Introduction

GBM Casting Graeme has worked within the Scottish TV Film industry since 2003. Over 14 years GBM Casting has built a reputation for the supply of reliable and professional Supporting Artist’s not only within TV and Film but throughout the Creative Industries in Scotland. Since established GBM Casting has grown to become one of Scotland’s most successful Casting Agencies with further expansion planned.

Leadership, Strategy and Support

*How can the industry successfully implement the recommendations outlined in the Screen Sector Leadership Group report?*

One national body, **not a unit**, called Scottish Screen that is headed up by people with real commercial experience in the TV and Film industry internationally combined with a record of success and who are well respected in the industry. Not the same people in recycled roles.

As to date there has been no record of success. Hence the need to mix it up and bring in new international talent.

A unit is not enough and does not project a strategic approach. People are used to dealing with bodies that have a national focus.

*What is your view of the current leadership of the screen sector through Creative Scotland and other supporting bodies?*

This question is difficult to answer as had no dealing with them - which in itself is an issue.

But looking at other models such as Northern Ireland Screen and Canada Film and the number of English productions that have come to Scotland employing English external crew, talents and Supporting Artists leads us to a conclusion that the current leadership is not stepping up to the challenge of linking productions with **local** companies.

Also the issue peddled by Creative Scotland and other bodies around ‘can’t tell you’ due to confidentiality means that local companies can’t get the business intelligence they need to make approaches to productions companies at pre-production.

This combined with the view by Creative Scotland and other bodies that they cannot recommend any specific companies is leading **demand failure** for local Scottish companies who appear invisible as no one advocating on their behalf.
How can we ensure that the Screen Unit has the remit and responsibility for providing the strategic vision and leadership across the sector? What changes to the current arrangements are necessary to achieve this?

As outlined above.

One national body, **not a unit**, called Scottish Screen that is is headed up by people with real commercial experience in the TV and film industry internationally who have a record of success. Not the same small circle of people in recycled roles playing the same old game.

To date there has been no record of success hence the need to mix it up a bit and bring in new international talent.

Bring in legislation that makes it a legal requirement for Creative Scotland and Scottish Enterprise to work together. As happened with the Community Planning duties placed on local authorities and their partners.

Clear commercial focussed targets over a five year period including the need to look at what has brought success in Northern Ireland and Canada.

**What are your views on the availability of funding and support for all content development?**

Content development is not an industry driver. The current emphasis on script development does not support the industry. It is only a workable model in terms of a creative agency seeking to develop the creative arts. It does not sit with an agency keen to support production activity and business.

We want to see an emphasis placed on business development and infrastructure development.

**Do you consider the support provided by Scottish Enterprise to be adequate? How might they or other bodies work to provide appropriate support for the industry?**

Scottish Enterprise need to find a way to work jointly with Creative Scotland through a joint set of outcomes that are commercially focussed and play on Scotland’s potential.

We have looked for evidence of support by Scottish Enterprise and spoke to people across the industry and it appears the role of Scottish Enterprise and other public bodies is not understood.

**How can we nurture and maintain funding for production companies?**

Same as alway:

- Ask them what they need
- Engage the industry
- Make funding relevant and accessible
An option could be move towards an Business Incubators and Accelerators Model that provides support and funding for production companies.

**How can Ofcom work to support the sector in its new role as regulator?**

Ofcom has stepped up and challenged the current situation of too little television work in the nations and regions.

The proposals on Monday 3 April 2017, will for the first time introduce a minimum network quota for Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland based on their population size. The quota will also set a target for network hours commissioned as well as spending.

As Andrew Griff Chief Operating at Sky stated at the NFTS Conference in 2017 need to “level the playing field that is unbalancing our industry”

Ofcom as the new regulator needs to ensure targets are met with the support of the Scottish Government and new Scottish Screen body. As what is important here is that a one-city-industry really limits our creativity and success as a country.

**What are your views on the state of commissioning for Scottish content?**

Seems to be all about News. Which seems irrelevant as people are moving away from TV and going online for their news.

**Drama Comedy and Film needs to be the focus** - Why? Because with more inward investment in feature film and high-end TV drama will creating more opportunity for those working in the industry.

