named are changing things?

Darren Henley: We have the Taking Part Survey, which the DCMS invested in, and that data is publicly available. We also evaluate each of those programmes. The Creative People and Places programme, for example, is evaluated very heavily and that is a long-term investment. There is no short-term panacea. You cannot go into a place that has been historically under-invested-in and expect to see something change overnight. What we are doing is having a long-term, meaningful relationship with those places. We are putting capital investment into them as well as people investment but we want to make sure there is leadership on the ground there. It is something I care passionately about. I absolutely want to make that change over the next 10 years. By 2030, I intend to see a very different Arts Council and a very different arts and culture structure.

Q388 **Clive Efford:** Could I ask the Minister; would you like to see the 62% proportion of funding that goes to opera reduced?

Margot James: I think we would all like to see more resources, as much as we can afford, going into a range of performing arts. As we have just heard, I am also very committed to getting growth outside of London and the south-east. Whether that means you need to shift the percentage or not I would not like to comment because I am not close enough to the decision-making of how the Arts Council distributes its funding.

Q389 **Clive Efford:** You are saying that it is not to do with the fact that it is an expensive form of art, but that it is London-based?

Margot James: No, I did not say it was not. It is clearly an expensive form of art. I totally agree with what has been said on that. It is a very important art form. It is an export. It is a vital part of the panoply of arts. We do not want a situation where we find we are reducing the percentage going to opera so much that the Royal Opera House would then have to put its tickets on sale for a completely unaffordable amount. Then you would probably think it is excluding a lot of people from a very elevating art form and we would not want to do that. It is a difficult balance.

Q390 **Clive Efford:** We heard that argument over many years from the Royal Opera House. We have the Albert Hall, for instance, as a financial set-up where it is pretty much self-financing and does not require huge amounts of subsidy. The Royal Opera House is a place of similar status. Should we not be looking to make the Royal Opera House stand on its own two feet a little bit more?

Margot James: They are very different. The Albert Hall, of course, is able to put on more varied forms of art. There is a huge variety of



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different types of music that the Albert Hall permits and encourages, whereas the Opera House has either ballet or opera. There is nothing else that they do. Therefore perhaps they do not have the same access to different markets as the Albert Hall does.

Q391 **Clive Efford:** Can I just ask another one?

Margot James: I am way out of my brief, by the way, Chair, just so the Committee is aware of that.

Chair: I appreciate you giving the answers you have given.

Q392 **Clive Efford:** Let me just ask another one here. Does it cause you concern that pop music gets just 8% of funding?

Margot James: Yes. The 8% figure is more concerning than the other matter, particularly with regard to what we are all here discussing, which is the grassroots. Of course pop music as an industry has a huge revenue, massive. I am sure it is a great deal more than opera.

Darren Henley: £4.4 billion.

Margot James: Yes. I did not know the exact figure but thank you for that. One could perhaps look to the industry to do more. In the same way as we expect football and the premiership to do more for grassroots football, perhaps we could expect the pop music industry to do more for grassroots music.

Q393 **Clive Efford:** Perhaps a ticket levy?

Margot James: There are other ways, are there not? It does not all have to come from the public purse.

Q394 **Chair:** Yes. The point you make about the comparison between football and music is a really interesting one because football is a professional, commercial industry but funds grassroots activity.

Margot James: That is right. We could expect the same of the music industry rather than going after the share that the Opera House has.

Q395 **Julian Knight:** I am sorry to labour the point about the Opera House. Darren, you spoke quite quickly to my colleague. I just wanted to establish something and check one fact you said to him and the Committee. Did you say the Royal Opera House was seeing a 3% reduction in its—

Darren Henley: It is part of our National Portfolio, which are our regularly funded organisations, of which there are just under 900 across the country. We took 3% of the funding away. There was a reduction.

Q396 **Julian Knight:** From those organisations?

Darren Henley: No, from the biggest ones. We ringfenced that money in London to work with smaller, diverse organisations. It was the Royal



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Opera House, the Southbank Centre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and one other.

Q397 **Julian Knight:** Sorry, is it 3% from the Royal Opera House or is it 3% from all those organisations?

Darren Henley: It is 3% from those four biggest organisations that we took. We then reinvested that money into the portfolio specifically to work with smaller, younger, diverse organisations.

