STOP THE SALE | 350 SAUCHIEHALL STREET

20 August 2026

FOR THE ATTENTION OF:
The Board of Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland

Waverley Court,
4 East Market St
Edinburgh EH8 8BG

COPIED TO: Màiri McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic

FROM: STUC Creative Industries Trade Unions Group: Scottish Artists Union; Bectu, a sector of Prospect; Equity; Musicians' Union; National Union of Journalists; Scottish Society of Playwrights; Society of Authors; and Writers' Guild of Great Britain.

RE: Trade Union Demands for the Future of 350 Sauchiehall Street

We are writing with deep concern about the future of 350 Sauchiehall Street and the absence of any public scrutiny as Creative Scotland decides what happens to the building which has been central to Glasgow's cultural life for more than fifty years. Creative Scotland has made choices that may permanently alter the ownership and purpose of 350 Sauchiehall Street venue. Yet the workers, artists, tenants and communities whose labour made it an important cultural space have had no meaningful opportunity to influence those choices. Public scrutiny and participation should be fundamental when the future of a publicly owned cultural asset is at stake.

Since the liquidation of the CCA on 30th January, former workers, trade unions, cultural organisations, community groups and MSPs have repeatedly called for workers to be involved in deciding what follows and for Creative Scotland's handling of the building to be open to public scrutiny. On 5 February during CEEAC Committee evidence session, Patrick Harvie MSP specifically asked Creative Scotland to involve former workers and explore the possibility of a worker-led operation of the building, and the Chief Executive undertook to raise this with the Board.

Despite those appeals, no formal route for worker or trade union involvement has been established. Public information has remained limited to a small number of brief announcements and recently published Board minutes, providing no clear account of which options were considered, how key decisions were reached or what will happen next.

1. Stop the Sale: Hold meaningful talks with workers and local communities

In brief announcement of 23 July, Creative Scotland invited expressions of interest from organisations seeking either ownership or a lease of 350 Sauchiehall Street. The decision to begin that process without prior consultation came as a shock to former workers, artists, tenants and the wider cultural community - people whose work and interests Creative Scotland exists to support. We understand that the submission period has ended on 12 August and that Creative Scotland intends to move quickly to the next stage. Yet no account has been given of what that stage will involve, who will assess the proposals, what criteria will be applied or how fundamentally different proposals will be compared. Despite sustained public concern and repeated calls for transparency, those most affected still have no formal role in the process.

We now call on the Board to suspend the process before any proposal is assessed and open a public consultation on the future of 350 Sauchiehall Street. The consultation must help determine how the building's cultural and public value will be protected.

Former CCA workers, trade unions, artists, tenants and local cultural and community organisations must be formally involved throughout the next phase. This must include defining the options under consideration; agreeing the eligibility requirements, assessment criteria; identifying the evidence applicants must provide; and determining the timetable, the composition of the independent selection panel and how final decisions will be reached. Worker, trade union and community representatives must also have a meaningful role in assessing and selecting proposals. The process must also be equitable in substance.

The next stage must begin from a commitment to keep the building in public or community ownership while securing a sustainable long-term operator. Finding an operator does not require the sale of the building. Creative Scotland must properly consider continued public ownership with a worker-led, community-led or not-for-profit operator; a secure long term lease; transfer to another public body; community ownership; and joint worker, community and public sector models.

We also call for Creative Scotland to show leadership by working actively with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to make these options viable. This should include identifying financial, technical and organisational support and exploring affordable long-term leasing, public transfer, community ownership and shared-governance arrangements. Respect for the sector requires every reasonable effort to secure the building's cultural future in public or community ownership.

2. Publish the evidence, the legal and public-finance basis for the process, and show how the Independent Review Recommendations are changing Creative Scotland's decision-making

The Independent Review of Creative Scotland was published in November 2025 and made 36 recommendations concerning the organisation's governance, transparency, financial planning and relationship with the cultural sector. Creative Scotland welcomed the recommendations and stated that it was "fully committed to delivering meaningful and impactful organisational change". **(Creative Scotland Annual Plan 2026/27**)

The process concerning 350 Sauchiehall Street has nevertheless continued without any public account of how the Review's findings have been considered. We are calling on Creative Scotland to explain how the following recommendations have been applied:

- **Recommendations 7, 12 and 32 concern sector participation, local knowledge and co-design.** Recommendation 7 says that Creative Scotland's long-term vision should be informed by partners across the sector; Recommendation 12 calls for regional relationships, local intelligence and co-design to be built into its governance; and Recommendation 32 calls for appropriate partners and sector-wide representation to feed into decision-making. In this process, those principles support a formal role for former CCA workers, trade unions, cultural organisations and community representatives while the ownership and operating options remain open. Inviting organisations to submit proposals is not a substitute for involving those affected in defining what the building should provide and how its public value should be assessed.
- **Recommendations 8, 19 and 20 concern scrutiny, transparency and communication.** Recommendation 8 calls for governance founded on transparency, strategic challenge and effective oversight. Recommendation 19 identifies scope for more information and decisions to be made publicly available. Recommendation 20 calls for stronger internal and external communication, for decisions and their rationale to be shared internally before public announcements and for greater consistency in communication. The March minute states that the Board considered "all the options", but does not identify them, the evidence used to compare them or the questions raised by Board members. Creative Scotland should also explain how the position presented to Parliament in February as a "blank sheet of paper" developed into the March decision to market the building, and why the wording of the March minutes were subsequently amended.

