

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

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update of the work of the Council’s Film in Argyll service in attracting inward investment into Argyll and Bute from the screen industries and the economic benefits that this brings to the local economy, including the opportunities to promote and market the area. The reporting period has previously been annually, however due to the pandemic and the resulting impact on the sector the last update to Committee was March 2021. This report therefore covers the period January 2021 – January 2023.
- 1.2 For the period January 2021 to January 2023, Argyll and Bute Council received **229 film enquiries** and there were **89 productions** filmed during this period. This has led to an estimated local production spend of **£1.1M**. Compared to the 2020 estimated local production spend of **£310,000**, the upwards trend over the last 2 years are a direct reflection of the continued recovery from the pandemic. It should be noted that the substantial increase in the number of enquiries and productions filming in the area is due to the backlog of filming which could not take place in 2020 due to pandemic.
- 1.3 In 2018, a charging schedule 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. For 2021 and 2022, the Council has received **£22,576** in total for commercial filming fees. This total does not include statutory charges such as temporary traffic orders and parking fees related to film and TV work.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

That members consider the contents of this report, including the fact that the sector is still recovering from the impact of the pandemic, and the continued positive economic impact the screen industry has on Argyll and Bute.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 This report provides an update 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. The reporting period has previously been annually however due to the pandemic and the resulting impact on the sector the last update to Committee was March 2021. This report therefore covers the period January 2021 – January 2023.

2.2 The screen industries sector, like many other sectors, has been significantly affected by the pandemic. Whilst recovery from the pandemic is still ongoing in 2022 for production, Scotland has continued to expand its opportunities for the sector with the opening of a number of studios including Pioneer Film Studios, the largest studio campus in Scotland. Some of these facilities are located near Glasgow and will attract major productions to Scotland whereby Argyll and Bute could potentially benefit from any on location filming which may be required out-with the studio space.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 That members consider the contents of this report, including the fact that the sector is still recovering from the impact of the pandemic, and the continued positive economic impact the screen industry has on Argyll and Bute.

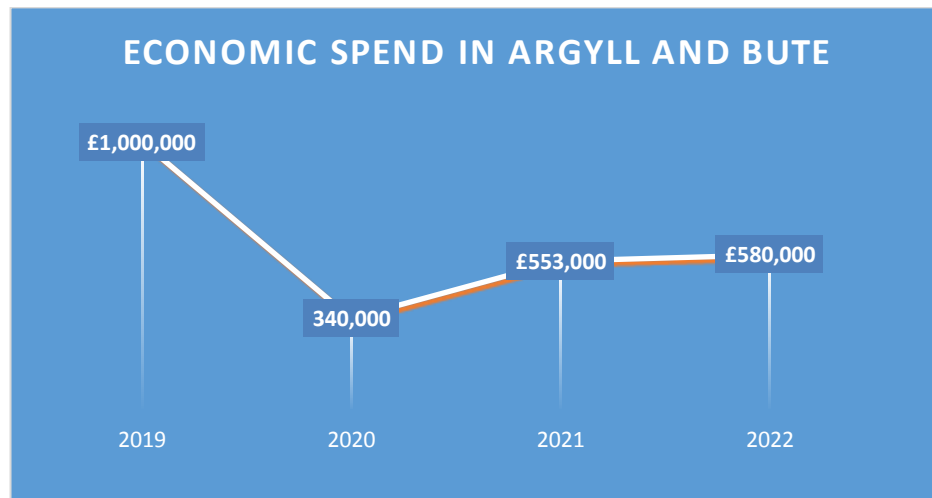
**4.0 DETAIL**

4.1 Development of screen industries is a key growth sector for both UK and Scottish Government and forms part of the creative industries that is strongly represented in Argyll and Bute. Screen Scotland has the overarching role of growing the sector in Scotland in partnership with a range of organisations, including the enterprise agencies amongst others. In recognition of the key role the screen industries plays in the economy, both the UK and Scottish Governments disburse a number of funds to grow indigenous talent and attract productions, including providing tax incentives aimed at productions which represent significant investment in the UK.