Q398 **Julian Knight:** You know it is 3% but you cannot tell this Committee precisely how much of your budget goes into funding the Royal Opera House?

Darren Henley: It is around £23 million, I think, but I do not want to give you a wrong figure. I do not want to give an exact figure because I need to double-check it but it is around £23 million. I can come back and correct that if I am wrong.

Q399 **Julian Knight:** Fine, £23 million. We had the pleasure of visiting the Royal Opera House this morning. We were shown around by Alex Beard, the chief executive there. I have to say, he looked like the biggest kid in the candy shop you could ever imagine. Comparing what I see as my local arts and the Royal Opera House, it is like the Starship Enterprise. Everything is absolutely immaculate. He apologised at one point when we were walking down a corridor because it was bare. It was perfect. It had plasma screens, it had everything you could ever begin to imagine.

Do you think it is frankly a little bit galling, even a little bit sickening, that we have everything going into these high arts whereas there is that 8% on pop music? Would it not be better if we stopped pandering to this extent and looked to share the cake a little bit more evenly and a little bit more fairly across the board? I understand you want to try to decrease it over time, but perhaps more quickly, more rapidly, so we can have a little more fairness in the system.

Darren Henley: One thing, as you say, is that of the Royal Opera House's revenues we are only a relatively small part. For example, I do know that they—

Q400 **Julian Knight:** £23 million is a lot of money.

Darren Henley: It is reducing. All I would say is that, for example, I know they have just done capital investment that had no call on the public purse at all. That is not me speaking on their behalf but I think we need to be proportionate. They have a very large turnover. They are a world-class institution. They are the Man City of that and they are seen on that basis around the world.

I would say also that we do not just invest in opera in London. The Welsh National Opera, for example, is based in Cardiff, because they tour across England and take opera right across the country, we are the biggest investor in that. We invest more money into the Welsh National Opera



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than anyone else does because they come across the country and they are taking that art form into towns and cities right across the country.

Q401 Julian Knight: We were told that one in five customers were effectively from overseas. I asked what that was in proportion, say, to Vienna, and apparently it is far smaller. It is around about the same as Paris. Frankly, I have never travelled to Paris to go to the opera. I just wonder what you think about whether it is pulling its own weight in terms of getting people into the UK in order to spend money in our shops and bring money into our economy. For £23 million, do you think at the moment, in terms of the multiplier effect, it is offering us real value for money?

Darren Henley: I am told by people who are more expert than me in the area of tourism that having big, major cultural institutions, heritage institutions, in our capital city is a really important thing. One of the things we are trying to do as the Arts Council, I absolutely believe, is move money around the country. In Birmingham, for example, we do have a great symphony orchestra and we do have the Symphony Hall there. It is a very big thing. We also have Birmingham Rep, we have very fine museum collections—

Q402 Julian Knight: It is nothing compared to the Opera House, I have to say, and I am a regular visitor.

Margot James: Can I interject? I just want to make the point that the Royal Opera House, as we have heard, is a global, international institution. It is something I think we should be very proud of and it does draw many people when they come to London to spend more money here. It is a huge part of our tourist attraction as a city. I do not feel the answer to some of the other problems we have been discussing is to reduce what we are investing in the Royal Opera House and indeed, as you said, other operas like the Welsh Opera and the Northern Opera around the country. It is something to be proud of. It is a flagship opera house the world over.

Q403 Julian Knight: Do you think, Minister, that with one in five customers coming through the door at the Royal Opera House coming from overseas, compared to somewhere like Vienna, which is far higher than that, it has further to go in terms of attracting those people?

Margot James: That may be the case. The comparison is somewhat erroneous because there are many more things to do in London than there are in Vienna and there is much more competition for the tourist budget in London than the parallel budget in Vienna. That might have something to do with it.

Q404 Julian Knight: Yes. There are horses, are there not, basically?

Darren Henley: If I may just interject on the European model, public funding of opera and classical music in places like Germany and Austria is virtually their total revenue stream. We have a far greater mixed funding model relying on philanthropy and ticket sales here than they would do



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over there. It is virtually all of them. That is why you see that virtually every city has an enormous opera house.

Q405 **Julian Knight:** Minister, on tickets, in terms of consumer protection legislation, you may have had my experience of frustration in terms of trying to get into venues and ending up being sent to these secondary ticket sites. Obviously we have seen Viagogo and the CMA just yesterday. Do you think that the legislation as it stands right now is fully effective in protecting consumers from these resale sites?

