



UK Community Renewal Fund success for project capitalising on Hertfordshire's world-class film & TV industry

Press Release

14th December 2021

A brand-new project to deliver culture-led regeneration across Hertfordshire has been given the green light, it was announced this week.

The programme, titled **Driving creative innovation and culture-led regeneration through the film industry**, aims to capitalise on the world-leading hub of film and TV studios located in South Hertfordshire to ensure that the wider community benefits from these assets. This project is part-funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Comprising three interconnected workstreams the project will kickstart innovation by supporting the creative industries' supply chain, invest in creative skills and knowledge exchange, and develop a series of brand-new screen tourism products to support the rebuild of Hertfordshire's visitor economy.

In 2016 research published by the British Film Institute found that inbound tourists to the UK spent an estimated £597.7 million in film-related screen tourism. In Hertfordshire alone, Creative England data has shown that location filming was worth £20 million to the local economy in 2016/17.

With established studios already at Elstree and Leavesden, along with investment in the new Sky Studios in Hertsmere, Hollywood's Sunset Studios in Broxbourne, and proposals for Hertswood Studios, partners across the destination are working closely to ensure that it can best maximise the opportunities presented to local businesses and residents by providing a wrap-around supply chain delivering world class skills, innovation, and workforce development.

Hertfordshire is home to a burgeoning film and TV sector which has attracted over £3.7bn of new private sector investment in the past 12 months. Hollywood's Sunset Studios choosing to locate its new £700m base in Broxbourne, is set to create over 4,500 permanent jobs with an estimated contribution of £300m p/a to the local economy. Further to this, Comcast's £3bn investment in Sky Studios Elstree will create over 2,000 jobs, while at Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, three new sound stages are being built, providing 83,000 sq. ft. of additional production space.

Led by Hertfordshire's official destination management organisation Visit Herts, along with project partners at the Hertfordshire Growth Hub and the University of Hertfordshire, this new programme is one of five successful bids to have been put forward for the UK Community Renewal Fund by



Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. This project has received £828,229 from the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council and Chair of Hertfordshire Growth Board, said: *“It’s wonderful that Hertfordshire has been successful in bidding for this funding, which will further strengthen the county’s status as home to the UK’s world-class creative media industry.*

Securing funding for all five of the projects for which we submitted bids to the Community Renewal Fund is yet another demonstration of central government’s confidence in our ability to deliver the right sustainable growth for our residents and maintaining our strong and growing economy.

The new Sky Studios development currently being built at Elstree and the proposed Sunset Studios site at Cheshunt are just two examples of the strength of the tv and film industry in Hertfordshire. We’re determined that this funding, which will be particularly important in making sure that young people can learn a wide variety of career-focused skills, will have a really positive impact on people’s lives.”

The project’s screen tourism development programme will draw upon some of the key strengths, opportunities, and gaps of screen tourism for Hertfordshire, identified as part of a [Screen Tourism Product Audit](#) conducted this year by Visit Herts, and expert Seren Welch.

Activity planned as part of the programme for the coming months includes the creation of a creative industries grants funding programme offering grants of up to £5,000 to support innovation with a focus on the film and TV production supply chain, and a package of specialist and technical support for businesses in the creative industries to enable growth. It will also include a CPD programme to upskill the creative industry workforce and close skills gaps, a knowledge exchange between industry and academia to increase innovation in training and build strong links within the destination, and the development of cast and crew accommodation and packages. Further to this, the programme will comprise the development of new screen tourism products with tourism businesses through an intensive grant supported product development programme with specialist support, access to production facilities, content creation, marketing, distribution, and grants of up to £8,000.

More details about [how businesses can apply to the programme](#) will be available in the New Year.

Deirdre Wells OBE, Chief Executive of Visit Herts, commented: *“We are incredibly lucky here in Hertfordshire to have attracted and delivered a huge number of internationally acclaimed film and TV productions over the years. From Harry Potter and The Crown to Strictly Come Dancing each Saturday night, our county is a prime location for the filming industry. This presents a huge opportunity for both our partners and the destination as a whole.*

We are thrilled to be partnering with the Hertfordshire Growth Hub and University of Hertfordshire on this latest project. Capitalising on the opportunities afforded to Hertfordshire as a direct result of the creative industries - be that through investing in skills, supporting the film industry supply chain at every level, or providing new, tangible ways for our visitors to experience movie magic within our destination – will be critical in supporting the recovery of our destination post-pandemic.

We extend a huge thanks to Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership for their role in submitting this bid to Government, and for their ongoing support.”

