

HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND FILM COMMISSION OPERATIONAL PLAN 2011/12

The Film Commission is part of the Planning and Development Service of The Highland Council. It is marketed as "The Highlands of Scotland Film Commission", and has its own logo and branding. The Gaelic title of the Commission "*Coimisean Fioin Gàidhealtachd na h-Alba*" is incorporated as appropriate in marketing materials and on the website www.scotfilm.org.

BACKGROUND

One of the recommendations of the "Scotland on Screen" report commissioned by Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and published in April 1996, was that a film liaison office be set up to cover the Highlands and Islands. Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the six local authorities in the Highlands and Islands area subsequently established a Highlands and Islands wide film liaison service known and marketed as the Scottish Highlands and Islands Film Commission (SHIFC).

Following a review of SHIFC 2009/2010 and the decision of several partner Councils to cut funding contributions it was decided that SHIFC could no longer operate as a network and that each of the partners should revert to marketing their own areas.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Commission is to build on the success of SHIFC by operating a film liaison service for the Highland Council area which will equal or surpass the film liaison services available elsewhere in Britain, and indeed, internationally, in order to maintain the world-wide reputation of the Scottish Highlands as a prime location for film and television related activity.

Although, for ease of reference, the operation is referred to generally, as a "film liaison service" and a "film commission", the services offered are available to both the still and moving image industries and related new media sectors. Film commission is a well known term worldwide.

The role of the Commission is to encourage inward investment from film-and television-related activity by making it as simple and efficient as possible for production companies to operate in the geographical area covered by The Highland Council. In practical terms this entails:

- Providing free, comprehensive, timely and confidential information to film-makers about locations and film-related supplies and services in the Highlands.
- Liaising between film-makers and appropriate contacts within the Council, in relevant public organisations and in the private sector in order to facilitate access for film-makers to the locations, supplies and services they require when filming in the Highlands.
- Marketing Highland locations to film-makers in conjunction with Creative Scotland and other key agencies involved with the Sector as appropriate.

- Contributing to the development of film and television-related activity in the Highlands.

ACTIVITIES FOR 2011/12

Making Highland more film friendly

Website / database development

Speed of response is crucial when dealing with enquiries from film companies, and methods of communication must therefore be quick and effective. The Commission has been at the cutting edge of e-communication having been at the forefront of the development of a bespoke website based database - Moviesite which is now used by film offices and agencies throughout the UK as well as internationally. This comprises three interlinked databases:

- a locations library of over 40,000 images
- a production guide/business directory of film personnel and services
- a contact database which provides statistics about companies and the types of projects they shot in the area as well as how much the production spends in the area.

A priority for 2011/12 is to improve the quality of information by updating and upgrading the databases and working with the database developers to introduce new applications and explore opportunities for income generation. This work includes:

- Continuing to audit and upgrade the photographic library for the Highland Council area.
- Updating the production guide on a regular basis. This includes having the guide audited by industry personnel.
- Reviving the idea of a Film Crews Friendly Accommodation scheme working in partnership with local destination marketing organisations to create an accommodation guide as part of Moviesite.
- Redesigning and updating the www.scotfilm.org website.
- Providing training for staff on Moviesite version two.

Business seminar

The Commission will organise a seminar for accommodation operators, landowners or other appropriate businesses to alert them to the opportunities available from film production in the Highlands.

Recce Support

The Commission will also provide limited and discretionary recce support funding and appropriate practical assistance to producers and locations managers undertaking research for major projects. Where possible this will be match funded by Creative Scotland.

Marketing & Promotion

The Commission undertakes marketing / Promotional activity so as to:

- Raise awareness in the film industry of the range and quality of locations and film-related supplies and services available in the Highland Council area.
- Promote the film liaison services offered by the Commission.

It is important that the Commission maintains and develops its profile. In a time of recession and a weak pound it is particularly important that SHIFC seeks to work with partners who encourage inward investment from emerging markets and markets which regard the UK as a cost effective location. Marketing activities have already evolved to address the different markets and geographic segments of the film and TV industry. During 2011/12 the Commission will work further to identify other key market segments and their characteristics, and seek to develop relevant marketing activities, undertaking where possible, joint marketing with Creative Scotland and the Scottish Locations Network.

E-marketing

The Commission will be concentrating promotional activity on e-marketing and the promotion of the updated website and new logo which reflects the change of name of the Film Commission.

Print

The Commission will not produce a printed locations brochure, however, through Moviesite, the Commission has the ability to produce e-brochures which can be customised for individual clients. As the web address will not change then the Commission can still distribute existing stocks of pens, keyrings and other branded items.

Advertising

Given the tight budgetary situation paid advertising will be limited to smaller adverts or entries in key industry publications. For example:

Kays

The Knowledge

Broadcast Magazine

Regional Film and Video

Production Magazine

Screen International

Film Bang

Exhibitions and sales calls programme

The Commission will have a reduced presence at key film exhibitions. Where possible attendance will be as part of a presence co-ordinated by Creative Scotland e.g. at the Cannes Film Festival. However, Creative Scotland do not consider the Commercials market a priority but this is a significant market for the Highlands. The Commission therefore plan to attend an appropriate event on an independent basis. Exhibition/festival attendance planned includes:

- Cannes Film Festival, May 2011 (as a Creative Scotland partner)
- Edinburgh Film Festival, June 2011 (as a Scottish Locations Network partner)
- A Commercials Event, October 2011 (TBC)

Familiarisation Visits

The Commission will organise at least one familiarisation visit for key UK and/or overseas locations managers. This will be linked to the business seminar being organised.

Partnership working with Creative Scotland and the Scottish Locations Network

As the national Screen agency Creative Scotland offer a range of services to film producers. To avoid duplication of effort and ensure a quality response to all enquiries the Commission will reach an agreement with Creative Scotland over our respective roles and responsibilities and agree a protocol for handling enquiries.

Staff will be given the opportunity to participate in appropriate training days organised by Creative Scotland.

Creative Scotland's services include the operation of a locations database accessible through the website www.scottishscreenlocations.com. The Commission will work with Creative Scotland to ensure good Highland coverage and that Highland content is up to date.

The Commission will also continue involvement with the Scottish Locations Network and wherever possible will attend network meetings and participate in national initiatives.