Margot James: We have the legislation into a good place. We need to make sure the enforcement catches up. The fact that at least one of the major secondary sites is now to be absorbed by the owner and the site is going to become a site with a controlled surcharge much more in users' interests is a sign that we are getting there with the legislation. I was very pleased to see the enforcement action that the CMA took against Viagogo. It was a shame that public money had to be used in that way when the other three main secondary sites agreed back in April, voluntarily, to comply with the law. That was a negative, but at least Viagogo have finally accepted that they need to comply with the law, not before time.

Q406 **Julian Knight:** Viagogo refused to appear before this Committee when we asked them.

Margot James: Yes. They wrote to me in September. I have the letter here. It is full of regret and apology and it says that regretfully they will not be able to attend your Committee given the legal proceedings and the legal proceedings that they are taking against Kilimanjaro Live. With great regret, they would not be able to attend your session. It is a great pity. Regretfully, the CMA has judged that the courts must now provide some clarity. It was an incredible message.

Q407 **Julian Knight:** It does seem to be the case that it is de rigueur, in fact, to refuse the Committee on legal grounds. Mr Zuckerberg, for instance. Have you considered introducing a secondary ticketing ombudsman?

Margot James: We are not considering that at the moment. It is obviously something that has been discussed but we do want to see the legislative changes that have been brought about via the Consumer Protection Act 2015 and also the banning of automated purchasing of tickets greater than the number that the original seller describes as a maximum. We want to bed that down. As you all know, Professor Waterson did his review a couple of years ago and we want to bed down the changes that we have introduced as a result of that and get the maximum effectiveness out of that before we embark on something else. It is definitely an area that we keep under constant review. It is very important. In answer to your first question about whether I think the system is working as it should be right now, no, I do not think it is, but I think the legislative changes we have brought about are having an effect.

Q408 **Julian Knight:** How long will that take, Minister? How long will it take



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until consumers can be certain that they are being treated fairly?

Margot James: By January next year all of those secondary sites—one of them has been absorbed into its parent site and will be operated on a footing approximately 15% above the original selling price. That is very much the right direction, very much what we want to see. The others, at the very least, will be complying with the Consumer Rights Act, making it very clear they are a secondary site, making it clear that the tickets have to have the original conditions on them, the original price, any restrictions, and also an end to drip pricing, which was one of the favourite activities of some of the companies and the source of great hardship to people who have saved up to go to a performance and then find when they get their bill it is three times what it was first presented to them on the site as.

Q409 **Julian Knight:** Just finally, do you believe that the likes of Trading Standards have the resources in place to go after these dodgy firms that are engaging in secondary ticket sales?

Margot James: We have given £15 million to National Trading Standards and Trading Standards Scotland to increase enforcement action. That increase is happening and there are prosecutions underway as we speak. Yes, obviously they could do even more with more resource but I think £15 million is a very good amount for them to be deploying.

Q410 **Ian C. Lucas:** Do you think we know enough about where these tickets come from when they are sold by businesses like Viagogo? Do you think we should focus more on the transference of tickets from promoters, artists and venues to sites like Viagogo?

Margot James: The supply chain of the tickets is a very important route to analyse to get to the bottom of what is going on in the market with all the vertical integration.

Q411 **Ian C. Lucas:** I had a quick look before one of the sessions here on a Viagogo site and none of the regulations that you mentioned about the face value being on there, none of that was there.

Margot James: No.

Q412 **Ian C. Lucas:** It seems they have snookered the law as well as this Committee, those businesses. I am slightly suspicious of some of the people in the business because they are getting the tickets from either the venues, the artists or the promoters on an industrial scale, not just from individual consumers.

Margot James: No. I think the automated software that was purchasing all the tickets for popular acts, as soon as they came on to the market from the primary seller, was a huge contributor to this industrial scale that you allude to. At least we have made that now illegal and it is a question of enforcement. We have armed Trading Standards to go after people who might be sourcing tickets in that way or indeed selling tickets



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in that way. There is more work to be done on the advertising side and the promotion of these sites.

