

Speech: Margot James' speech to launch the BFI Screen Business Report

Good morning. Thank you to Amanda and the BFI for inviting me here today to the launch of the Screen Business report. And it is great to be here at Warner Bros, home of so much great screen entertainment, for it.

It is a pleasure to see so many of you here representing all screen sectors from games and VFX to film and TV. As the Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, I'm certain that such connectedness between our screen sectors is the future.

It is exciting to see such comprehensive analysis of the impact of creative business on the UK economy. To pick out a few highlights:

Over £3 billion total production spend in 2016, with high end TV spend doubling to almost £900 million in just three years; and the video games sector attracting £1.75 billion of corporate investment since the introduction of the Video Games Tax Relief.

The report goes beyond these impressive headline figures to detail just how well the sector delivers benefits across the UK's nations and regions, as my colleague the Chancellor notes in his foreword.

Over £850 million invested in national infrastructure and facilities: so yes, we have the legendary James Bond and Harry Potter franchises resident at Pinewood and Leavesden, but there's a whole new wave of high-end TV and UK indies shooting across the country: Game of Thrones in Northern Ireland, The Levelling in Somerset, Outlander in Scotland, Doctor Who in Wales, God's Own Country in Yorkshire.

And with over £390 million invested through video game tax relief in 2016, the UK's trailblazing video game development clusters such as Edinburgh, Dundee, Leamington Spa and Guildford are flourishing.

The UK provides a truly national screen offer.

The report also highlights the importance not just of place but of people: how the government's tax reliefs have enabled the creation of almost 140,000 Full Time Equivalent jobs in 2016, and highly productive ones at that.

This, coupled with the government's and industry's efforts in advancing skills pipelines, from the work of the National Film and TV School and the newly rebranded ScreenSkills, to the BFI's £19 million Future Film Skills Strategy and Lucasfilm's fantastic Star Wars trainee scheme, are ensuring that a broad and representative new generation of screen professionals is on the march.

Screen Business shows how, over the past decade, the UK has capitalized on its traditional strengths – ongoing government support, our skilled crews and

excellent facilities – while taking advantage of new opportunities such as the incredible growth in demand for content, screen tourism – worth almost £900 million in 2016 – and our world-class visual effects.

It is this innovation, this confidence to be daring with new stories, new technologies, new ways of engaging audiences, that I advocate for proudly as Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries.

And government is driving this progress in partnership with industry: from the Industrial Strategy's Sector Deal to the forthcoming launch of the Contestable Fund which has been designed to stimulate the provision and plurality of innovative, original UK content.

Now, more than ever, such confidence will benefit us as we embrace a post-Brexit world. We will continue to be an outward facing, open, and internationally respected nation. And it is reports like these and examples like Shepperton Studios, investing £500m to create one of the largest studios in the world, that give us, Global Britain, the evidence we need to continue to drive growth, enhance our competitiveness and further support the UK's creative ambition, the diverse results of which are enjoyed by audiences globally.

I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to this piece of work which tells such an important story about the UK screen sectors – many of you are here today, thank you.

I am going to hand over to Harriet now, so it remains for me to thank you all again for this positive and insightful piece of work.