Filming in England

Regional Filming Hubs Action Plan Report:

Unlocking England's Film & High-End Television Production Potential

September 2023

This comprehensive report presents the strategic initiatives developed in response to the identified priorities by Filming in England's Regional Filming Hubs. By harnessing our collective strengths, we aim to propel England's film & TV industry to new heights, creating opportunities and unlocking its full potential. Explore this report to discover the key priorities and actions that will shape the future of England's film and HETV production landscape.







Introduction

Hayley Armstrong Head of Production Services

Creative England's Filming in England team is an integral part of the Creative UK Group, proudly funded by the British Film Institute and endorsed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, and are dedicated to maximising and supporting feature film and high-end television (HETV) production in the English Regions. Our objective is to ensure that all communities across the nation can reap the benefits brought by a thriving film and TV industry.

England boasts a rich history, diverse landscapes, worldclass production crews, and state-of-the-art facilities, making it one of the most enticing destinations for the global film and TV industry. Within the English Regions, four major production hubs contribute significantly to this reputation: Bristol in the South West, Manchester and Liverpool in the North West, Leeds in Yorkshire, and the South East. With the unprecedented global demand for content, this presents unparalleled opportunities for all areas across the English Regions.

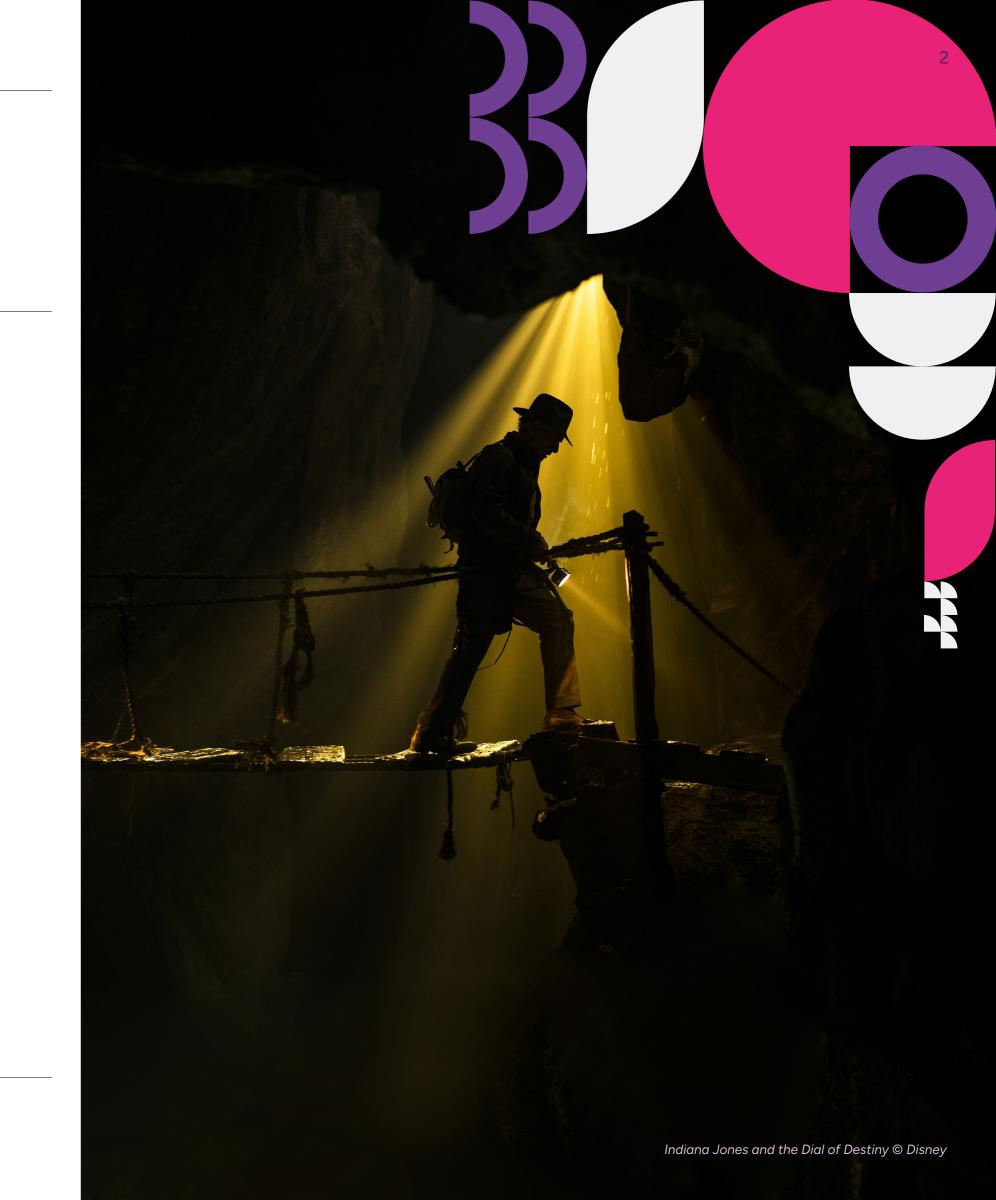
In November 2022, we introduced the Regional Filming Hubs, comprising of local partners who bring their knowledge, experience, and vision to strengthen England's film-friendly production environment and to maximise the creation of world-class film and HETV across the nation. All Four Regional Filming Hubs – East & South-

East Hub, South-West Hub, Midlands Hub and North Hub – serve as crucial eyes on the ground, providing real time data and key insights regarding critical crew requirements, location and production challenges, studio availability and opportunity for sector growth.