If I might just come back on your question of how you have recently found these sites trying to sell tickets that do not comply with the consumer rights legislation, I am assured by the CMA's work this year that come January they will comply. They have been given a period of grace. From April, when the companies agreed to comply, they were given six months, I think it was, to work through their systems in order to comply. I know it sounds like an Alice in Wonderland world that somehow these companies are allowed all this time to comply with the law. It surprised me, so no doubt it will surprise all of us, but at least from January or February next year that should be in place and the CMA's rulings will have taken effect.

Q413 Ian C. Lucas: It just seems to me, picking up on one of the observations you made earlier, like an awful lot of money in the entertainment and music sector is being taken out of the system away from the artists by Viagogo to Switzerland or somewhere.

Margot James: Exactly, yes. I know. It is an outrage.

Q414 Ian C. Lucas: When we are talking about local venues, would it not be good if that money went to local venues?

Margot James: Exactly. I do not think we need to take it off the Royal Opera House.

Q415 Rebecca Pow: Just on the back of that, I welcome the legislation and it is a good move in the right direction but it has been raised to us by Ed Sheeran's promoter, Stuart Galbraith, who came here, that we should not get hooked up on bots and legislation. Should we not include in future legislation other methods that are being used to harvest these huge numbers of tickets, like multiple uses of computers that everybody goes on or multiple uses of credit cards? For one of their concerts, I think they spotted 10,000 multiple purchases were being made that had slipped under the radar. Is this something, Minister, that in the future you think we ought to be including?

Margot James: That begs the question about the issue of enforcement. I do not know when that was, the experience that you have just reported on there. That would now be against the law. I think I can safely say that because still you are using automated systems to purchase tickets. If you are co-ordinating mass purchasing in that way of more than the promoter's maximum per customer, then that could be against the law. Without knowing more detail I could not say for sure.

Q416 Rebecca Pow: It is obviously how to pick it up and who has the money to do the tracking, which is very laborious, by going through every ticket sale.



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Margot James: Yes, that is true, and that is where the painstaking efforts of organisations like National Trading Standards and proactive investigations should lead us, to the exposure of things like that, especially if we can have some co-operation from the artists as you must have had in that evidence. In principle it should be a good thing that some artists are refusing to accept tickets purchased from secondary sides. I say that with a note of caution because of course it is not always apparent to consumers that it is a secondary site that they have purchased the ticket from. Although in law now it has to be made apparent, historically it has not been apparent. In fact, companies have gone to great lengths to masquerade as a primary seller online. We are not there yet but there is something in artists saying, "No, tickets are for sale through either the primary seller or one of the fanbase sites like—not Twitex. I apologise, Chair, I have forgotten the name of it but there is an excellent site that exchanges tickets that fans cannot use anymore without anybody being ripped off. Ice is one. There is another one. Twickets. Nearly right.

Q417 **Rebecca Pow:** I wanted to change subject completely and just move on to talk about music and music education. We have had some stark statistics about the decline in centres offering music at A-level, GCSE music, and also music tech. In fact, the number of centres offering music tech fell by 31% since 2016, with the consequent drop of students coming through in all those. Mr Henley, this is obviously a concern because it is bound to impact on this large industry, jobs and careers, not to mention the cultural and emotional benefit we get from music.

Darren Henley: You are absolutely right. We know from recent DCMS figures that creative industries are now more than £100 billion a year contributor to our economy, one of the fastest-growing sectors. I wrote an independent review on music education and on cultural education for Government in 2010 and 2011 and I am absolutely of the opinion that music, dance, drama, art and design, all of those creative subjects, are a very important part of every young person's education and it is concerning when we see that falling away.

Q418 **Rebecca Pow:** Are you aware that we may have a lull and gap of people coming into this big industry as a result of this?

Darren Henley: It is concerning. Obviously the Arts Council is not responsible for education in the curriculum but what we are doing is working very hard with music education around the country. What we do for the Department for Education is that we are a fundholder for £75 million of music education hubs across the country, 120 of those hubs working in every area of the country with universal provision, but it is not the only thing. We need school music as well. I believe it should be part of the curriculum for every young person in every school. Obviously those schools that are not part of the national curriculum or not subject to the national curriculum can make their own decisions on a school by school basis.



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Q419 Rebecca Pow: Just before I go to the Minister about the education and the curriculum, on those music hubs and the £75 million, which is money you are getting from the Department for Education, there has been some criticism that there is no way of monitoring how good, bad or indifferent they are. Do you not think that ought to be part of the system?

