
SCREEN INDUSTRIES REPORT UPDATE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of current screen industry activity and development in Argyll and Bute.
- 1.2 Development of Screen Industries fits with government targets for developing the economy and sitting under Creative Industries, it is identified as one of the key growth sectors by Scottish Government. In April 2014 Creative Scotland (CS) published its 10-year Strategic Plan, Unlocking Potential and Embracing Ambition. This presented a shared vision for the arts, screen and creative industries and at its heart is a set of ambitions and priorities that has focused and informed the work of CS as well as their funding guidelines and decisions over the period 2014–2017. Following on from this, in October 2014, Creative Scotland published its Film Strategy 2014-17, detailing priorities for the film sector. The Film Strategy explains how CS works with the sector and public partners within the context of the ambitions, and recognises the opportunities that the screen industry sector play in growing the economy of Scotland. In December 2017, CS and its partners published the 'Screen Unit Collaborative Proposal' which sets out a more collaborative inter-agency approach on public sector support for Scotland's screen sector with services better aligned, easier to access and a proposed increase in budget of £10m. The proposal aims to deliver cultural, social and economic development of the sector which could directly benefit Argyll and Bute through increased production and inward investment within our area.
- 1.3 For the year January 2017 to January 2018, Argyll and Bute Council received 115 enquiries and there have been 48 productions filmed during the year. This has led to an estimated local production spend of **£1,354,434** and has more than doubled 2016's estimated local spend of £523,850 with two, currently confidential, high profile feature films, The Country Council TV series and a Netflix series being the main contributors. The screen industries have the potential to not only bring production spend to the local economy but to be a catalyst for the growth of the tourism industry in Argyll and Bute based on Argyll and Bute film productions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.4 That members consider the contents of this report and the positive economic impacts the screen industry has had on Argyll and Bute.
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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

**Environment Development and Infrastructure
Committee**

**DEVELOPMENT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

8 March 2018

SCREEN INDUSTRIES REPORT UPDATE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an overview of the work of Argyll and Bute Council in attracting inward investment into Argyll and Bute from the screen industries and the economic benefits that this brings to the area including the opportunities to promote and market the area.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That members consider the contents of this report and the positive economic impacts the screen industry has had on Argyll and Bute.

4.0 DETAILS

- 4.1 Development of Screen Industries fits with government targets for developing the economy and siting under Creative Industries, it is identified as one of the key growth sectors by Scottish Government. In April 2014 Creative Scotland (CS) published its 10-year Strategic Plan, Unlocking Potential and Embracing Ambition. This presented a shared vision for the arts, screen and creative industries and at its heart is a set of ambitions and priorities that has focused and informed the work of CS as well as their funding guidelines and decisions over the period 2014–2017. Following on from this, in October 2014, Creative Scotland published its Film Strategy 2014-17, detailing priorities for the film sector. The Film Strategy explains how CS works with the sector and public partners within the context of the ambitions, and recognises the opportunities that the screen industry sector play in growing the economy of Scotland. In December 2017, CS and its partners published the 'Screen Unit Collaborative Proposal' which sets out a more collaborative inter-agency approach on public sector support for Scotland's screen sector with services better aligned, easier to access and a proposed increase in budget of £10m. The proposal aims to deliver cultural, social and economic development of the sector which could directly benefit Argyll and Bute through increased production and inward investment within our area.

- 4.2 Creative Scotland facilitates a Screen Locations Network made up of mostly local authority film offices, including Argyll and Bute Council, who work to an agreed protocol. This protocol is based on providing information on locations, crew etc and facilitating productions in the area as well as promotion of locations. Creative Scotland Locations (CSL) work closely with The British Film Commission (BFC) and British Film Industry to promote production in the UK. International enquiries are fed into CSL, who in turn pass this on to local film offices. Many recent enquiries have included the opportunity to propose council owned land for unit bases and parking within Argyll and Bute, which brings the potential to raise revenue for the Council.
- 4.3 The Economic Development service has been providing a service to the screen industries since 1998 when the film service was initially part of the Scottish Highlands and Islands Film Commission. Over the last year we have been working hard to improve the service to the industry to maximise the economic benefit to the area and increase the awareness of what we can offer. Core to our service is providing confidential advice and support as a “one stop shop” to the industry through a single point of contact within the Economic Development section. The “one stop shop” supports the production’s needs in many ways including, liaising with other council departments (for road closures, access to land/property including car parks etc.), providing locations to film enquiries, landownership queries, local knowledge and connecting productions to local services such as Gaelic speakers and community groups.
- 4.4 For the year January 2017 to January 2018, Argyll and Bute Council received 115 enquiries and there have been 48 productions filmed during the year. This has led to an estimated local production spend of **£1,354,434** and has more than doubled 2016’s estimated local spend of £523,850 with two, currently confidential, high profile feature films, The Country Council TV series and a Netflix series being the main contributors. The screen industries have the potential to not only bring production spend to the local economy but to be a catalyst for the growth of the tourism industry in Argyll and Bute based on Argyll and Bute film productions.
- 4.5 Within the year this included:
- Filming on Islay for two commercials for **Johnnie Walker** and **Ardbeg** whisky consisting of a total 49 cast and crew for six days.
 - Two confidential high profile feature films due to be released this summer. This involved a total cast and crew of approximately 105 in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.
 - One confidential series, thought to be a potential Netflix favourite, choose Loch Lomond as a filming location last year with a confirmed 21 days of prep and filming. The budget of the Netflix series is estimated to be at 120 USD million. The first series is due to be released in November 2018.
 - The BBC and ITV both visited Argyll last year, comprising a total cast and crew of approximately 50. **The Loch**, a new drama filmed at Blairvadach for 9 days and was shown on ITV in July last year. **The Replacement**, a BBC thriller, filmed around Loch Lomond for two days. The two dramas were highly popular and received a great social media response when Argyll was featured as a location.