This Action Plan Report addresses the initial six key priorities identified by the Regional Filming Hubs. It will guide Filming in England's delivery of support and advocacy on both regional and national levels, working in collaboration with our delivery partners to effect positive change and leverage our combined strengths to maximise England's full potential as a world-class destination for film and HETV production.

To ensure regular assessment of addressing priorities, the Regional Filming Hubs will foster ongoing dialogue with key local organisations, which play a vital role in the facilitation of production in their respective areas, as well as engage with wider industry. We extend sincere gratitude to all local partners and Film Offices involved in the Regional Filming Hubs, who have shared valuable intelligence, best practice, and growth opportunities. Industry feedback and insights continue to shape the Regional Filming Hubs' direction, collectively ensuring that England retains its reputation as a world-class filming destination and remains a driving force for growth in the Regions.





The Importance of a Film-Friendly Environment

The UK screen sector has experienced significant growth in recent years, fuelled by generous tax reliefs, rapid expansion of world class studio and build space capacity, and investment in cultivating a fully diverse workforce to support the huge demand for content creation. At the core of these crucial elements lies the compelling necessity for a film-friendly, connected production environment. This environment serves not only to optimise the combined impact of these elements, but also supports filmmakers' content creation,

ensures operational efficiency, and cultivates positive relationships with local communities and stakeholders.

This fundamental objective forms the very essence of the Regional Filming Hubs, strategically designed to embody these principles. The hubs assume a pivotal role in realising our overarching objective, which is articulated in this Action Plan by outlining a roadmap that translates this vision into reality.

UK Screen Sector Tax Relief Incentives

Talent & Skills

Film-Friendly Environment

Infrastructure

Figure: Key levers in maximising production

Filming in England



Setting the Scene

Across England, an increasing number of regions are witnessing the remarkable advantages that film and TV productions can bestow upon local communities. These benefits encompass a wide spectrum, including substantial economic impact, the generation of employment opportunities, and the allure of screen tourism.

To maximise the effectiveness of all our endeavours in driving industry growth, it is crucial to forge strong partnerships and foster collaboration among local, regional, and national stakeholders. The Filming in England Partnership plays a pivotal role in convening a diverse network of members who collectively contribute towards achieving this goal.



North Regional Filming Hub

(North East, North West & Yorkshire)



Studio **Build Space**



Studio Build Spaces in Development



Film Offices

Local Authority Filming in England Partnership Members



£56m*

Est. Spend on Location (2022-2023)



City Film Offices



40 Filming in England Partnership members



£2.3m BFI Skills Cluster to support skills development & training



Over 500,000 sq. ft Stage and build space



74*

Number of Feature Film & TV Drama on Location (2022-2023)



Regional Film Offices



Regional Production Funds

Yorkshire Content Fund, North East Production Fund and Liverpool City Region Production Fund



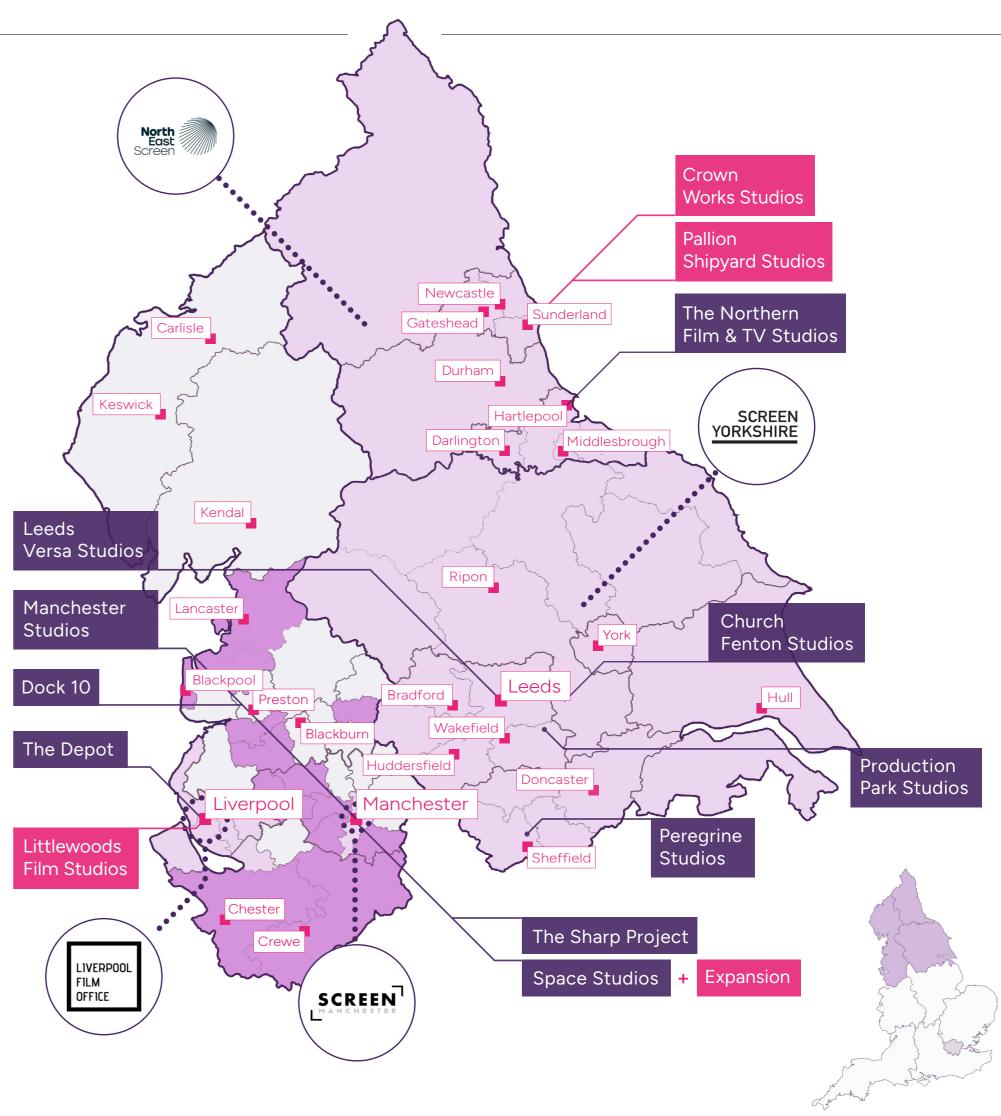
of the UK's 7 Production Hubs — Manchester/Liverpool & Leeds