Darren Henley: We collect data on every one of those hubs and we are working to improve them. We have invested our own money on top of the DfE money, to work in terms of peer group monitoring and to build quality measures into that system. I was involved in it before I came to the Arts Council. One of the things I can absolutely tell you is that all the way through that process the Arts Council has been talking about quality and not just quantity.

It is important that we have lots and lots of young people going through and in fact from the data we collect I can tell you exactly 711,241 pupils participated in whole class ensemble teaching through the music education hubs last year. They are working with just under nine out of ten schools in the country. They are working with schools and they are active in that, but it is important that we have within the school system qualified music teachers and classroom music teachers. That is part of the ecology overall.

From my point of view, I believe absolutely passionately that it is part of getting a good education. The three pillars of a good education should be numeracy, literacy and creativity and I see creativity as being absolutely central to every young person. Those are the sorts of values and skills that we are seeing employers want. Creativity works right across the piece. I am not suggesting that scientists are not creative and cannot have creativity, but those cultural education subjects like music, dance, drama, art and design are particularly strong and important in a young person's life.

Q420 Rebecca Pow: Minister, what are you doing to put pressure on the Department for Education to raise the importance of music and the creative side in education? It is a stark reality that numbers are falling.

Margot James: Yes, it is very concerning. We do have joint teams of officials between my Department and the Department for Education in a range of skill areas and creativity, including music, is one of them. There is a job to be done that is being done in terms of improving the consistency of the music hubs around the country. The National Plan for Music Education, which has been mentioned, is still in train, and there is, I think, £300 million of ringfenced money from DfE that has gone towards the funding of these music hubs between 2016 and 2020. There is also—again, my Department has input into this as well—a music and dance scheme on top of that, for which the budget is £118 million. That is also part of the National Plan for Music Education.

Q421 Rebecca Pow: Minister, it has been put to us that there is a bit of a policy clash around music education because we have had the



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consequences of the EBacc or local authority cut. Maybe that is undermining your ambitions in the National Plan for Music Education and these music hubs. Is there a conflict of interest going on here?

Margot James: I have heard that debate and I have heard both sides of it. I think there has been a problem of enough time and resource being committed in schools to the performing arts, not just music but drama and dance as well, and I very much agree with what we have heard already about how fundamental a part of anyone's general education an education in these performing arts is. It is vital.

I am not convinced that it is down to the introduction of the EBacc because the EBacc is still, I believe, five or six subjects. There are still discretionary subjects that young people will take. Most students seem to take nine, 10 or 11 GCSEs, of which five or six are EBacc. That gives quite a discretion outside and they should be encouraged to provide the training and education that is needed in these other subjects, particularly in the performing arts.

Q422 **Rebecca Pow:** How are we going to get the message across in Parliament when you have constantly been selling it, talking about STEM subjects, especially for women, and I realise how very important that is? Do you think we are not getting across the right message of the enormity of the industry, this music and creative industry, so that people are not realising that it could be as important as doing engineering, maths or chemistry?

Margot James: Yes, I totally agree with where you are coming from here and I prefer to look at it as STEAM rather than STEM, STEAM with the addition of arts as well as maths, science and technology. Arts is fundamental. If you talk to anybody in the tech industry, they will tell you that it is not all about coding, it is not all about the technical side. They need people who are creative in order to get to the next level of what technology can provide. It is fundamentally important and if the arts have fallen behind because schools have gone too far from one extreme to another, then we have to pull it back.

That is part of the thinking, if I could just finish, behind the National Plan for Music Education. It is to balance that and to make sure that even if top quality teaching is not available in every school, it is definitely available in every area, which is the hub concept.

Q423 **Rebecca Pow:** Just finally, would you welcome Ofsted having a requirement to introduce an arts and cultural activities requirement in their school assessment? Maybe that would help shift the balance.

Margot James: I am not close enough to the Ofsted reporting system and assessment system. You would have to get that from an Education Department official or Minister. We have a similar issue with digital education, which is improving but is not where we want it to be as yet. In fact I was positing the idea only the other day that perhaps Ofsted should include within its inspection criteria a school's digital capability culture



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and educational environment. The same may well be true for the arts as well, but without a more rounded knowledge of the Ofsted inspection regime I could not comment further.

