

Labour to lead debate on privatisation of Channel 4

Edinburgh South MP Ian Murray says that the UK Government will destroy the Scottish creative sector with their privatisation plans for Channel 4.

Labour has tabled an opposition day motion allowing any other MPs in the House of Commons, including Conservatives, to reject the government's plans.

Mr Murray points out that Channel 4 has spent more than £220 million on Scottish productions in the last decade and a half and more recently around £20 million per annum.

Channel 4 is obliged to spend more than half their content budget outside London, but in the government plans there would be little in the way of encouragement for spending in the regions, so putting a strain on the Scottish creative sector.

Location, Location, Location, one of Channel 4's most successful shows, is produced by IWC, a Glasgow and London based company. Blockbusters like *Brassed Off*, *My Beautiful Launderette*, *Trainspotting*, *Everybody's Talking about Jamie*, and *Bhaji on the Beach* have showcased the UK's diversity to audiences across the globe.

Mr Murray is due to close the debate on behalf of the Labour front bench.



He said: “Channel 4 has provided us with some of our country’s best loved entertainment – from Graham Norton’s first chat show to Gogglebox and Derry Girls – not to mention the single largest investment into British film with Film4.

“We should be celebrating the incredible success of Channel 4 as a public service broadcaster, not trying to sell it off when we already have a process that works.

“Channel 4 invests millions of pounds into the Scottish creative economy and creates hundreds more jobs through its supply chain. Under the Tories plans, that will be under threat.

“This is yet another instance of the Conservatives endangering the Union – they are recklessly vandalising the cultural fabric of the Union, and doing the nationalists job for them.

“At the next General Election, only Labour can boot Boris out of Number 10 and create a government that delivers a modern Britain, looking to the future.”

Shadow Culture Secretary, Lucy Powell MP said: “Conservative MPs have a chance today to vote with us and show they’re brassed off with the government’s decision to sell off one of Britain’s cultural crown jewels and kill off our home-grown film industry. This sale will also hit jobs in the regions and nations, undermining British made programming and representation.

“The nation has just come together to celebrate the Platinum

Jubilee, with public service broadcasters beaming this proud British moment around the world yet the Conservatives betray our shared values, pursuing Channel 4's sale in an act of cultural vandalism.

"Labour is now the Party of modern Britain with a positive vision for our country's future championing much loved institutions which embody our British values and help our country grow and prosper."