- 4.2 This growth and the potential for further growth was highlighted in a recently published report, 'The Economic Value of the Screen Sector in Scotland'. This stated that the screen sector GVA in 2019 was £567.6 million with a potential for this to grow to £1 billion by 2030. This report was for the year 2019, which was pre-pandemic and prior to the current number of studios that Scotland has. The GVA figures in the report are made up of development and production, tv broadcast, distribution, exhibitions and festivals, talent and skills development, infrastructure and screen tourism. A further report detailing the economic value for the year 2021 is expected to be published towards the end of 2023.
- 4.3 The key economic benefits of the screen industries for Argyll and Bute include income from hire of locations and ancillary services such as accommodation providers, local caterers etc. Economic impact also includes: the growth of indigenous production companies and freelancers; supporting cinemas in the area (there are more independent cinemas in Argyll and Bute than anywhere else in Scotland); film festivals of which there are currently two, Dunoon Film Festival and Sea Change on Tiree; film tourism and the publicity and subsequent visits to the area as a result of productions which feature Argyll and Bute.
- 4.4 More recent screen industries developments have included the opening of a number of studio spaces in Scotland which the industry had long called for in order to attract longer form and larger scale productions. The most recent studio to open is Pioneer Film Studios based in Stepps, outside of Glasgow, and is the largest studio in Scotland. The opening of this studio has the potential for more location shoots in Argyll and Bute as a result of the accessibility of Argyll and Bute to the central belt.
- 4.5 To assist in growing the sector and the associated benefits, Argyll and Bute Council Transformation, Projects and Regeneration officers work with Screen Scotland. Screen Scotland facilitates a Screen Locations Network made up of mostly local authority film officers, 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 CSL, who in turn pass this on to local film offices. All the above frameworks, recent developments and funding could directly benefit Argyll and Bute through increased production and inward investment within our area.
- 4.6 Core to the Council's Film in Argyll service is providing confidential advice and support as a "one stop shop" to the industry through a single point of contact ([www.filminargyll.co.uk](http://www.filminargyll.co.uk)). 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.

- 4.7 Delivering this screen industries development meets with our Outcome Improvement Plan objective of ‘Our Economy is Diverse and Thriving, our Economic Strategy objective under the “Place and People” outcome “Creating a vibrant, cultural experience and strong creative industry”. In response to the pandemic, Argyll and Bute’s Economic Recovery Plan published in August 2020 also highlights council action to “Continue to support cultural activity including film and TV locational work” under the key Scottish Government theme, Place and People. It is also an excellent opportunity to showcase Argyll and Bute to a national and, in some cases, international audience.
- 4.8 The screen industries continues to 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. Liaising with Visit Scotland, Film in Argyll has supported film tourism by supporting the “Set in Scotland” guide which provides an overview of film locations throughout Scotland and highlights many high profile productions that have filmed in the area over the years. As part of Argyll and Bute’s economic recovery process from the coronavirus pandemic, the Development and Economic Growth service will continue to work across council services and with key partners to promote filming in Argyll and Bute.
- 4.9 For the period January 2021 to January 2023, Argyll and Bute Council received **229 film enquiries** and there were **89 productions** filmed during this period. This has led to an estimated local production spend of **£1.1M**. Compared to the 2020 estimated local production spend of **£310,000**, the upwards trend over the last 2 years are a direct reflection of the continued recovery from the pandemic. It should be noted that the substantial increase in the number of enquiries and productions filming in the area is due to the backlog of filming which could not take place in 2020 due to pandemic. The breakdown can be seen from the graph (**Fig.1**) below which provides figures for the last three years, however industry figures vary year on year and can change dramatically due to the fact that one large budget production can significantly increase figures in one year.
- 4.10 The type of enquiries and productions coming into Argyll and Bute have changed compared to pre pandemic years, whereby Film in Argyll is seeing a decrease in unscripted TV small scale productions, and an increase in larger productions with a cast and crew of 30+ with a higher budget. There could be various factors responsible this change, but it is highly likely that the work and opportunities that are being created at a Scottish level around creating more studio space in the central belt, is having a positive economic impact on surrounding areas. Film in Argyll continues to work closely with our key partners in Screen Scotland and the Scottish Location Network to champion Scotland as a top location for filming.