- **Recommendation 23 concerns strategic cultural-infrastructure planning.** The Review found no evidence that Creative Scotland had undertaken a comprehensive assessment of capital needs across the sector and called for a dedicated capital fund supported by a strategic assessment of infrastructure needs. The assessment of 350 Sauchiehall Street should therefore begin with a clear understanding of Glasgow's and Scotland's cultural-infrastructure needs and the contribution the building could make towards meeting them. Expressions of interest may identify possible uses and operators, but they do not establish what provision is needed, what public value could be lost through a change of ownership or which model would protect that value over the long term.
- **Recommendation 25 concerns long-term financial planning.** It calls for short-, medium- and long-term financial plans capable of supporting strategic decisions. The comparison between the available options should therefore extend beyond the immediate financial commitment offered by a bidder. It should consider the consequences of retention, lease, public or community transfer and sale, including future maintenance and investment, continuing public subsidy, the value of retaining public control, the cost of replacing cultural provision, the permitted use of any sale proceeds and any effect on Creative Scotland's future funding.
- **Recommendation 18 concerns the effective monitoring of Fair Work.** Where an existing or prospective operator receives, or may seek, Creative Scotland funding, its employment practices and arrangements for effective worker voice should be examined rather than accepted on the basis of policy statements alone. This should inform the due diligence undertaken on prospective operators and the enforceable terms of any future funding or operating agreement.

We call on Creative Scotland to provide full transparency about the evidence and advice on which this process is based. This must include the relevant Board papers, options appraisals, valuations and financial assumptions, together with the legal, property, procurement and public-finance advice relied upon. Creative Scotland must also disclose the advice received on the use of any sale proceeds, the implications for its future funding, and the identity and role of those advising the Board.

We also call for Creative Scotland to show how that evidence informed its decisions: which options were considered, how they were compared, who recommended the present course and who authorised each stage. Where information cannot lawfully be disclosed, Creative Scotland must identify what is being withheld and explain the specific legal basis. Commercial sensitivity must not be used as a general reason for withholding the basis of decisions concerning a publicly owned cultural asset.

3. Work with Trade Unions to expand Trade Union recognition across Multi Year Funded organisations

For many years, the creative-industry Trade Unions have engaged constructively with Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government to advance Fair Work across the sector, arguing that public funding must carry binding and enforceable Fair Work obligations and that workers must have an independent collective voice.

We are calling on Creative Scotland to make a formal commitment to work with the creative industries trade unions to expand trade union recognition across Multi-Year Funded organisations. A cultural sector that respects and values its workforce must ensure that all workers - including freelancers and others in the most precarious forms of employment, benefit from Fair Work protections.

Demonstrable compliance with all five dimensions of Fair Work- effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect - must be an ongoing condition of Multi-Year funded organisations. Evidence from our members, reinforced by the STUC's ***Freelance and Forgotten*** **report,** shows a persistent and significant gap between formal commitments to Fair Work and the reality experienced by artists and cultural workers, particularly freelancers. Compliance cannot therefore be established through organisational reporting of their commitment to the Fair Work alone: workers and trade unions must have a formal role in evidencing conditions, monitoring progress and identifying where intervention is needed. Funding agreements must set out the evidence required, how compliance will be improved and enforced, and clear expectations for trade-union access, recognition and collective bargaining.

These demands are central to our joint campaign, **No More Creative Standards: Cement Fair Work in the Art of Scotland**, calling for the full implementation of the Independent Review and Culture Fair Work Taskforce recommendations, including enforceable Fair Work conditionality across Multi-Year Funding. The future of 350 Sauchiehall Street is an immediate opportunity to put these commitments into practice.

As a public body Creative Scotland are major custodians of Scotland's cultural heritage and its future legacy. However, trust amongst the sectors workers and trade unions is it an all-time low, with many fearing that there is not enough being done to protect the future of a key stone, publicly owned cultural space in the heart of Scotland's largest city.

The seeds of doubt planted in the mind of workers in the sector follows the failures in implementing and adhering to key Fair Work principles, namely effective worker voice that led to and played a major part in the collapse of the CCA.

Despite this we still believe that there is a huge opportunity for Creative Scotland to engage with stakeholders across the cultural sector to establish a world leading arts and culture venue that can be enjoyed for a generation to come, but only if you can stop the sale, embed the recommendations and engage with Scotland’s trade unions.

We call on the Creative Scotland board to pause the process and engage with workers and communities meaningfully, ensuring that public interest at its heart, as the public has every right to expect.

Signed, the STUC Creative Industries Trade Unions Group

Scottish Artists Union
Tamara Rogovic, President

Equity
Marlene Curran, Officer for Scotland

Musicians’ Union
Caroline Sewell, Regional Organiser

Bectu
Paul McManus, Negotiations Officer for Scotland

Scottish Society of Playwrights
Kris Haddow, Chair

Writers’ Guild of Great Britain
Ellie Peers, General Secretary

Society of Authors UK

Anna Ganley, CEO