

**TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON PLANNING**  
**RESPONSE FROM THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE**  
**QUESTION 2.17**

**September 2014**

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- i. The BFI believes that some flexibility should be given to allow production companies to request permits covering an area larger than one hectare.
- ii. We would ask that that proposed period be extended to a maximum of 12 months - or 9 months extendible to 12 months if no valid objections are presented.
- iii. The BFI would therefore request that the proposed permits allow for the possibility of outside sets with a height greater than 10 metres, with a further qualifier that in instances where sets greater than 10 metres in height are required, the permission would be subject to agreement from the landowners.

**2. ABOUT THE BFI**

In 2011 the BFI became the lead organisation for film in the UK. It is now a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film.

Our mission is to ensure that film is central to our cultural life, in particular by supporting and nurturing the next generation of filmmakers and audiences. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK.

- It delivers this role: As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK

In October 2012, the BFI published 'Film Forever, Supporting UK Film 2012-2017', which set out its strategy for the next five years, following an extensive industry consultation.<sup>1</sup> It described the activities underpinning the BFI's three strategic priorities: Expanding education and learning opportunities and boosting audience choice across the UK Supporting the future success of British film Unlocking film heritage for everyone in the UK to enjoy.

To that end, the BFI helps ensure that public policy supports film and, in particular, British film.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Greg Dyke.

**3. BACKGROUND**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bfi.org.uk/about-bfi/policy-strategy/film-forever>

The UK film and television industry plays a vital economic and cultural role. Culturally British films and television programmes can help reflect, explore and challenge our diverse history, cultural beliefs and shared values. In doing so, the best British films and television programmes not only help us to reach a better shared understanding of Britain and its place in the world, but are also instrumental in spreading awareness and appreciation of British culture around the world. As such, British films and TV are an important part of our cultural heritage and a significant medium for the continuing expression and dissemination of British culture.

Economically, film and television production is a significant employer and generator of value to the UK's GDP. A recent report published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport - Creative Industries: Focus on Employment - found that there were 259,000 film and television jobs in the creative economy.

It is estimated that UK film alone contributes over £4.6 billion to UK GDP and more than £1.3 billion to the Exchequer, according to an independent report published by Oxford Economics in 2012.

Key to the continuing success of the British film and television production sector are effective fiscal incentives, world class crews and the necessary physical infrastructure, including vital studio space.

The government has built on the huge success of the Film Tax Relief by introducing new Creative Sector reliefs for High End Television, Animation and Video Games. It has also provided £16 million in additional funding to Creative Skillset to ensure our skills base remains highly competitive on a global level.

However, despite the welcome news that the redevelopment of Pinewood Studios has received much needed planning permission; it is the area of UK's current lack of Studio space that represents one of the most significant risks to our international competitiveness and long term success.

The BFI welcomes the DCLG's consultation on planning. In particular, we are encouraged by the DCLG's willingness to address issues around planning for the temporary use of buildings and exterior space for filming.

#### **4. CONSULTATION QUESTION**

Our response to this consultation is limited to Proposal I: Permitted development right for the film and television industries.

#### **Question 2.17: do you agree there should be a new permitted development right for commercial film and television production?**

The BFI welcomes the consultation paper's stated aim of ensuring that it is easier to use buildings and land as temporary locations for commercial filming and agrees with the proposal for a new permitted development right. As mentioned above, the UK has provided a compelling case for the country to be used as a base for film and television production. Key to maintaining this success is the UK's ability to meet the demands of the film and television production sector.

The proposal to introduce a new permitted development right to allow commercial filming and associated physical development is a significant positive step. It is also very helpful that the permits will be granted based on a set of transparent criteria, ensuring that equal consideration is given to all production companies.

Having consulted with our client base of industry executives involved in location filming, we would ask that some flexibility is given on three key areas:

- i. The consultation paper suggests that the permission will be granted for “location filming inside existing building and outside on single sites of up to one hectare”. The BFI believes that some flexibility should be given to allow production companies to request permits covering an area larger than one hectare.
- ii. Further that the permission will be granted “for a maximum of nine months in any rolling 27 month period”. We would ask that that period be extended to a maximum of 12 months - or 9 months extendible to 12 months if no valid objections are presented.
- iii. It is also proposed that one of the conditions is that “*outside sets to have a maximum height limit in the region of 10 metres from the ground*”. From time to time there is a need to build outside sets of a height above 10 metres. The BFI would therefore request that the proposed permits allow for the possibility of outside sets with a height greater than 10 metres, with a further qualifier that in instances where sets greater than 10 metres in height are required, the permission would be subject to agreement from the landowners.

We believe that the three amendments above will increase the utility of the proposed permits. We are, however, mindful that there is a balance between the needs of the film and television sector and those of the land and property owners and would therefore recommend that these additional concessions are only allowed in cases where prior permission is granted with the consent of all parties.