- Q424 Ian C. Lucas:** My question is on that specific point. I should declare an interest first of all because I am married to a music teacher. On inspection, and I am pleased you raised it, the very well sourced advice that I have is that, not surprisingly, schools respond to incentives on inspections when the inspectors prioritise particular areas. In the past, things like perhaps digital but also music and other performing arts have not been prioritised and as a result the people who are leading school, head teachers, who are held to account on the basis of what Ofsted says, give less priority to performing arts. Certainly in my own experience there are far fewer performances at schools nowadays than 20 years ago or even 10 years ago. The fact is that our teachers are not commended or praised for holding these events. They get no credit for it.

I would like you to have this conversation with the Education Department, and obviously this is devolved and we need to have a conversation in Wales, because I do think we need to emphasise it much more than we have been doing in recent years.

Margot James: You make very good points there. Yes, I will definitely discuss this with my counterpart in the Department for Education.

- Q425 Jo Stevens:** Mr Henley, how long has your National Portfolio Fund been in existence?

Darren Henley: As the National Portfolio in its current format—I am just going back in history—this is the third iteration we have done from 2012 to 2015, and 2015 to 2018. It is the third round of National Portfolio.

- Q426 Jo Stevens:** I know my colleagues have talked about the funding going to opera and I am not going to go there. I love opera but even I opened my eyes wide when I saw that figure. Why only 8% on pop music?

Darren Henley: There are a number of funding streams we need to disaggregate here. I have been thinking about the 62% figure and I cannot make that figure add up. For example, our grant in aid is around £400 million. I think we need to go back and interrogate that figure.

We have project grants. These are smaller grants that are available to people and they are processed on an ongoing basis. Of those, within the music sector, 21% of them are going to pop music, 20% is going to classical music and 15% is going to jazz. We do have other ways of responding to people. It is not just through our National Portfolio. They tend to be more long-term and, by nature, larger organisations.

- Q427 Jo Stevens:** Going back to my question, why only 8% on pop music from that particular fund? What do you look at? For example, if I am putting in a request for funding and I am the Royal Opera House, I not only am getting a shedload of money from you, I am also getting huge amounts



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of corporate sponsorship and philanthropic donations. Do you take those into account when you decide how you are going to share that money out?

Darren Henley: Yes, we will look at the overall budget of an organisation and we will look at the proportions. There will be some small organisations where we are very much a majority funder. There will be other bigger organisations where we are a minority funder. Yes, we will look at all sorts of things. We will look at the social good that is done, we will look at balancing across art forms and we will look at geography as well. For example, one of the things we tried to do with our national lottery funding, and I announced this when I came into the organisation, is move to at least 75% of our money being spent outside London because we identified a geographical inequality there. We have achieved that number. That means that we are putting more money into more places.

One of the things we need to do though is to develop centres of production excellence around the country. That is something I am very keen to do. We are looking at organisations, we are looking at leadership and we are looking also to encourage more applications. One of the things I hear sometimes from people is, "The Arts Council has not given us any money", and it is not a facetious answer, it is a genuine question, "Have you actually asked us for it?" That is one of the things. We are also working with people to get more applications. One of the things I want to do—and I will absolutely undertake to do this to the Committee—is develop, as part of our role as a national development agency, a higher level of good applications from within the sector, this part of the music industry, and get more money so that we can get more money out to people.

Q428 Jo Stevens: I think you said right at the start of our session that you are now going out talking to people because you want grassroots music venues to make those applications to you, but is that not shutting the door after the horse has bolted from the stable? We have seen a decline in venues. The Minister referred to the figures, 35% over 10 years. There has been a problem for 10 years. Why only now are you actively going out and promoting what you have available so that people can make applications to save their live music venues?

Darren Henley: We will respond to applications. We, as a development agency, will work with people. This has only really come to the fore, I would say, in the last year or two, and we are now very much addressing it. It is something we are trying to see what we can do. It is a part of the sector that traditionally has not talked to us. It is a part of the sector, when there was not this issue, who did not come to the Arts Council for funding. One of the things there is—

Q429 Jo Stevens: Do you not feel there is a responsibility on you, as the Arts Council in England, to make it known that you have that funding available to those hard-to-reach parts of the sector?