Professor Julie Newlan MBE, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Business and International Development at the University of Hertfordshire, added: *“Considered one of the top 20 institutions in the UK for film and TV production, the University of Hertfordshire has a proud history in the creative arts. With world-class expertise and teaching, state-of-the-art studios and equipment, and strong industry links, the institution is already delivering industry-ready graduates, driving innovation and employment opportunities in the sector. This, combined with our reputation for powering businesses and economic growth in the region, will allow the county’s already flourishing film and TV industry to prosper further.*

Recognised as a University Enterprise Zone, the University already delivers a wide range of support for entrepreneurs, including 1:1 mentoring, peer-support networks, access to funding opportunities, and access to commercial, creative and research expertise. This project will allow the University to invest in future skills for the creative industry by delivering new continuing professional development programmes, business support for creative entrepreneurs, and knowledge exchange initiatives between the sector and academia.”

Liza Armstrong, Head of Service at Hertfordshire Growth Hub, stated: *“We are delighted to be working in partnership with Visit Herts and the University of Hertfordshire on this project. The support on offer will provide the creative industry, and its supply chain in Hertfordshire, with the support needed to exploit new business opportunities and achieve their potential.”*

In October Hertfordshire LEP’s Annual Conference was broadcast live from Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden and brought together senior leaders and industry figures from Hertfordshire, Hollywood and beyond to identify how best to stimulate future investment, drive local job creation and spearhead skills development.

Delegates heard how up to 13,000 new jobs could be created in Hertfordshire’s booming film and TV sector, helping young people into long-term employment as well as reskilling those whose jobs have been impacted by COVID-19. A sector action plan is being developed in partnership with industry to leverage recent investment successes, helping to identify what will be needed to enable the industry to grow sustainably as well as leverage its economic, social, and environmental value.

Neil Hayes, CEO, Hertfordshire LEP, said: *“We are at the fulcrum of the potential growth in the film and TV industry. Our role is to work with our LEP partners to make sure we have a broader throughput of businesses, provide the comprehensive range of real skills that the industry needs and a platform for the scale of growth that’s required. This project will help us to further capitalise on our fantastic film and TV assets and ensure the wider community can benefit.”*

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Notes to Editors

For further media information on Visit Herts, please contact Brand Manager (Destinations) Lana Crouch at lane.crouch@visitherts.co.uk or call 01227 812914.

About Visit Herts

Visit Herts is the destination management organisation for the county of Hertfordshire, welcoming 29 million visitors a year, and championing the county's £2.4 billion tourism industry which supports more than 43,000 jobs.

Visit Herts works with a range of public and private sector businesses and organisations to raise the county's profile as a leading destination. Activities include targeting UK and overseas markets through consumer marketing and PR campaigns, forging strong relationships with the travel trade, improving quality and skills within the industry, and growing investment in tourism.

Visit Herts is a public/private sector partnership supported by Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and is delivered by destination management specialists Go to Places. For further information tweet @visithertsuk or visit: www.visitherts.co.uk

About the UK Community Renewal Fund

The UK Community Renewal Fund is a UK Government programme for 2021/22. This aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches to prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It invests in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment. For more information, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fundprospectus>

About Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is part of a network of 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships across England. They are business led partnerships between local authorities and local private sector businesses. They play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and job creation, improve infrastructure and raise workforce skills within the local area.

2021 marks a watershed year for Hertfordshire LEP with a decade of driving economic growth and productivity within the county through innovation, job creation, improved infrastructure, and increased workforce skills. Watch this video to see our key highlights over the past decade. Keep up to date with our progress: www.hertfordshirelep.co.uk

About the University of Hertfordshire

The University of Hertfordshire brings the transformational impact of higher education to all. Its students, staff and businesses consistently reach their full potential.

Through high quality teaching, 550-degree programmes, cutting-edge research projects and powerful business partnerships, they think bigger, stand out and positively impact local, national, and international communities. For more information, visit www.herts.ac.uk

About Hertfordshire Growth Hub

Hertfordshire Growth Hub is Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's flagship business support provider. Powered by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, it is delivered by a consortium of partners to provide a central point of access for businesses in the county to access support and guidance to enable them to grow, scale and innovate, strengthening the Hertfordshire economy.

It is part of a network of 38 Local Enterprise Partnership-led Growth Hubs across England integrating national and local business support. Publicly funded by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, with some accessing European Regional Development Funds, Growth Hubs provide locally tailored support and advice to direct businesses to the most appropriate organisations to assist with their specific business needs.

The Hertfordshire Growth Hub consortium is led by business support specialists Exemplas, with the University of Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce. Visit: www.hertsgrowthhub.com