

BBC series *The Outlaws* helps Bristol film and TV sector recover after pandemic 'dip'

Productions such as BBC series *The Outlaws* helped Bristol's film and television sector to a strong recovery after an "expected dip" in inward investment during the pandemic, according to new data.

Annual figures released by Bristol Film Office, a division of Bristol City Council, estimated that film and TV production in the city was worth around £12.6m to the local economy during the financial year ending March 2021 .

This was down from [£17m the previous year](#), after filming in the city ground to a halt during the first national lockdown between March and June 2020.

The data is calculated using national average production spend figures compiled by Creative England, with contribution from all national Film Offices' data.

Bristol Film Office recorded a total of 653 filming days at locations across the city and/or at The Bottle Yard film and television studios in 2020-21, down from 957 days in the previous period.

Following the government's implementation of safety guidelines for the industry, production in Bristol was able to resume in summer 2020 on Disney+ series *The War Of The Worlds*, BBC period drama *The Pursuit of Love* and ITV game show *Tipping Point*.

Senior Bristol film manager Laura Aviles, who oversees The Bottle Yard Studios and Bristol Film Office, said that following the disruption, Bristol had seen similar quarterly

levels of spend to previous years for the remainder of the financial year.

Bristol Film Office said there had been a “rapid increase” in the number productions getting underway in the city for the remainder of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021.

Among them was comedy-thriller *The Outlaws*, starring Bristol comedian Stephen Merchant and Hollywood actor Christopher Walken, which premiered on BBC One on Monday (October 25).

Ms Aviles said: “This is clear evidence that the film and TV production bounced back incredibly quickly in Bristol, despite crew, companies and facilities having endured an incredibly uncertain and challenging period.

“The levels of production we’ve seen so far in the current financial year are exceptionally strong, and we forecast a healthy spend for 2021/22 that we hope will match, or even exceed pre-pandemic levels.”

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Deputy mayor of Bristol Craig Cheney, who is Bristol City Council's cabinet member for finance, governance and performance, added: "Film and TV production truly felt the effects of the covid-19 pandemic, with its impacts reaching into the wider creative sector and the industry's supply chains.

"These figures show that the industry is making a strong return with Bristol continuing to play a major role internationally in filming and production.

"We are committed to supporting the industry through Bristol Film Office and The Bottle Yard Studios and are encouraging those who work in the sector to use our local businesses and talent pool to ensure it remains sustainable as it works towards a brighter future."

Upcoming Netflix sci-fi thriller *The Last Bus* and period drama *Becoming Elizabeth* for US network STARZ were among the other productions filmed at The Bottle Yard Studios and on location across Bristol with support from the city's Film Office.

In February The Bottle Yard Studios announced plans to expand into neighbouring Hawkfield Business Park, after securing an [£11.8m investment](#) from the West of England Combined Authority (Weca).

The move is expected to create more than 1,000 jobs over the next 10 years in the South West's creative sector.

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