Big projects often employ thousands – according to IMDb Pro, Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them took on 1,967 people while high-end TV dramas like The Crown can see several hundred people on set at any one time. Art departments alone can have teams of around 60 people, while visual effects professionals often total well over one hundred on big-budget features.

**How might Brexit impact the Scottish screen industry?**

Brexit has the potential to damage the Scottish Screen Industry.

Producers including the backer of Winston Churchill filmed in Scotland – have warned that severing links with Brussels will endanger the industry. Lionsgate, which released Churchill in June 2017, worries that Brexit will impede the already complex process of funding, filming and releasing a multimillion-pound product.

Currently, British productions such as The Wife, starring Glenn Close, and filmed in Scotland benefitted from an EU programme called Creative Europe.
How do you view the role of broadcasters in supporting the sector?

**Move out of London.**

A recent survey of TV producers by Pact found that of the two-billion-pound budget for UK commissions in 2016, just 32% was spent outside London. Furthermore, just 35% of full-time jobs in TV are in the nations and regions.

By why would they when Scotland is quiet on what we can bring to broadcasting and have no national body helping broadcasters.

Stop meeting quotas set for filming outside of London as it well know that programmes made under the ‘out of London quota’ employ 50% of their staff from London, particularly in senior roles.

These senior programme makers are shipped around the UK and put up in hotels during shoots. More junior roles are filled locally – but this isn’t enough to leave a legacy and make a long term impact on the economy. And although these programmes are filmed in the nations and regions, they are edited back in London, creating no work for post-production houses or editors outside the M25.

**How might the newly proposed BBC channel help support the industry in Scotland?**

**Focus on TV people want for example strong high end drama and comedy** as in River City, Two Doors Down, Shetland, Rillington Place and The Replacement

No more News as people access news in different ways so another news channel for Scotland is outdated as people more online for their news.

**How can Scotland become a key destination for UK and international productions?**

Tell people about Scotland.

Promote all the resources both natural and infrastructure.

Get an office in Scottish Screen Agency in London.

Implement the 4Ps of marketing

**Why have film and TV producers selected Scotland in the past as a location for production?**

- Price
- Scenery
- Location
What is your view on the current network of regional film offices across the country?

Not working - why would anyone have the time to engage with 32 regional film offices who are underfunded due to the financial pressure local government is experiencing.

As much as decision making at the lowest level is very important to ensure communities needs are met there are some things that need to have a strategic national focus and film offices moving to national body is one of these.

Are you aware of examples of best practice in Scotland, or elsewhere, which the Committee could draw upon?

Northern Ireland Screen - amazing results and investment of the back of Games of Thrones including a renewed partnership between BBC and Northern Ireland Screen. This joint agreement sees the BBC and Northern Ireland Screen work together to invest financially and creatively in developing an internationally competitive screen industry in Northern Ireland.

Wales Film - has clear guidelines that where public funding is used production companies must clearly outline what LOCAL welsh companies they will be using.

Canada Film

Netflix commits to a $400 million investment in Canadian film and TV - It’s the company’s first permanent production outside the US. The plan is part of a deal between Netflix and the Canadian government to support innovation in the digital realm.

Netflix to work with local Canadian producers and studios. If Netflix fails to commit to the agreed-upon investment in the given timeline, the Canadian government can apparently impose fines on the company.

Netflix’s chief content officer, said in a statement to Variety.

“We look forward to continuing our work with Canadian talent, producers, broadcasters, and other local partners to create Netflix originals in Canada for many years to come.”

Film Industry in Georgia LA USA

Georgia is now the No. 1 filming location in the world, according to Film L.A and the industry has a giant impact on the state's economy.

Gov. Nathan Deal announced film and television productions generated $9.5 billion in economic impact in fiscal 2017. This includes $2.7 billion in direct spending.