Darren Henley: Absolutely, and we are doing exactly that. We are actively going into places where there has been, traditionally, under-representation, and we are talking to those people and working with them to get applicants in. The Elevate fund that I mentioned before, that was 40 organisations that we worked very closely with, who we believed could get into our National Portfolio and who had never had a funding relationship with us before. We worked on developing their leadership. For some of those organisations, we need to get them to a stage where they can be sensible recipients of public funding. It is important. If I was just writing blank cheques you would have me before you very quickly and I would be before the Public Accounts Committee. As the accounting officer for the Arts Council, I need to make sure every penny we spend, we do everything we can to make it as sensible a use of public money as possible. We want very much to get to those solutions.

This is why I think that developing some of the business, sustainability and leadership skills in this area is important to give it a long-term future. I want to be able to make a long-term strategic intervention that sorts the problem out, rather than a short-term series of sticking plasters that may mean we go into the same cycle of problems in the future. We will work and research very much to see what we can do with our money to make that intervention and make this a more sustainable sector.

Q430 **Jo Stevens:** Say in three or five years' time we look at the proportion of that fund that is going to opera, is going to pop music or is going to grassroots live music venues, do you think that 62% will be much lower?

Darren Henley: I do not recognise the 62% figure. I would need to understand what that is and I cannot work out what the number is. I am sure it is a percentage of something but I am not sure what it is. It is certainly not a percentage of our overall investment money.

Q431 **Jo Stevens:** What I have is that it is from your National Portfolio Fund. Pop music gets 8%, opera gets 62%, jazz gets 2%, world folk music, folk music, choirs and brass bands receive 1% each or less.

Darren Henley: That is only one of our funding streams. That does not include any of our development funds. One of the things we are doing is to bring people into that portfolio. We considerably grew the National Portfolio this time around. Those figures, I suspect—I would need to check them—may be retrospective. Our new National Portfolio has a much more wide and diverse set of younger organisations.

It is a slow process. When we are talking about investing multi-million pounds into an organisation, we have to be confident that that organisation can be in receipt of that money and that it is also using it for a wide range of things. Some of those things will be around developing space to be able to be used by young people and developing talent. What is the talent development pipeline that we can work with these organisations to do? We see that as part of that measurement. For us it is



not just about writing a cheque to prop up a business model that is not currently working.

One of the interesting things is that we are seeing some of the other changes. I have heard a lot of the problem is that alcohol sales have changed. Younger audiences are not buying as much alcohol as they were previously in those venues and that is changing the whole dynamic. They were not ever making the money on the music, they were making the money on the alcohol. That is interesting. When you layer in some of the problems we have heard around business rates as well, it is quite a complex situation.

The other thing is that I am not convinced there is ever a one-size-fits-all with everything. We know this kind of relationship with local authorities up and down the country where there are a challenges around local authority investment in culture. We know that the response has to be different depending on the local authority.

Q432 Jo Stevens: Mr Henley, this problem of live music venues has been going on for 10 years. This is my point. We can talk about what we are going to do in the future and we can talk about how you are going to make different approaches but have you not been sitting on your hands for the last 10 years while all these venues have been closing?

Darren Henley: No. We are working with venues. For example, at Band on the Wall in Manchester we have just put a major, multi-million-pound capital investment into to help them to rebuild. They have come into our portfolio and they have had a significant uplift because of the work they are doing. We are working and it will be one-by-one around the country as we build a relationship with them. They need to be able to apply to us. We will work with them to make sure that we have systems, processes and funds that are applicable to the needs they have, but it has to be a sensible use of public money.

Q433 Jo Stevens: I look forward to hearing about the successes of it, maybe next year or the year after. Minister, can I just ask you one final question? It is about what assessment you might have made of the potential for the creative industries tax relief to be extended to types of music other than orchestras.

Margot James: I have not made any assessment yet. I will check with our officials to see whether assessments have been made, jointly, possibly, with the Treasury, and write to the Chair if any have been. I do not see why we should not be looking at extending the tax reliefs to other forms of music.

Q434 Clive Efford: I wanted to go back on the education just to clarify one thing. Minister, you mentioned that your officials meet with Department of Education officials. Is that the board that the Government agreed to set up in response to Mr Henley's review?

Margot James: I do not—



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Q435 **Clive Efford:** Let me just say.

Margot James: I do not think so.