major studio developments / expansions in planning

^{*}Data Source: Production activity data supplied by productions, Film Office partners, local authorities and national organisations.





Midlands Regional Filming Hub

(East & West Midlands)



Studio **Build Space**



Studio Build Spaces in Development



Local Authority Filming in England Partnership Members



£10m*

Est. on Location Spend (2022-2023)



City Film Office



Filming in England Partnership members



£1m BFI Skills Cluster to support skills development & training



26*

Number of Feature Film & TV Drama on Location (2022-2023)



Regional Production Fund West Midlands Production Fund



Regional industry body Create Central for the West Midlands



studio developments in planning



Developing Production Hub — Birmingham

*Data Source: Production activity data supplied by productions,

Film Office partners, local authorities and national organisations.

Filming in England

SCREEN YORKSHIRE **MARV Stunt Training Studios** Mansfield FLM Stoke-on-Trent Shrewsbury Wolverhampton Coventry Northampton Sky Blue Fly By Nite Studios Studios



South West Regional Filming Hub



St in

Studio Build Spaces in Development



Local Authority Filming in England Partnership Members



£16m*
Est. on Location Spend (2022-2023)



2 City Film Offices



35Filming in England
Partnership members



Over 190,000 sq. ft stage and build space



40*Number of Feature Film & TV Dramas on Location



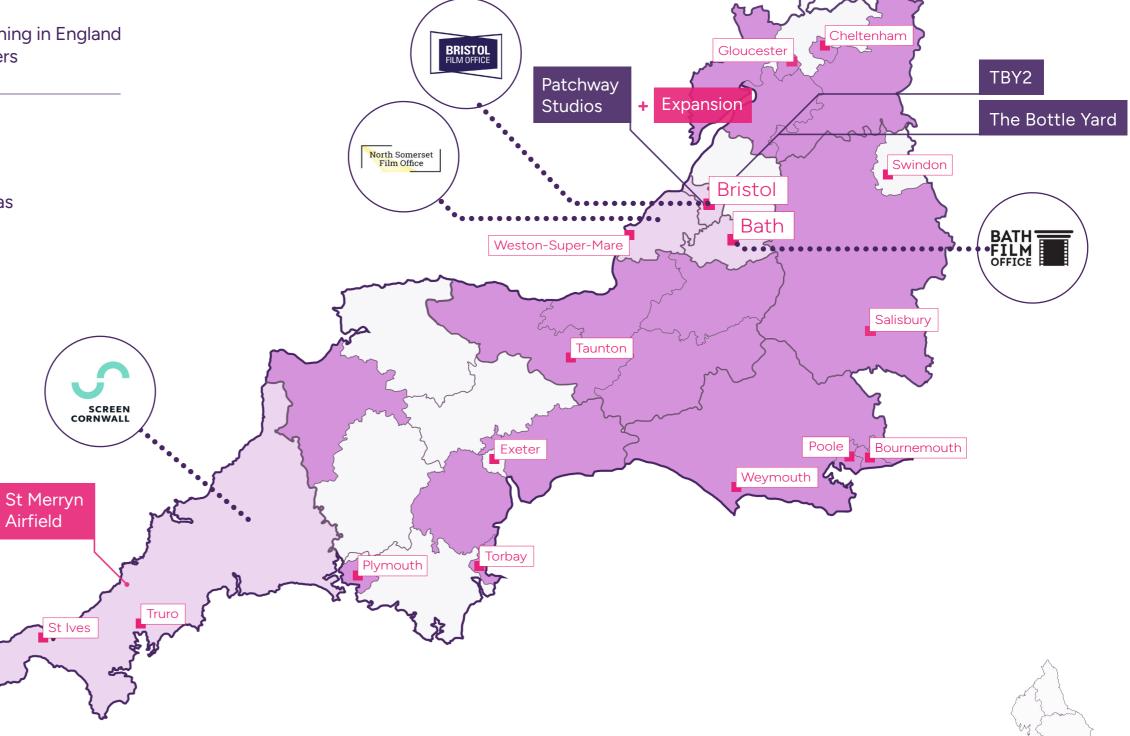
County Film Office



of the UK's 7 Production Hubs — Bristol



Studio developments in planning



*Data Source: Production activity data supplied by productions, Film Office partners, local authorities and national organisations.



East & South East Regional Filming Hub



Build Space



Studio Build Spaces in Development



Local Authority Filming in England Partnership Members



£55m*

Est. on Location Spend (2022-2023)



BFI Skills Clusters to support skills development & training in Berkshire (£0.6m) and Metro London (£2.2m)



65 Filming in England Partnership members



Over 3m sq. ft stage and build space



157*

Number of Feature Film & TV Dramas on Location



County Film Offices



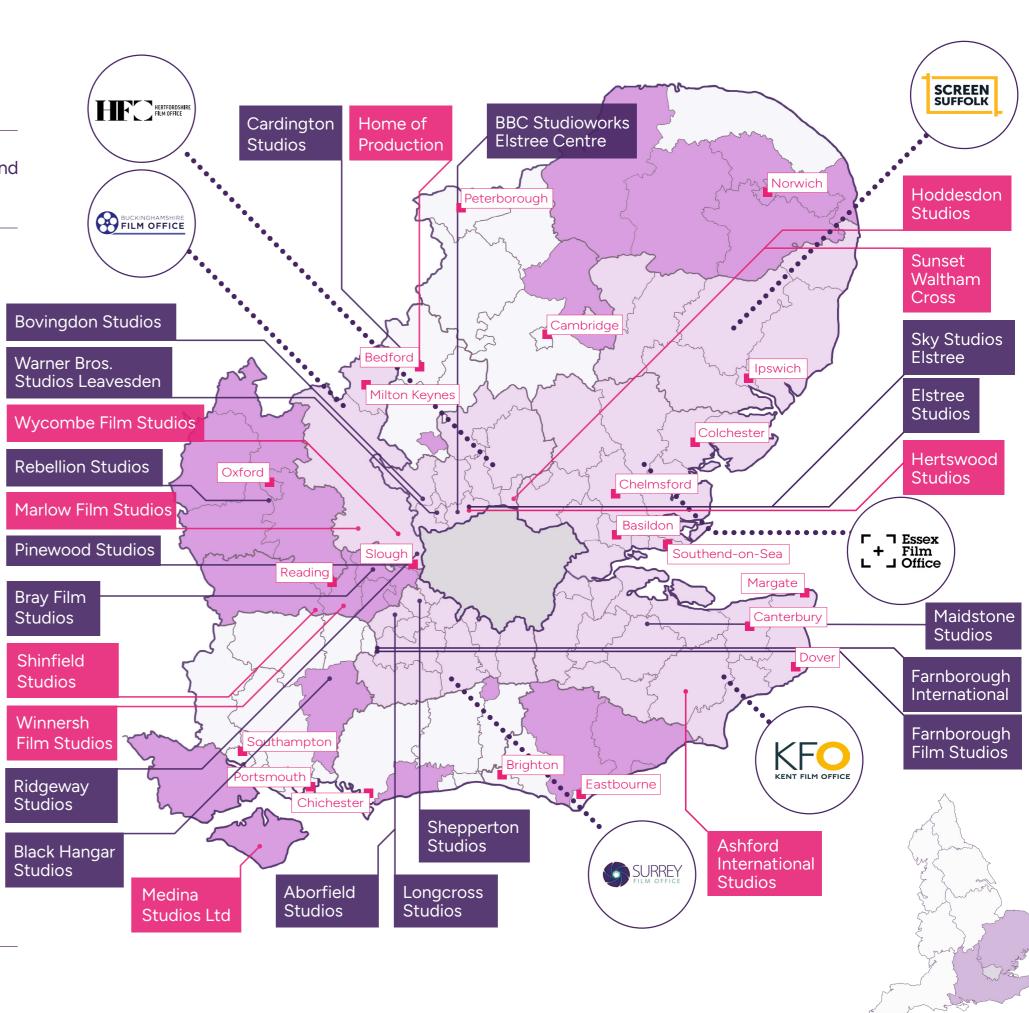
of the UK's 7 Production Hubs - South East