In the past year, 320 film and television productions shot in the state, including several Marvel movies, Netflix's "Stranger Things" and AMC's "The Walking Dead."
“Georgia’s growth in the film industry — from $67.7 million in direct spending in FY 2007 to $2.7 billion in FY 2017 — is unprecedented, not only in production spend, but also in the amount of investment that has been made in infrastructure,” said Lee Thomas, deputy commissioner for the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Film, Music and Digital Entertainment Office,

**Talent Development, Skills and Training**

*How can Scotland nurture and retain domestic talent?*

By providing work opportunities, and work of a sufficient calibre and scope that talent will want to work here. This cannot be done without professional sound stages and professional infrastructure to attract productions of a sufficient size. Indigenous Scottish film production is too small and unreliable to be regarded as a key employer.

*How might the new Screen Unit work across agencies to ensure a coherent approach to the development of talent?*

*Are you aware of examples of best practice in Scotland, or elsewhere, which the Committee could draw upon?*

*How can development, skills and training keep pace with the ever changing needs of the industry?*

*Are there skills deficiencies or gaps which might impede productions choosing to come to Scotland?*

Aging population and skills shortage.

*Does Scotland have the requisite level of domestic talent to accommodate an increase in productions coming to the country?*

Not yet but if the Scottish Screen unit is successful we will attract back the Scottish talent working in London and internationally.

*What infrastructure, support and investment is required to ensure continuing development of talent in Scotland?*

Getting building studios!!!! Invest in space that production companies can film in

*Are there clear pathways from education through training to the workplace that deliver an industry-ready workforce?*

There needs to be a national strategy for developing skills and talent in the industry, with agreed outcomes.

Then there has to be the production capacity to retain the trained crew. At the moment, money is invested in training a workforce that leaves the country.
How do we address the problem of inconsistent work for employees in the Scottish screen sector?

Studios and production spaces are an integral part of the infrastructure to encourage productions to work all year around. Currently, winter is traditionally a very quiet time for the whole industry. High quality inside filming space would go some way to reducing the inconsistent work pattern in Scotland.

Do you feel there is a lack of diversity amongst employees in the screen industry? And if so, why might this be and what can be done to promote diversity?

GBM Casting has made real effort to increase the diversity amongst it Support Artists. This has led to an increased demand for our Artists as Productions Companies required a set of background that reflects the world we live in.

Do you feel enough investment is present for the purposes of training specialist skills?

Creative Skillset collect a training levy from all productions over a certain budget that film in the UK. In the past there was a commitment to provide bursaries for Scottish freelancers looking for training, necessary because most specialised training was held in London. The Scottish office has now closed, and we do not know whether there is any funding in a particular ‘Scottish’ pot, and whether this has been investigated by Creative Scotland or any other body.

Are there ways in which film and TV productions can be encouraged to utilize Scottish cast and crew where appropriate?

There also needs to be an agreement on Scottish spend for incoming production received funding that has to be open and transparent. Not every production can employ Scottish crew;

- Outlaw King
- Mary Queen of Scots
- Patrick Melrose
- WWZ

All used English cast, crew and Supporting Artists however, developing key relationships early with line producers and monitoring budgets and potential spend

Infrastructure, Intelligence and Maximising Benefit to Scotland

What improvements to the current studio infrastructure are needed? How might this be achieved?

GBM Casting fully supports the AFTPS points outlined in their response. Specifically

If Scottish Opera, the National Theatre for Scotland and Scottish Ballet can have spaces built for them out of public funds, what is stopping the building of a National Film Studio, governed by a charitable board where any funds realised could be channelled back into supporting indigenous film production, training schemes or
invested in better facilities and services? Surely the State Aid argument (successfully negotiated by Northern Ireland Screen, it appears) can be side-stepped if there is no commercial interest.

**What kinds of facilities are needed and where?**

There needs to be a wide variety of spaces from world-class professional sound stages capable of housing high-end returning drama series, to smaller spaces for smaller budget films and television, commercials and single set builds. There need to be additional facilities attached, not least production office space, workshop space and carparking. We have given this information before to numerous consultants, and we would be happy to show the Committee, by way of a set visit to a production, to show them the amount of space that is needed.

**How might these kind of facilities be funded?**

Through a cocktail of funding including productions companies paying a contribution to the rent of the facilities. Need to get a commercial approach on the development implementation and delivery of facilities and ensure the industry does not become over reliant on the public purse.

**Distribution, Exhibition and Audience Development**

As GBM Casting does not have much expertise in this area therefore, the questions below have been left blank.