

Meeting: Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee

Date: 4 December 2018

Title: Supporting the future of the North East England's Screen Industry

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Service: Environment, Housing and Leisure

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

To present Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee with an overview of the screen industry in North East England and the steps being taken to support its development.

2. Recommendations

The committee is invited support the continued development of the North East's screen industry and suggest areas for consideration in relation to the presentation.

3. Details

3.1 Background

The UK's screen industry is flourishing. Currently centred in and around London and the South East, with significant recent growth in Manchester and Leeds where there are growing capacity issues and skills shortages.

'Film and high-end TV alone attracted over £2bn of inward investment to the UK in 2017, creating employment, boosting tourism and bringing global talent to the UK. There is enormous potential to go further'. (HMG Industrial Strategy 2018).

The TV and Film Sector in the North East is currently one of the smallest in the UK; less than 2% of TV produced in the UK is made in North East England. Inward investment from high end TV and film has held steady for the last 5 years with an average of £10m GVA per year compared to industry national growth of 120%. Without investment, the North East TV and film sector will fall further and further behind the rest of the U.K.

3.2 Ambition

To move the region's screen industry from surviving to thriving and champion a real step change to growing the sector.

3.3 The ask

Local authorities are asked to help Northern Film and Media (NFM) grow the region's film and TV sector via three key initiatives:

1. **A Great North Screen Fund** – £4m to match £4m private investor for a new, regional, evergreen £8m commercial content investment fund to attract incoming UK and international film and TV productions.
2. **NFM Academy Talent Development Programme** – We will develop emerging talent from the region's FE colleges and universities in the creative industries, to train them for work in the North East's film and TV industry.
3. **NFM Professional Development Scale up activities** – Financial support for NFM to provide professionals and SMEs with a bespoke annual programme of activities, and to offer grant funding of £2,000 - £5,000 per TV/film company to support growth.

3.4 Great North Screen Fund. NFM manages the Production Service for film and TV productions shooting anywhere in the North East of England. We promote the region, advising productions on locations, assisting them to find regional, professional crew and facilities, connecting them with local and regional contacts, and accommodation and helping to ensure that filming goes smoothly.

We want to attract more productions to film in region, we want them to stay longer and spend more and we want to ensure more work opportunities for regional crew and NFM Academy work placements. The North East does not have a production fund and has struggled to compete against neighbouring regions who do.

Figures show that between 2009 and 2015 Yorkshire Film & TV Industries generated an annual turnover of £424m across 590 creative businesses (an increase of 247% against the UK average of 118%) with GVA increasing 242% in comparison to UK average growth of 120%.

3.5 NFM Academy Talent Development Programme. There is a national screen industry skills shortage. The Future Film Skills Report commissioned by the BFI in June 2017 identified the need for 10,000 more people working in film, and the need to provide training for 30,000 jobs over the next five years.

With funding, NFM can deliver an annual programme of Academy services to work with 200 emerging professionals and include Careers introduction to industry, boot-camps, workshops and seminars and networking socials with guest speakers. This programme would support the 15% of our region's FE and HE student population who are studying creative subjects, to obtain jobs in the region's film and TV industries on graduation.

3.6 Professional Development Scale up activities. The North East has nearly 300 crew and over 48 production companies. With funding, NFM will provide individual support for professionals and SMEs via a bespoke annual programme of activities which deliver skills training, workshops, conferences and networking events, where they can build stronger links with leading industry individuals and larger indie production companies in the wider north and nationally. This work received ERDF funding to September 2018 and NFM is exploring the current ERDF calls for future funding potential.

4. What are the next steps?

- All 12 local authorities to confirm their support for developing the region's screen sector.

- Secure £4m of public sector funding to match the £4m private sector funding for a regional Great North Screen Fund launched 2019.
- Secure the delivery of NFM Academy services to support our new and emerging talent from the region's FE colleges and universities, to work on TV and film productions in our region.
- Secure the delivery of NFM's professional development support services and provide grant funding to enable indigenous film and TV companies to create new work, and scale up.
- Ensure that the creative industries are recognised in the North East's Local Industrial Strategy.