

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee
DATE	20 th April 2010
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen City & Shire Film Office
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/10/089

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report will justify the reason for withdrawal of financial support to the Aberdeen City & Shire Film Office

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- a) It is recommended that committee give approval to the withdrawal of financial support for the Aberdeen City & Shire Film Office for the financial period of 2010
- b) It is recommended that committee agree to review any future requests for funding of a similar initiative in the future based on sound economic impact assessment.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Approval of this paper will have no financial implications on the council

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The continued delivery of the Aberdeen City & Shire Film Office if successful would have supported the delivery of **Vibrant Dynamic & Forward Looking** via the Culture Sports and Arts strand by "recognising the contribution of Sport, Culture and Arts to promote the area as a tourist destination" Prosperity & Jobs: Economic promotion of Aberdeen locally, nationally and internationally, promoting all aspects of city life, wherever the City is represented.

Partnership for Aberdeen: Co-operate with neighbouring authorities and others to promote inward investment in the North-East.

Work with other agencies, including Visit Scotland, to encourage tourism and the provision of facilities for tourists.

Single Outcome Agreement:

The continued delivery of the Aberdeen City & Shire Film Office will also assist in delivery against the following outcomes within the Single Outcome Agreements.

National Outcome 1: We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe

National Outcome 2: We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people

National Outcome 12: We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and enhance it for future generations.

National Outcome – 13 We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.

However as there has been little positive economic impact attributed to this initiative over the last year we have failed to meet the above objectives.

The impact of withdrawing the services provided by the Aberdeen City & Shire Film office has been assessed in relation to Equalities and Human Rights.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Risk Management

Given the current global economic environment, and future economic uncertainty there has been a marked downturn in the number of film related media activities within the UK, many film makers are now actively seeking locations within the former eastern bloc countries, where filming costs are greatly reduced in addition to local governments offering cash incentives to film co-operations. Continuation of the Aberdeen City & Shire Film Office in its current manner would not generate sufficient local economic impact to merit an annual investment of £ 20,000, which in the current climate could be more effectively spent on the delivery of other services and initiatives.

Personnel

As Aberdeen City & Shire Councils jointly manage this initiative, withdrawal of this service will free up officers' time to deliver other economic development activities.

6. REPORT

Introduction

The Aberdeen City & Shire Film Office (Formerly Grampian Film Office) was established in March 2003 in a partnership between Aberdeen City & Shire Councils and the then Scottish Enterprise Grampian, this was after Scottish Enterprise Grampian carried out research into the feasibility of establishing a film office in Grampian.

The resulting report made it clear that there were opportunities to develop a service that will support the development of the industry in Grampian and also attract business that the area may currently be missing out on.

A report sent to Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure committee on the 1st September 2009 highlighted that there was a distinct downturn in the number of film shoots across the whole area in 2008/2009 and of this the City only received a small percentage. This report resulted in a reduction of funding of annual funding from £20,000 per annum to £ 10,000 per annum. It was also recommended in this report that the funding agreement be reviewed on an ongoing annual basis against outcomes and economic impact.

Since September 2009 there has only been 4 filming activities notified within the city, with a notified economic impact of £10,155. This is a further decrease from the economic impact of £34,000 reported in the September 2009 paper. The declining amount of film activity in Scotland as a whole appears to be reflected in the new Creative Scotland structures where Scottish Screen locations has effectively disappeared.

Joint evaluation of the project by Aberdeen City & Shire officers has resulted in the decision to withdraw the Aberdeen City & Shire Film Office services. The current Film Officer will be redeployed within the Education and Leisure services of Aberdeenshire council, removing the need for any redundancy payments or redeployment support. The website which has been a useful tool to promote the region will remain active and monitored for usage on a regular basis. If site traffic increases and the demand for information on potential film locations increases then discussions will be held with Aberdeenshire council to evaluate the benefits and costs of potentially offering a reduced service in the future.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Heather Farquhar
Skills & Business Training Manager
Enterprise Planning & Infrastructure

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS