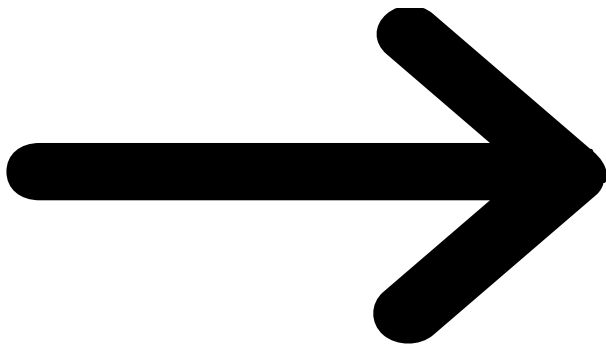


SNP set to finally give go ahead on Pentland Studio

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The Scottish Conservatives have welcomed the news that a major new film studio looks set to receive planning permission after ministers said they were minded to approve it.

The decision about whether to give the go ahead on the proposed £55 million Pentland Studio on the outskirts of Edinburgh had been with the Scottish Government for months, despite all funding being in place.

But developers received notice from the Scottish Government's chief planner that ministers were intending to approve the application, subject to conditions and the completion of a planning obligation.

One of these conditions related to improving infrastructure on the Edinburgh city by-pass, but if completed it would provide Scotland with a world class 96-acre site with a water stage and six sound stages.

The latest instalment of the Avengers franchise recently began filming in Edinburgh, but not all of the filming can take place in Scotland due to the lack of a world leading film studio.

It is hoped that once completed, the new facilities could attract more programmes to be shot in Scotland, and help retain industry expertise.

Scottish Conservative culture spokesman Jackson Carlaw, who recently raised the matter of studio capacity at FMQs, said:

“Having dragged their feet for months I’m delighted that the Scottish Government has seen sense and decided to give this project the go ahead.

“Provided that the conditions of the approval are met, this should provide Scotland with an international, world leading film studio complex.

“I have no doubt that this will help attract major film and television productions to Scotland, and finally allow us to match and exceed facilities elsewhere in the UK.

“It will also give us a real opportunity to develop and nurture creative arts skills in Scotland, and give us the ability to retain talent rather than see it go elsewhere.

“Once finished, this new development will see us have a capacity and talent base to match the unrivalled variety of our natural landscape locations.”

The Scottish Conservatives urged the SNP to approve the application back in January:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/01/ministers-must-reveal-fate-of-55m-film-studio/>

UKIP's Foreign Affairs spokesman condemns yesterday's devastating attack on innocent passengers of the St Petersburg Metro

UKIP's Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs spokesman James Carver MEP condemned yesterday's devastating attack on innocent passengers of the St Petersburg Metro, which left 14 dead and dozens more injured.

Mr Carver said: “My heartfelt sympathy goes to all those affected by this atrocity and to the Russian people. It was nothing less than an act of sheer barbarism.”

“This is the fifth time Russia's transport infrastructure has been attacked since 2007 – all of which have claimed serious loss of life.

Disgraceful that Theresa May calls for

closer UK ties with brutal Saudi Arabia

Responding to calls from Theresa May today for closer ties with Saudi Arabia, UKIP's Women's and Equalities spokeswoman, Margot Parker MEP said:



“Whilst visiting Saudi Arabia, we call on the Prime Minister to raise the issue of horrific human rights abuse which takes place in that state every day.

“Theresa May must convey to the Saudi authorities that women are not second class citizens.

“To ignore brutal abuses on women and the flagrant discrimination against religious minorities in Saudi Arabia is to condone what is going on in this brutal regime.

It's time the Government started giving mental health services the money they need – Barbara Keeley

Barbara Keeley MP,
Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, commenting on the NHS report on Out of Area Placements In Mental Health Services for February, said:

“These statistics show yet another rise in the number of mental health patients being treated hundreds of miles away from their homes due to lack of beds in their local area. These are some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and the fact that some are having to go over 180 miles from where they live just to get a bed creates extra pressures on them and their families.

“Last week's NHS Five Year Forward View report says that some areas of the NHS

have: ‘...been living off bail-outs arbitrarily taken from other parts of the country or from services such as mental health’. Using mental health budgets to plug financial black holes elsewhere is leading to issues like these out of area placements.

“The Tory government has talked a lot about parity of esteem between physical and mental health but the reality is simply not matching the rhetoric. It’s time the Government ended the warm words and started giving mental health services the money they need.”

A new ten-year strategy to improve Scotland’s mental health

Today I want to talk about something which I know will be of huge personal importance to many readers – mental health.