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**FILM IN ARGYLL – SCREEN INDUSTRIES UPDATE REPORT**

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 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.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**3.0 DETAILS**

- 3.1 Development of Screen Industries fits with UK government targets for developing the economy and has been 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. Following on from this, in October 2014, Screen Scotland published its Film Strategy 2014-17, detailing priorities for the film sector.
- 3.2 Following on from the Film Strategy, in August 2018, Screen Scotland was launched. It aims to grow the film and TV sector in Scotland. Screen Scotland sits within Creative Scotland and is a partnership with Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, with funding from the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. The Scottish Government is investing an additional £10m, bringing the total budget for screen sector in Scotland to £20m, in addition to the support and resources of the partner agencies. This includes a £3m per annum Broadcast Content Fund and additional funding for strategic partnerships with content commissioners.
- 3.3 Screen 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. Screen Scotland Locations (SSL) work closely with The British Film Commission (BFC) and British Film Industry to promote production in the UK. International enquiries are fed into SSL, who in turn pass this on to local film offices. In addition, in Feb 2019, the new BBC Scotland Channel was launched and a Memorandum of Understanding between Screen Scotland and the BBC agreed. This sets out a common purpose: to support a vibrant, world-class Scottish television industry that excels in the production of a diverse range of content, including ambitious projects which reflect Scottish culture and are enjoyed by audiences in Scotland, the UK and

internationally. All the above frameworks, recent developments and funding could directly benefit Argyll and Bute through increased production and inward investment within our area.

- 3.4 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. Screen industries development meets with our Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan objective of ‘Our Economy is Diverse and our new Economic Strategy objective under the “Place and People” outcome “Creating a vibrant, cultural experience and strong creative industry” as well as being an excellent opportunity to showcase Argyll and Bute to a national and, in some cases, international audience.
- 3.5 For the year January 2018 to January 2019, Argyll and Bute Council received 124 enquiries and there have been 40 productions filmed during the year. This has led to an estimated local production spend of **£1,088,500** and marks 2018 as the first year for the area to host and accommodate over 200 crew/personnel for a 6 week feature film entirely shot in Argyll and Bute. 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.
- 3.6 Within the year 2018 productions included:
- Filming on the Mull of Kintyre for **Stella McCartney’s** autumn fashion line over three days. The shoot also enlisted help from the Kintyre School Pipe Band which was led by the original piper from Paul McCartney’s “Mull of Kintyre”.
  - Filming at Inveraray Castle and car park for the fifth heat of **Sky Arts Landscape Artist of the Year**, which was eventually voted the best location of the series. The council also received an income of over £1,000 for the commercial use of the car park over the 3 day shoot.
  - Arrochar featured on one of the most watched BBC 1’s thrillers of 2018, **The Cry** as a beauty spot. The Council received over £500 in commercial filming fees for the use of the car park for the 1 day shoot.
  - **Love me to Death** (*now known as Then Came You*) was the area’s first 6 week shoot to be shot entirely in Argyll and Bute and to accommodate over 200 cast and crew at Drimsynie Estate. The romantic feature film received a great social media response and engagement from the community to ensure the production was welcomed to the area.
  - 2018 was again another popular year for car commercials, as **Skoda** chose the Inveraray and the Lochgoilhead area as backdrops for a joint campaign with **We Love Cycling**.
- 3.7 In 2017 the film service brand was developed further by creating a standalone website ([www.filminargyll.co.uk](http://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. The website has performed well in 2018 with more than 2,000 page hits. Much of this traffic was driven to the website through promotional social media posts on the council's corporate Facebook page and marketing material distributed at conferences such as FOCUS 2018. 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. Looking forward into 2019/20 there is a plan to further develop a "Movie Map" for the website which will drive film tourism and further meet the objective "Creating a world class tourism destination" under the Smart Growth outcome of the Economic Strategy.

- 3.8 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 Screen 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 Screen 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.
- 3.9 In 2018, a charging schedule pilot was implemented to make better use of the Council's assets for the purpose of commercial filming. It was important when developing the schedule and associated charging model that we provided our customers with a structured, transparent process when dealing with filming on our assets. This ensured we were providing a fair approach to charging, avoided uncertainty and delay with enquiries whilst continuing to provide a film friendly service. A report is due to be considered at the Policy and Resources Committee in August this year to review the implementation of the charges, however it has been noted that the Council has received **£7,805** so far in commercial filming fees and statutory charges since its implementation. It should be noted that the industry continues to be agreeable to the charges and enquiries have continued to increase since its implementation.
- 3.10 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. 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.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The value of screen industries within the UK and Argyll and Bute continues to increase due, at least in part, to the UK Tax Relief and Netflix as a highly popular and successful streaming service. In addition, the recently established Screen Scotland has invested £20m 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 continue to proactively attract productions and to market the area for film tourism.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

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|-----|------------------------|----------|--|
| 5.1 | Policy                 |          | ABOIP1 The economy is diverse and thriving. EDAP: Cowal: Investment in Key Sectors and Business Support: Economic Strategy: Creating a vibrant, cultural experience and strong creative industry |
| 5.2 | Financial              |          | None   |
| 5.3 | Legal                  |          | None.  |
| 5.4 | HR                     |          | None.  |
| 5.5 | Equalities/Fairer Duty | Scotland | None.  |
| 5.6 | Risk                   |          | If we do not continue to respond to enquiries and develop our film office we could lose productions and income to other areas in Scotland and beyond.  |
| 5.7 | Customer Services      |          | Website allows greater interaction with customers.   |

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11<sup>th</sup> April 2019

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