Fig 1. The Sectors Impact and Recovery of Economic Spend in Argyll and Bute.



#### 4.11

Within the period Jan 21 – Jan 23 productions included:

- Oban Airport featured as a key location in the new **Top Gear** series, where Paddy, Freddie and Chris battle to prove which vehicle is the best off roader. Filming took place in January 21 and the Council received an income for the use of the location.
- **Float**, a six part BBC Drama series filmed in the former Helensburgh Swimming Pool over the course of two weeks in April 21 and provided a substantial income for Live Argyll and Argyll and Bute Council.
- **Murder Island**, a six part series written by Scottish novelist Ian Rankin filmed on the Isle of Gigha, saw contestants become detectives in a specially-curated crime thriller. Filming took place in May 21, shot over 6 weeks the cast and crew worked with the Gigha Heritage Trust and used Gigha's only hotel for accommodation and catering for the duration of the shoot. The shoot also generated income for the council for the use of accommodation and council owned land.
- **Star Wars, Andor** created for Disney, filmed in and around Cruachan Mountain in June 21. Cruachan's owners, Drax, made a series of charitable donations after Disney used the site. Funds went towards a new vehicle for Oban Mountain Rescue Team and creating a rural defibrillator network with community councils. A donation was made to support the ongoing maintenance and restoration of St Conans Kirk in Lochawe.
- Inveraray featured as a key location in a **high profile TV series**, where the lower main street was transformed into another time period. Filming took place over the course of 4 days in September 22.
- **The End We Start From**, a BBC Drama film based on a book by

Megan Hunter, shot at Kilmory Beach and Craignish Pier. Filming took place in September 22 over the course of 2 weeks and Lochgilphead was used as a unit base for the production during this period.

- **Ranger Hamza and the Ramblers** from CBeebies went on an eco quest to Oban, Connel and the Isle of Mull in April. The footage can be found across three episodes on BBC iplayer.
- Dunoon, Loch Lomond and Strathlachlan, Strachur all featured as locations in **Martin Compston's Scottish Fling**. Filming took place in the spring 22 and the council received an income for this.

4.12 In 2018, a charging schedule 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. For 2021 and 2022, the Council has received **£22,576** in total for commercial filming fees. This total does not include statutory charges such as temporary traffic orders and parking fees related to film.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The screen industries continues to 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. As part of Argyll and Bute's economic recovery process from the pandemic, the Film in Argyll service will continue to work across council services and with key partners such as Screen Scotland and the Scottish Locations Network to take advantage of the newly developed film studios and ensure the sector continues to grow in Argyll and Bute.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy - Supports Outcome Improvement Plan, Economic Strategy and Economic Recovery Plan under Place and People theme.

6.2 Financial - Provides an annual income for Development and Economic Growth that allows the continued development of the Film in Argyll service.

6.3 Legal - Film Location Agreements are put in place when filming takes place on Council owned land or assets.

6.4 HR – None.

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics.

- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – N/A.
- 6.5.3 Islands – Filming takes place across the area.
- 6.6 Climate Change – None.
- 6.7 Risk - If we do not continue to respond to enquiries and develop “Film in Argyll  
“we could lose productions to other areas in Scotland and beyond as well as  
the resulting economic benefit to the area.
- 6.8 Customer Service – None.

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10<sup>th</sup> December 2022

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