



Mayor of Bristol

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

In copy: Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, Secretary of
State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Reply to Marvin Rees
Telephone 0117 922 2420
E-mail mayor@bristol.gov.uk
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By email only

Budget 2021: Creative and culture sector support

Dear Chancellor,

Bristol has been identified as an exemplar creative economy with an estimated £496m generated by over 6,000 cultural and creative organisations and businesses, and a workforce that is estimated at c.16,000 in the city alone.

This creative ecology is highly specialised, regionally integrated and contains a large number of nationally and internationally significant anchor institutions. It is also well served by a dynamic, talented and agile population of micro and SME businesses and some of the most talented freelancers in the world.

Each city contributes to national growth with its own assets, businesses, and intuitions. More so than any other sector, the creative economy is what makes Bristol unique. It grew by 30% between 2010 and 2018 and pre-pandemic, some parts were projected to grow even faster in the coming years.

Investment at the forthcoming Budget and months ahead will be vital if this sector is to make a full contribution to local and national economic recovery and renewal. Detailed below are some key recommendations we hope Government will consider as part of this process.

Yours sincerely,

Marvin Rees
Mayor of Bristol

i) Investment in Bottle Yard Studios (£24.3m)

Film and TV production over the last 10 years has become the jewel in the crown of Bristol's creative economy. Providing tens of millions of inward investment and hundreds of high paying direct and indirect jobs each year, this is a key sector in Bristol's economy.



The Bottle Yard Studios (TBYS) in South Bristol is the largest dedicated film and TV studio facility in the West of England. Based on the emerging business case, there is an opportunity for TBYS to grow from 8 to 13 studios, providing increased capacity and higher quality provision at a time when content development is growing exponentially globally, and within the UK.

With total capital funding of £21.3m to cover purchase and conversion costs and investment in new purpose built studios, the Bottle Yard Studios could provide a catalyst for regeneration, creating a film and media focal point in an area of deprivation. An additional £3m revenue fund would ensure a strong focus on skills development, enabling training and education pathways into the sector as well as upskilling local people.

With this investment, construction could commence within 8-13 months from the date of project approval, with the site operational within two years. The proposal would also accommodate the need for further housing development in the area.

ii) Increase the rate of creative sector tax reliefs

It is vital at this critical time that the UK remains one of the world's leading screen production hubs to ensure sites like Bottle Yard Studios continue to grow. The Government should support any efforts to prevent international competitors from gaining ground to the detriment of UK jobs, and provide the confidence on which global investment decisions depend.

We hope the Treasury will therefore support a proposal to increase the rate of relief to 32% for productions qualifying under the relevant cultural test (film, high-end TV, children's TV, and animation). This measure would secure 60,000 new jobs across the UK and attract a hundred new productions a year to places like Bristol, increasing production spend to £6.4bn p.a. by 2024 and build on the strong track record of success, particularly in regions like the West of England.

iii) Stimulus to deliver cultural content (£1.5m) and income support

The impact of COVID-19 has demonstrated a need for a hybrid approach to the delivery of cultural content in the future. We are seeking to co-design with Government a stimulus approach – with investment of circa £1.5m - that will support and protect the vital culture and creative industries sector, enabling them to provide content and services during the period ahead where even with the exit from national lockdown, ongoing restrictions will affect the sector's ability to fully operate.

This fund would direct resources towards local cultural and creative organisations and freelancers and involve the development of cultural content, virtual festivals and productions, as well as targeted face to face engagement (following the relevant guidelines).

Government should also urgently consider a broader hardship fund aimed at freelancers, practitioners, and event organisers whose work has been adversely affected by COVID-19 but who are often those taxpayers excluded from pandemic support.

iv) Cultural Compacts to deliver local recovery (£15m over 3 years)

We would also urge the Government to accept the recommendations put forward in the [Cultural Cities Enquiry](#) and endorse the suggestion for Cultural Compacts to be the key vehicle for delivering local recovery and renewal, embedding them in broader programmes such as the forthcoming Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund. With new investment, compacts could be developed in places where culture is central to local recovery. Compacts would contribute at least 30% match-funding and require just £15m investment over 3 years: £50k per Compact, equivalent to £5m a year.