Major studio developments / expansions in planning

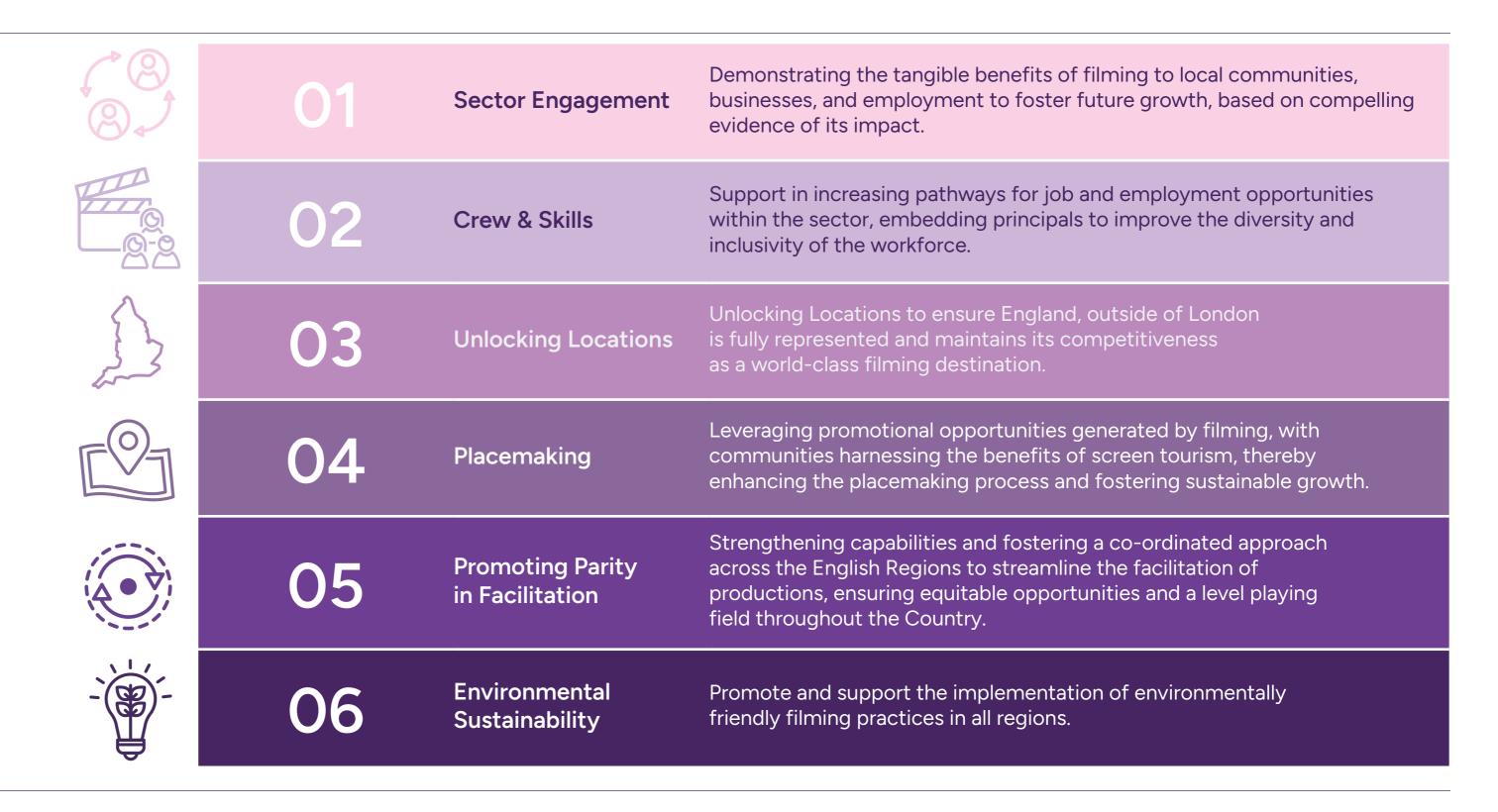
^{*}Data Source: Production activity data supplied by productions, Film Office partners, local authorities and national organisations.





Key Priorities and Rationale

The Regional Filming Hubs have identified six key priorities that demand action and support. The rationale behind each priority is explained in detail below. These priorities will be discussed and reviewed during quarterly Regional Hub meetings to provide updates and determine whether acceleration is needed based on feedback. The Action Plan and Outcomes in section 5 outlines the desired outcomes from each priority and specifies the necessary actions to be taken.





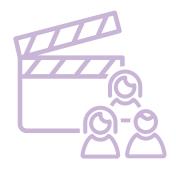
Key Priorities and Rationale

01 Sector Engagement

Demonstrating the tangible benefits of filming to local communities, businesses, and employment to foster future growth, based on compelling evidence of its impact.

During the Regional Filming Hub meetings, feedback from local authority partners consistently highlighted the challenges they face in justifying the allocation of resources and time towards facilitating productions. There was unanimous agreement that greater support in demonstrating the benefits of productions is crucial to garner support from higher level stakeholders and key decision makers. While local teams are no stranger to this challenge, it has been further exasperated in recent years due to budget constraints and limited resources. It is imperative to make concerted efforts not only to effectively communicate the evidence of positive impacts that communities can derive from the screen sector but also to assist local partners in tracking and gathering such evidence.





Support in increasing pathways for job and employment opportunities within the sector, embedding principals to improve the diversity and inclusivity of the workforce.