Clive Efford: A recommendation of Mr Henley's review was that there would be a new cross-Whitehall ministerial group between Culture and Education, and that should be set up. Was that set up? That is my question.

Margot James: I do not know whether it is was in direct response to that review but we definitely have—

Q436 **Clive Efford:** Do you know?

Margot James: Do you?

Darren Henley: It was set up but it ended at the start of this new parliamentary term.

Q437 **Clive Efford:** It does not meet anymore?

Darren Henley: No.

Margot James: There are other forums for meetings between DCMS and DfE officials on skills training and education.

Q438 **Clive Efford:** Also, in response to recommendation 3, there was a criticism from Mr Henley that there was no overarching strategy for commissioning and delivery of cultural education in England. It is slightly longer than that but that is the gist of it. The Department said, "We agree", and that the Departments would all work together and develop a national plan for culture education. Has that been done?

Margot James: We have certainly developed with the Department for Education a National Plan for Music Education. That is a close working relationship between DCMS officials and DfE officials. The answer to your question is certainly yes in terms of music education.

Q439 **Clive Efford:** When was that completed?

Margot James: It is ongoing.

Q440 **Clive Efford:** It is ongoing?

Margot James: Yes. It is a group that meet regularly. They developed the national plan for music. It is operating and they monitor it.

Q441 **Clive Efford:** In response to the questions earlier on from Ms Pow, would you say that the issue of EBacc is being looked at and its impact on music education?

Margot James: I am sure that EBacc comes up in the discussions. I tried to make the point that I do not think we should get fixated on one cause of what is a problem, I suspect, with many and several causes, not just the EBacc. I am sure EBacc comes up in those discussions but I do not think the problem is only associated with that issue.



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Q442 Clive Efford: I would just make the point that research we have had sight of from the University of Sussex was that 59% of respondents said the EBacc is having a negative impact on the provision and uptake of music in their school. Conversely, 2.5% said EBacc was having a positive impact. There has been an 8% drop in the number of children taking GCSE music in the last year. If reports are coming back that there is a problem here, I go back to the point, is the National Plan addressing this issue?

Margot James: If you would like me to report me back specifically on what the National Plan is doing in relation to the EBacc, I am very happy to do that. We can ask our officials, they can report and I can write to the Chair. I have heard this argument and we did discuss it earlier in your hearing. I did make the point that the EBacc consisted of five or six subjects and most young people take 10 or 11 GCSEs. There is discretion over and above the EBacc requirements. There may be other causes of the decline in young people taking music GCSE. I do not think it should all be laid at the door of the EBacc, which, let us not forget, has done a lot to boost academic performance in schools, which was sorely needed.

Q443 Clive Efford: If you are going to look at that, could I just draw your attention to the fact that it is also suggested that there is a drop in the number of schools that are offering music qualifications and there has also been a drop in the number of centres offering A level music, quite a substantial one. The number of students starting courses fell 15.4% since 2016. If you are writing to us about that, perhaps you could just look at the situation in education regarding GCSE, A level and the impact of EBacc.

Margot James: I think I already committed to doing that. There may be a fall in the number—you quote figures and I am sure there is a fall in the number of schools with their own music teacher offering music GCSE and A level. Possibly the response of Government to that fall has been the establishment, with ringfenced money, of the national hub strategy, so that even if you do not have a teacher in your own school there is a hub nearby. I wish it were possible to have a music teacher in every school and perhaps that should be our aim but at least the DfE is responding to the decline by having this hub strategy with ringfenced funding.

Q444 Chair: Sorry, if I may, I appreciate the Minister answering a number of questions that are very much at the limit of her brief. On these particular questions on music education it would be very helpful to have a response quite soon because the Committee will soon be taking evidence from a number of different Departmental Ministers, including the Schools Minister, as part of our inquiry on the social impact of culture and sport. I am sure that information could be highly relevant to that evidence session with them.

Margot James: Right. We will prioritise that particular response.

Chair: Thank you very much. Thank you. Clive Efford.



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Q445 **Clive Efford:** I was drawing to an end but I am quoting from a report that is on the website of the DCMS, not the Department for Education. I would just point that out.

Margot James: I think that underlines, if I may, Chair, the fact that we are working very closely with the DfE.

Chair: I think that concludes the Committee's questions. Thank you very much for your evidence this afternoon.

Margot James: Thank you very much indeed.