- 2017 was a popular year for car commercials, as **Peugeot** and **Ford** brands visited Argyll last year. Peugeot chose the Isle of Mull and Staffa as its backdrop whilst Ford filmed at Crinan Harbour and The Rest and Be Thankful.

Screen industries development meets with our Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) objective of 'Our Economy is Diverse and Thriving' as well as being an excellent opportunity to showcase Argyll and Bute to a national and, in some cases, international audience.

- 4.6 In 2017 the film service brand was developed further by creating a standalone website (www.filminargyll.co.uk). The website provides a platform to promote the work that we do within the industry, what services we offer (landownership queries, local knowledge, confidential support etc.), the wealth of potential locations (landscapes, buildings, castles, etc.) and to show overall what Argyll and Bute has to offer to a wider audience in a more visual way whilst continuing to build an awareness of Argyll and Bute as a film location to the industry and our customers. Since the website went live in November 2017 we have logged more than 900 page hits which have been driven to the website through promotional social media posts, blogs and newsletters. The service has also seen a substantial increase in the number of members of the public and community groups coming forward to register their property for filming, which has been instrumental in ensuring the service continues to deliver unique locations for projects/enquiries.
- 4.7 The desired outcome to deliver is that 'Argyll and Bute is a leading location for screen industry productions and film tourism'. Increased inward investment to Argyll and Bute through the screen industries could initially result in an instant boost to the local economy through local spend on accommodation, local services, parking and hire of film locations. However, longer term these benefits could have a positive impact on the wider economy in Argyll and Bute with an increase in visitors to the area attracted through film tourism. In order to successfully obtain these benefits the following objectives need to be proactively undertaken. The first three are in line with Creative Scotland Screen Locations Network;
- Attract production activity to Argyll and Bute – through marketing and promotion of the area, developing the skills of the screen industries sector, identifying and developing potential locations and providing incentives.
 - Facilitate production – through free provision of local knowledge and advice, contacts and expertise, and to supply appropriate information on locations, facilities and crew.
 - Work with Creative Scotland and other agencies, whether local or national, to facilitate production, and to act as the key contact for production in the area.
 - To attract film tourism – through the mapping of locations and development of trails, development of promotional material and working with tourism partners.
- 4.8 In order to continue to maximise the economic benefit from the screen sector, the service is also developing a further framework for charging for the use of Council owned property and land for film. Frequently we receive requests for filming on Council land, usually small scale productions such as news broadcasts and

students undertaking filming on pavements which can be accommodated with a simple notification to Roads and Amenity Services. However there has been a recent increase in demand from larger productions for Council owned property/land for filming purposes or to support filming. It is recognised that Argyll and Bute Council are not currently in a position to maximise the potential monetary benefits from such arrangements, therefore a report and proposed framework will come forward to committee in the spring for consideration.

- 4.9 To ensure a quality screen industries service within Argyll and Bute and to maximise on the economic benefit from an increase in the number of productions taking place, we have continued to improve the services that we offer. This includes continuing to develop the website and the support that we offer. In addition, we will continue to engage with industry representatives through benchmarking exercises, attending industry specific events and surveys to ensure the Film in Argyll service is comparable to industry standards and services offered in other regions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The value of screen industries within the UK and Argyll and Bute is increasing due, at least in part, to the UK Tax Relief. In addition, the screen unit collaborative proposal includes a further proposed £10m investment into the development and support for screen industries in 2018/19. To take advantage of this growth, we are looking to continue to develop our existing service through an enhanced online experience, engaging with our customers and developing a framework to support and protect our assets and to continue to proactively attract productions and to market the area for film tourism.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 6.1 | Policy | SOA1 The economy is diverse and thriving. EDAP: Cowal: Investment in Key Sectors and Business Support |
| 6.2 | Financial | None, from within existing departmental budget and through CSL. There is potential to generate income once an appropriate fee framework has been agreed. |
| 6.3 | Legal | None. |
| 6.4 | HR | None. |
| 6.5 | Equalities | None. |
| 6.6 | Risk | If we do not continue to respond to enquiries and develop our film office we could lose productions to other areas in Scotland and beyond. |
| 6.7 | Customer Services | Website allows greater interaction with customers. |

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure

Policy Lead – Cllr Aileen Morton

1st February 2018

For further information contact: Natasha Finlay, Technical Support Officer (01546 604873) or Audrey Martin, Transformation, Project and Regeneration Manager (01546 604180).