Finance Committee

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Bill

Submission from the UK Film Council

I am writing on behalf of the UK Film Council to say that we read the above document with great interest. The UK Film Council is the government's lead agency for film in the UK ensuring that the economic, cultural and educational aspects of film are effectively represented at home and abroad. The UK Film Council works throughout the UK in partnership with the National Screen Agencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and with the nine regional screen agencies in England.

One of our key partners in Scotland is Scottish Screen. In addition we support the Edinburgh International Film Festival and have awarded grants to ensure a network of twelve digital screens showing a wide range of films in cinemas across Scotland. We have also supported numerous film productions in Scotland including *Summer*, *Red Road* and *Rounding Up Donkeys*.

Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for the Creative Media, is another of the UK Film Council's key partners and we would expect that in developing the creative economy and the skills of creative practitioners, Creative Scotland would also positively engage with it. Other UK Film Council funded organisations such the British Film Institute and First Light Movies also support a range of initiatives in Scotland.

The UK Film Council welcomes sharing its views on the establishment of Creative Scotland as a new arts body replacing the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen and whether this will help simplify and improve the landscape of Scottish public bodies.

Scotland’s film and television production sector has a unique and current combination of opportunities to significantly grow and develop over the new few years. Through specific actions, Scotland can seize those opportunities and increase the volume and value of film and television production from Scotland. This will generate more jobs, wealth, investment, exports and competitiveness; it will also increase the representation of Scotland, its stories and talent to audiences at home and internationally, assisting in defining Scotland’s identity to itself and to the rest of the world. In order to seize the opportunities for film and moving image to continue to develop and flourish within Creative Scotland, the agency needs retain a focus on:

- Improving Scotland's competitive position at UK and international levels;
- Building the scale of businesses and skills in Scotland in particular by using digital media to innovate;
- Attracting business and business activity to Scotland;
- Working with Skillset and other SSCs to build the talent base;
• Promoting understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of film culture, including but not limited to;
  o Strengthening the network of Cultural Cinema Hubs that help ensure access to film culture Scotland wide,
  o Supporting the excellent film and media education work that Scottish Screen has developed, in particular initiatives such as MIE Brechin initiative.

Film is very well placed to benefit from the mix of general functions that Creative Scotland will have (Part 3 27 General Functions of Creative Scotland). The UK Film Council believes that a critical success factor for the new agency will be in ensuring that the unique aspects of film are protected by responding to both the cultural and economic importance of film and moving image development, production, distribution, exhibition and education. We are reassured that Creative Scotland will maintain film and media expertise and strongly urge that Creative Scotland continues to build on the excellent work of the Scottish Screen staff.

UK Film Council believes that any national film agency should provide strategic vision and investment – industrial and cultural – across the sector, otherwise huge opportunities will be missed. I very much look forward to finding out more about Creative Scotland and its plans for film and moving image.

Tim Cagney
Head of UK Partnerships
UK Film Council