The industry-wide skills shortage poses a significant threat to industry growth, but this shortage is not limited to the UK, it is a global concern affecting all areas of the industry. To address this issue, Filming in England supported the BFI Skills Review, which highlighted the need for an additional 20,000 crew members to meet production demands. One of the proposed solutions is to allocate 1% of all production budgets to training initiatives. Another important recommendation from the Review is to develop clear pathways and increase opportunities for individuals entering the industry.

In response to the BFI Skills Review, an initial six BFI Skills Clusters have been awarded a total of £8.1m over three years that will see locally based partners identifying skills shortages and gaps and coordinate skills and training opportunities for production crew in their area. Four of the six clusters will benefit the English Regions, building local skills bases across the North, the West Midlands and the Counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Surrey in the South East.

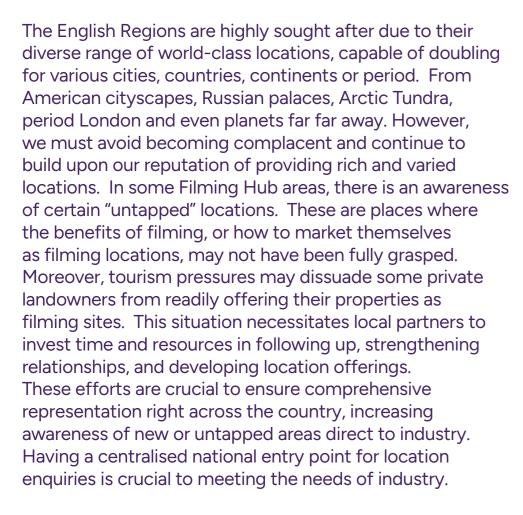
All Regional Filming Hubs recognised the value in promoting new pathways into the industry, specifically by engaging with local education institutions and facilitating connections with incoming productions. However, additional support is needed to strengthen these connections and foster collaboration between industry and local higher and further education. While Filming in England's role sits within job creation and does not directly extend to education or training, feedback indicated that further support is necessary to bridge the gap between education and industry on a local level to increase pathways into the industry and ultimately grow opportunities to wider groups and increase representation within the workforce.



Key Priorities and Rationale

03 Unlocking Locations

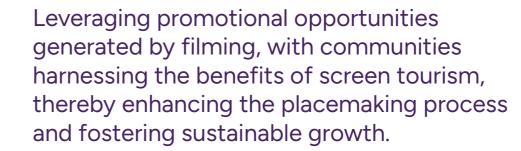
Unlocking Locations to ensure England, outside of London is fully represented and maintains its competitiveness as a world-class filming destination.

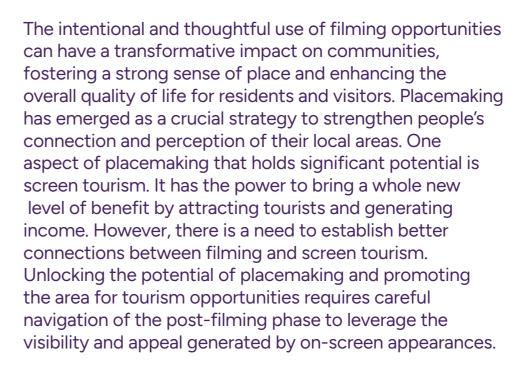


Filming in England strives to assist local partners in developing their own directories of USP filming locations via the National database, making the process easy and hassle-free. This way, local knowledge can be leveraged in providing a comprehensive package of locations across the country. This approach enhances the awareness of both

new and untapped areas, directly benefiting the industry.

04 Placemaking











Key Priorities and Rationale

O5 Promoting Parity in Facilitation



Strengthening capabilities and fostering a co-ordinated approach across the English Regions to streamline the facilitation of productions, ensuring equitable opportunities and a level playing field throughout the Country.

06 Environmental Sustainability



Promote and support the implementation of environmentally friendly filming practices in all regions.

Feedback from various areas highlights the added difficulty of managing filming enquiries and requests, which are often considered an unofficial "bolt-on" responsibility. This results in being squeezed alongside everyday duties that may take precedence. Consequently, maintaining a consistent, film-friendly approach becomes challenging. Filming in England recognises the importance of addressing this issue and seeks to develop specific initiatives and provide guidance assets to alleviate the heavy lifting by local authorities and enable a more efficient and accommodating environment for film and TV productions across the country.

Our local partners play a crucial role in driving sustainable practices within the film & TV industry on a local level. As the industry focuses on reducing its carbon footprint, Filming in England continues to collaborate with the BFI, British Film Commission, and the devolved Nations to prioritise this key principle.

In 2020, the BFI and Albert released the report 'A Screen New Deal', which outlined a plan for more sustainable production. The plan addressed areas such as production materials, energy and water usage, studio buildings and facilities, studio sides and locations, and production planning. Following this, the Screen New Deal Pilot was launched in partnership with Creative Wales and Ffilm Cymru Wales, providing a practical pathway for scripted film, HETV drama, and studio-based productions to achieve zero-caron, zero-waste future. The insights and knowledge gained from this pilot will be shared with our Regional Filming Hubs.

