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BFI announces the first stage of preparing for a new era in film

- **Digital strategy for modernisation**
- **New focus on income growth and increased efficiencies**
- **Increased public access to BFI Collections**

The BFI today announced measures to help it prepare for a new era for film in the UK. The proposals include an ambitious digital modernisation strategy, making the delivery of its services more efficient, a plan to grow income and increased free public access to the BFI Collections.

This is the critical first step for the BFI as it adapts to a changed financial environment and becomes the lead body for film in the UK. In this first phase the BFI is prioritising those activities that are core to the BFI, that are unique and that audiences most value.

Central to the strategy is continued investment in digital capability that will provide greater public access to the BFI's film and knowledge collections and improved reach of its public programmes.

The BFI will build on its revenue-earning successes³ with a package of initiatives that includes a new Membership drive, introducing advertising opportunities onscreen and online, as well as an ambitious sponsorship and fundraising campaign. Additionally, brand new business opportunities are being developed to take advantage of the BFI's expertise, skills and knowledge, through international partnerships and new digital business models.

The BFI's long standing ambitious and successful drive to engage with more and different people is at the heart of a decision to relocate the BFI Library to BFI Southbank where it can be tied more closely to growing audiences, the delivery of the cultural and education programmes and to the BFI Mediatheque. For dedicated researchers, a bespoke facility will be created at the BFI National Archive where the collections are physically held. A pioneering digital-on-demand service is also planned at BFI Southbank that will allow desktop delivery of the Collections. Over time, the ambition is to offer similar services at BFI Mediatheques around the UK.

These changes are being proposed against a backdrop of a 15% cut in its grant in aid over the next four years, successive years of zero increases in grant-in-aid funding and rising utilities and pension costs which have created a widening gap in the BFI's budget. These new measures allow efficiencies, stimulate additional revenue and help the BFI further reduce its reliance on public funding. Nevertheless, the BFI anticipates the proposals will lead to a net reduction in its workforce of around 37 posts.

Amanda Nevill, Director of the BFI, said: 'It is imperative the BFI builds on its successes and remains commercially astute in this tough new environment. We have an incredible opportunity in the months and years ahead to create something very special for film in the UK and these proposals are both bold and necessary.'

In tandem, the BFI is also making itself ready for the transition of responsibilities from the UK Film Council and further structural changes may be made following the due diligence period. Early in the New Year the BFI will advertise to recruit new Governing Board members to guide it through the transition period and beyond. At the same time, an outline transition timetable will be published.

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Notes to Editors:

1. At the core of the proposals are:

- A plan to bring greater coherence to the cultural programme across the whole of the BFI, a move which will also reduce costs and create more incentives for fundraising and philanthropy. A new post of Director of BFI Public Programmes will lead a unified team of programmers across cinemas, festivals, distribution, digital and print;
- An aim to further increase the number of people across the UK and internationally who can engage with the BFI's public programme and film culture. Digital technologies will play a critical part in this and the BFI proposes renewing infrastructure and investing in new skills;
- Closure of the Gallery at BFI Southbank as part of the prioritisation on those activities that only the BFI can deliver;
- A proposal to move the BFI Library and reading room from its current location and create new facilities at BFI Southbank in the space currently used for the Gallery;
- Establishing a bespoke research centre for academics, the film industry and researchers in the heart of the BFI National Archive at Berkhamsted;
- A stringent review of procurement processes to achieve economies; reducing overheads by making savings in support costs;
- Boosting new business through the development of commercial opportunities both within the UK and internationally
- A drive to increase fundraising income and philanthropy

2. The proposals are subject to a period of formal staff consultation as a number of posts will be put at risk of redundancy from the end of January. If accepted, the proposals will start taking effect from the end of March 2011.

3. Between April – Sept 2010 BFI Southbank had 126,210 paid cinema admissions - its highest number ever for a six month period.

This year the BFI IMAX enjoyed its most successful quarter ever - total paid admissions Jan – March 2010 were 177,039, the highest in the history of BFI IMAX.

The 54th BFI London Film Festival welcomed 990 industry accredited delegates, exceeding the number in 2009, and reported the highest ever audience attendance in excess of 132,000 filmgoers.

In 2010 the BFI published 297 films (features, shorts, documentary, fiction) across 40 separate video editions (DVD, Blu-ray, Dual Format). 249 were sourced from original film elements preserved in the BFI National Archive, and 245 have never previously been released on any video format.

About the BFI

The BFI is the nation's cultural organisation for film, keeping the breadth of voices in moving image culture alive and known. Through its venues, festivals, film releases and online, the BFI inspires people to understand and enjoy film culture, ensuring that everyone in the UK can see the broadest range and choice of films, otherwise not provided by commercial cinema. The BFI reaches an audience of over 7.5 million in the UK every year.

www.bfi.org.uk

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