

## SCREEN INDUSTRIES REPORT

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of current screen industry activity and key actions for further development of screen industries in Argyll and Bute.

Development of Screen Industries fits with government targets for developing the economy and is identified as a growth sector. This is part fuelled by the introduction of a 25% tax relief for film and high end TV production. In addition, The Review of the Film Sector in Scotland, January 2014 and a March 2014 feasibility study into location space for film and TV production favours a purpose built studio with a west coast location in or around Glasgow. A call for investment partners has gone out. This studio will bring benefits across Scotland, and is approximately one hour from Argyll and Bute.

For the year Jan 2013 to Dec 2013, Argyll and Bute received 167 enquiries from productions. Twenty-seven productions filmed in the area which resulted in £454,300 being spent in the local economy. 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 based on film or simply through advertising the area.

To ensure a proactive, quality screen industries service within Argyll and Bute it is proposed that we increase the strategic importance and activity of our film location office.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That members note the contents of this report, the proposed action plan and the potential for the Argyll and the Isles Film Office to continue to develop a proactive approach to attracting inward investment from the industry.

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**2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report provides an overview of current screen industry activity and key actions for further development of screen industries in Argyll and Bute.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That members note the contents of this report, the proposed action plan and the potential for the Argyll and the Isles Film Office to continue to develop a proactive approach to attracting inward investment from the industry.

**4.0 DETAILS**

- 4.1 Development of Screen Industries fits with government targets for developing the economy and is identified as a growth sector. This includes the introduction of a 25% tax relief for film and high end TV production. Value and demand for industry facilities has been demonstrated by maximum capacity booking of all studios across the UK, leading to the transformation of a warehouse in Cumbernauld into a studio where the US Sony Pictures Television TV series Outlander has filmed for one year with a budget of circa £50m. A second series of 16 episodes has recently been confirmed. The Review of the Film Sector in Scotland was published in January 2014 and a March 2014 feasibility study into location space for film and TV production favours a purpose built studio with a west coast location in or around Glasgow. The call for public/private partners will close imminently. This studio will bring benefits across Scotland, and is approximately one hour from Argyll and Bute.
- 4.2 The overarching body within Scotland for attracting screen productions and co-ordinating Scotland-wide activity is the National Film Commission for Scotland, Creative Scotland Locations (CSL). This body facilitates a Screen Locations Network made up of mostly local authority film offices, including Argyll and Bute, 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. 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 been for studio space. In addition, CSL have a recce fund of £80,000pa for Scotland, with a ceiling of £3,000 per recce. This is available to productions considering Argyll and Bute as a location.

- 4.3 For the year Jan 2013 to Dec 2013, Argyll and Bute received 167 enquiries from productions, which compares favourably to other areas within Scotland. Twenty-seven productions filmed in the area which resulted in £454,300 being spent in the local economy. In the last six months we have introduced average spend figures per type of production across Scotland and this is attached for information. Screen enquiries, particularly for feature films, can take a number of years to become actual productions. The feature film, Valhalla Rising, was filmed in Glen Kinglass in August 2008 but first contacted our film office in February 2006. Recent films including Brave and Under the Skin, and adverts such as Bank of Scotland and McDonalds, 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 based on film or simply through advertising the area. Screen industries development meets with our Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) objective of 'Our Economy is Diverse and Thriving'. In addition, the Strategic Action Plan for Culture, Heritage and Arts in Argyll and Bute, March 2014, aims to identify how the film sector can be an economic and tourism generator for the area.
- 4.4 Where previously the Council was part of Highlands and Islands Film Commission and the large majority of enquiries came through the Commission and were then disseminated to the relevant partners, we have recently developed a standalone data enquiry system and branding for Argyll and Bute which is accessed via the Councils Filming web page (<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/business-and-trade/filming-argyll-and-bute>). This allows us to promote our area more effectively and to be able to provide a more prescriptive service to the screen industries.
- 4.5 The outcome is that 'Argyll and Bute is a leading location for screen industry productions and film tourism'. To increase inward investment to Argyll and Bute through the screen industries 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.

- 4.5 To ensure a quality screen industries service within Argyll and Bute it is proposed that we increase the strategic importance and activity of our film location office. This includes continuing to develop the web pages and the service that we offer. In addition we will also consider the pros and cons of establishing an Argyll and the Isles Film Commission and whether this would result in a better quality of service.
- 4.6 A draft action plan has been developed to take forward the objectives listed above with timelines. Milestones for this are;
- September 2014 - Filming in Argyll and Bute location facility and crew search data base (based on MovieSite software) goes live
  - November 2014 – Promotion at European Film Commission or other event.
  - December 2014 - Action Plan agreed
  - February 2015 – Marketing Plan agreed

## 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. There are potential opportunities arising from the proposed Scottish film studio in Glasgow, only one hour from Argyll and Bute. To take advantage of this growth, we are looking to build on our existing film office offering 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.   |
| 6.2 | Financial         | None, from within existing departmental budget and through CSL and Visit Scotland contributions.                  |
| 6.3 | Legal             | None.   |
| 6.4 | HR                | None.   |
| 6.5 | Equalities        | None.   |
| 6.6 | Risk              | If we do not continue to 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 Ellen Morton**

1<sup>st</sup> October 2014

**For further information contact:** Arlene Cullum, Snr Development Officer (01436 658727) or Audrey Martin, Projects and Renewables Manager (01546 604180).

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Film in Argyll – Action Plan DRAFT 04 09 14

Appendix 2 – Moviesite Report 2013

Appendix 3 – Film Commission Update Returns Jan-Oct 2014

Appendix 4 - REVISED CE 2013-14 Average Spend Figures (Revised July 2013)