Currently, various production hubs and major cities have implemented clean air zones and developed their own policies concerning elements required by productions. As part of our ongoing efforts, we aim to share best practices and develop additional tools to encourage our local partners and industry to adopt sustainable practices. Through collective action and collaboration, we can make positive strides towards a greener future in the film & TV industry, promoting sustainability across the country.



Action Plan and Outcomes Priority 1: Sector Engagement

Demonstrating the tangible benefits of filming to local communities, businesses, and employment to foster future growth, based on compelling evidence of its impact.



Outcome	Rationale	Action	Progress
1.A Economic Impact Toolkit for Local Authorities	An evidence-based approach in demonstrating the positive economic impacts and job creation can strengthen the case for advocating for allocation of resources and capacity within Local Authorities	Measuring Matters Toolkit was launched in May 2023.	
		 Encourage consistent use and gather feedback from users for a quarterly review to identify potential adjustments. 	
		 Discuss the Toolkit and its progress in the upcoming RFH meetings scheduled later in 2023. 	
1.B Accessible resource providing top level sector statistics and facts	To secure buy-in from key stakeholders, local authorities require easily accessible resources that offer concise statistics and facts on the benefits of filming.	Accessible resource to be created which brings together top-level facts and stats that can effectively showcase the advantages of being film-friendly.	



Action Plan and Outcomes Priority 2: Crew & Skills

Support in increasing pathways for **job and employment opportunities** within the sector, embedding principals to **improve the diversity and inclusivity** of the workforce.



Rationale	Action	Progress
Local Authorities want to bridge the gap between industry and education on a local level to provide opportunities for their residents and young people.	Filming in England to do a preliminary mapping of engaged educational organisations and encourage feed in from Regional Filming Hub members and wider Creative UK to discover who are currently engaged across the regions and where there are gaps.	
To support the rationale above.	 Filming in England to create the explainer pack for such organisations to understand the opportunities, to include those organisations who are already engaged with Creative UK and RFH members. 	
	 We will liaise directly with regions that have BFI Skill Cluster funding to ensure we bring value not duplication of efforts. 	
	 Explainer pack drafted for educational organisations shared with RFH members for feedback. 	
To improve representation within the industry we must work with wider organisations that can support those from underrepresented groups, opening pathways to increase opportunities for more people.	 Filming in England to map out organisations for outreach plan, aiming to engage with more industry organisations that we can work with and signpost to and vice versa so we can ensure more people are aware of the resources and opportunities available. 	
	Filming in England will lead this outreach and engagement plan.	
There is a growing eagerness in various areas to tackle unemployment and facilitate the entry of your people and new trainees into the workforce.	 A guidance asset drafted to include local training initiatives and support via National Skills Body, Screen Skills and the Regional BFI Skills Clusters. 	
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Action Plan and Outcomes Priority 3: Unlocking Locations

Unlocking Locations to ensure England, outside of London is fully represented and maintains its competitiveness as a world-class filming destination.



Outcome	Rationale	Action	Progress
3.A Enable affiliate access to new Reel-Scout platform for Filming in England Partners to integrate & showcase local filming location assets for promotion domestically and internationally.	Local Authorities and other organisations encounter challenges in allocating time and resources to develop and maintain their own location directories. Recognising industry's demand for a unified platform, Filming in England will introduce new database Reel-Scout. This platform will enable affiliate access for local partners, allowing them to seamlessly integrate their location assets.	Filming in England to complete data migration to new Reel-Scout platform with affiliate model piloted in Summer 2023.	
3.B Development of a comprehensive locations toolkit to provide valuable guidance in various areas, including effective management of property assets, understanding the criteria that productions seek in location doubles	This toolkit will serve as a valuable resource for individuals and organisations looking for practical insights and best practices in optimizing property assets and built heritage for filming purposes.	Interactive and comprehensive website resource scoped to receive feedback from Regional Filming Hubs.	



and capitalising on vacant building assets.

Action Plan and Outcomes Priority 4: Placemaking

Leveraging promotional opportunities generated by filming, with communities harnessing the benefits of screen tourism, thereby enhancing the placemaking process and fostering sustainable growth.



Outcome	Rationale	Action	Progress
4.A Case Studies on the impact of filming and screen tourism.	In 2015, Creative England, in partnership with Visit England, published a Screen Tourism report with Olsberg SPI. This report has been a valuable resource for local partners, highlighting the connection between screen tourism and a film-friendly environment that welcomes productions. To strengthen the case at a local level, we recognise the need for updated case studies on the impact of filming and screen tourism.	Filming in England to scope and develop new case studies on screen tourism. We aim to collaborate with Visit England to maximise the effectiveness of our efforts in this space.	
4.B Establishing a National bank of accessible promotional imagery	Local partners are facing growing challenges in accessing and obtaining approval for the use of promotional imagery from productions that they have supported. This hinders their ability to effectively promote and showcase their involvement.	 Filming in England will explore the possibility of establishing wider usage agreements with our own imagery suppliers. This would allow local partners to have free access to promotional imagery associated with the productions they have supported. 	
		 Filming in England will conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify additional measures that can be taken to simplify the process through national relationships and collaborations. 	
4.C Developing a National Film Tourism Map for English Regions	Currently, some areas and organisations have their own versions of filming maps. However, there is a growing recognition of the benefits of having a unified national offer, where individuals can easily explore and navigate through the English Regions.	 Filming in England to undertake scoping exercise into Reel-Tourism™ Module and other existing platforms to investigate the functionality and costs associated with a National Film Tourism Map. 	
4.D Quarterly Industry newsletter	It is essential for areas to effectively promote and expand the exposure of their offerings, such as vacant properties or unique landscapes or build heritage.	 Filming in England to produce quarterly newsletter to serve as a platform to highlighteach hub area, showcasing a collective offering from the regions directly to industry. The first newsletter will be strategically planned to coincide with the launch of the new National database, maximising its impact and visibility. 	



Action Plan and Outcomes Priority 5: Promoting Parity in Facilitation

Strengthening capabilities and fostering a coordinated approach across the English Regions to streamline the facilitation of productions, ensuring equitable opportunities and a level playing field throughout the Country.



Outcome	Rationale	Action	Progress
5.A Enhancing Networking Opportunities: Quarterly Events for Collaboration and Engagement	The need for fostering stronger connections and collaboration among local businesses, councils, locations, and the wider industry has been identified by the Hubs. To strengthen local connections and facilitate meaningful engagement, it is essential to expand the scope of networking events beyond just crew and industry contacts.	 Filming in England will rebrand current Crew networking evenings and utilise FIE Partnership members, RFH members and Creative UK's network. This initiative will promote a more cohesive and vibrant ecosystem. To ensure inclusivity and engagement across all regions, quarterly mixers will rotate throughout the year, taking place in each Regional Filming Hub area. 	
5.B Development of a standardised Highways Filming Application Form	Feedback from industry indicates that existing highways application forms often lack clarity and cause confusion, resulting in unnecessary delays. Creating a simplified and standardised template that can be used specifically for filming on the highways applications, will promote consistent communication and understanding and embed efficient working practices between industry and highways teams.	Filming in England to scope the development of a standardised template to share with Hubs to gather feedback and incorporate any necessary improvements.	
5.C Development of Crew & Unit Base Parking Guidance for Local Authorities	Parking plays a crucial role in location filming and can serve as a significant source of income generation for councils. It is essential local authorities, and their parking teams are equipped with a comprehensive understanding of industry requirements.	 Filming in England to scope development of a guidance document for local authorities. This guidance will provide a comprehensive understanding of filming requirements, foster collaboration and increase opportunities for local authorities to maximise income potential. 	
5.D Development of an interactive Google Unit Base Map	Unit Bases serve as central hubs for productions, providing essential operations and facilities during filming. To supplement the Crew & Unit Base Parking Guidance and provide valuable support to industry, an interactive Google map displaying potential unit base locations would be a valuable asset.	 Filming in England to develop an interactive Google Map functionality that enables local partners to map and showcase current and available unit base locations. This initiative will enhance collaboration between local artners and industry and serve as a valuable resource promoting efficient processes. 	



Action Plan and Outcomes Priority 6: Environmental Sustainability

Unlocking Locations to ensure England, outside of London is fully represented and maintains its competitiveness as a world-class filming destination



Outcome	Rationale	Action	Progress
6.A Establishment of a National Sustainable Supplier Directory	Numerous sustainable local supply businesses operate across England, but there is currently no unified approach to connect productions with these suppliers. One of Filming in England's key principles is to promote sustainable practices within the industry and foster a more environmentally conscious approach to filming.	Filming in England to scope the development of a sustainable supplier directory in alignment with the implementation of the new National database. Upon it's launch, Filming in England will share a call to action with local authorities to raise awareness among local businesses. We will collaborate with BAFTA Albert to ensure a coordinated approach and avoid duplication of efforts. The directory will serve as a valuable resource, encouraging more sustainable practice across industry.	
6.B Mapping of Local Authorities' Efforts in Promoting Environment Sustainable Practices.	The feedback received from the Hubs indicates a lack of a coordinated approach to making England more sustainable for production. While there is a desire to do more in this regard, local authorities expressed uncertainty about how to proceed due to current resource limitations.	 Filming in England to include an agenda item in the Hub meetings to discuss existing initiatives and practices, idea sharing and strategies to help establish a cohesive and coordinated approach across England. Ultimately working towards a more sustainable future for production in England. 	



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Filming in England Partnership

This Action Plan Report has been created following the launch and the intel gathered from Filming in England's four Regional Filming Hubs. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our Film Office partners, our local, regional and national partners as well as the productions who have provided intel and supported the Regional Filming Hubs.

The creation of the Regional Filming Hubs marked a significant milestone in the Filming in England Partnership. With a continually expanding membership, now exceeding 200 diverse organisations, the Partnership serves as the vital link connecting stakeholders across England. From local authorities, Film Offices, locations, facilities, studios to national organisations, Filming in England has fostered an extensive network that spans England.

If you are not already a member and would like to join, contact Film & TV Partnership Manager, Hannah.macleod@creativeengland.co.uk

For any enquiries, please get in touch; production@creativeengland.co.uk +44 (0) 20 8324 2311 @filminengland





