



Glasgow City Council

**Economy, Housing, Transport and
Regeneration City Policy
Committee**

Report by Director of Regional Economic Growth

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Item 6

20th August 2024

**Glasgow Film Charter and
Code of Practice for Filmmakers Review**

Purpose of Report:

This report presents the findings of engagement with Elected Members and local businesses regarding filming in the city and its impact.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee:

- i) Notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) Considers the recommendations provided.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At the Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration City Policy Committee on 15th August 2023, an update on the work of Glasgow Film Office was presented to Members. Several broad issues regarding filming activity in the city were raised prompting a review of the existing Film Charter for the City of Glasgow and Code of Practice for Filmmakers.
- 1.2 The work took place across March and April this year, and this report provides a brief background to the Film Charter and Code of Practice, before presenting the methodology used to gather the data from both Elected Members and businesses impacted by filming in the city. The report presents some options, based on desk research of other key competitor cities in the UK, for charging companies to film in the city, before concluding with recommendations for consideration by Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Film Charter (FC) was established in 1997 and forms the Council's policy to promote Glasgow as an attractive 'film-friendly' city. The FC outlines the city's five commitments to film and television producers:
- i) Council inter-departmental and ALEO co-ordination;
 - ii) Facilitation of parking and traffic management issues under the appropriate statutory requirements of road traffic legislation;
 - iii) facilitation of meetings with key external agencies;
 - iv) a fee structure which seeks only to recoup costs; and
 - v) a policy of non-interference regarding script content.

The Charter¹ was reviewed in 2012 to incorporate co-operation from then recently formed ALEOs such as Glasgow Life and City Property.

- 2.2 The Code of Practice² (CoP), an advisory document outlining minimum standards of good practice, was created at the same time as the Charter to guide larger productions shooting for 5 days or more in the city. All productions in the city, regardless of their duration, are advised to adhere to the basic principles of the CoP.

3. Methodology and Key Findings

- 3.1 The Strategic Projects team within Economic Development carried out both qualitative and quantitative exercises, consisting of workshops with Elected Members, and a survey to capture views from businesses impacted by filming. The findings from this work is appended to this report.

¹ Available at: www.glasgowfilm.com

² Available at www.glasgowfilm.com

Elected Members

- 3.2 On Tuesday 26th March and Wednesday 10th April 2024, project officers carried out a workshop with Elected Members from the wards most impacted by filming in the city and those that generated the most complaints, namely Hillhead, Anderston/City/Yorkhill. During these workshops, Elected Members were asked to relay the challenges and opportunities their local wards faced during filming in their local areas. Three key areas emerged from this: communication with Elected Members and residents; community impact; and legacy/community benefit.

Businesses

- 3.3 One of the key areas of understanding that required further exploration was the impact of filming on local businesses in the city. In May 2024, an online survey was conducted with businesses in the two wards impacted most by filming. They were asked about their experiences of filming in the city and whether they had any ideas that could improve their experience.

- 3.4 Two key questions were asked:

- Has your business been impacted by filming, and if so how?
- Would you say your experience of filming in the city was positive or negative?

A total of 52 responses were received from businesses and of the 45 responses that cited an impact from filming activity, it was split relatively equally with 27 reporting a positive impact and 25 reporting a negative impact from filming.

- 3.5 Respondents also offered ideas on how they felt engagement between production companies, businesses and the Council could be enhanced. Again, three key themes emerged: financial compensation, including suspension of business rates; more effective communication and greater inclusion; and marketing and promotion.
- 3.6 It should be noted that respondents citing negative impacts could also appreciate the benefits of a thriving production industry in Glasgow and were offering suggestions to improve their experience of filming.

4 Charges for Filming

- 4.1 At its meeting in August 2023, Committee asked for comparative work, with other cities, to be carried out, with a focus on understanding what competitor cities are doing with regards to charging fees.
- 4.2 Currently, any charges in Glasgow are governed by the Film Charter. Council and ALEO policy is that the basis of charging of fees for film productions must reflect only actual costs that cannot be readily absorbed into a department or ALEOs operating budget.

- 4.3 Productions that require NRS services not exclusive to filming, for example, traffic orders, parking restrictions, equipment permits, alteration of street lighting or traffic lights etc. will be charged as per the Book of Charges.
- 4.4 The only filming on Council-owned or managed property that does not incur a charge is filming that does not affect the everyday users of that location i.e. exterior short pieces to camera undertaken anywhere in the city outside of NRS Events managed spaces. They are usually short in duration and require little to no assistance from GCC officers. This policy is broadly in line with guidance issued by the City of Westminster and the New York Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment.
- 4.5 Some cities, such as Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol, have filming charges that are similar to Glasgow's but also have a permit system for productions based on the size of crew. The permit fee is charged on top of all other required permissions such as parking, traffic notices etc. and are for Council owned locations only. Filming that takes place entirely within a private location is not required to apply for a permit. The legislative basis for these permits is unclear.
- 4.6 Any imposition of a filming charge in Glasgow would require to be administered. The resourcing of this would need to be fully considered and the cost-benefits of any such charge assessed. There is also a reputational risk of introducing charges that need to be balanced with the current Council position of Glasgow as a film-friendly location.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 The data collated from the review provides a number of recommendations that can be made to help improve and enhance the existing Charter and Code of Practice, which already addresses the main concerns raised.
- 5.2 It is important to note that filming is not a licensed activity and there is no specific permissions required for filming in the city. The Film Office does not authorise permits for filming and has no power to enforce its Code of Practice beyond its purpose as an advisory set of guidelines.
- 5.3 Whilst the recommendations are not direct changes to the Code of Practice, they are ways to mitigate some of the negativity around filming, and reinforce our standing as a Film Friendly City. There are five recommendations presented and will be progressed:

5.3.1 Continue to promote and advocate for community legacy

Encouraging production companies to engage with local associations and contribute to small community activities or community funds is a positive and lasting contribution that may generate more empathy towards filming, without being a prerequisite for permission to film.

Action: Explore new ways of encouraging discussions between Productions and local Community Council's and residents' associations

to highlight specific concerns in the area. In addition, more robust guidelines on areas that have been used for filming will be drafted to help mitigate recurring issues.

5.3.2 Interruption to trade

One of the key issues highlighted was the interruption to trade caused by filming activity. Mitigating action may help overcome this through, for example, temporary installation of signage that shows businesses are open as usual. Businesses that are asked to close will still require to negotiate directly with the Production company, with the Council using its convening powers to encourage both parties to find a mutually beneficial outcome.

Action: Develop new ways of promoting constructive and meaningful dialogue between Productions and affected businesses with clear information on how access can be managed.

5.3.3 Explore methods of promoting local business

Promotional activities to sell the business offer and showcase what benefits local companies could bring to filming in the city will be explored. Screen Scotland and other key stakeholders, such as the Chamber of Commerce, will be engaged to discuss how this can be taken forward.

Action: Promote local crew and suppliers to Productions when possible and encourage the use of affected businesses at the location through, for example, Green Rooms.

5.3.4 Improved communication

A review of both the Film Charter and Code of Practice to strengthen the language around how and when Production companies communicate with businesses and communities that will be affected. If productions fail to communicate with affected parties, they could face further scrutiny when seeking necessary permissions for future filming.

Action: The Code of Practice will be strengthened to ensure that Productions are clear in their responsibilities to notify affected businesses and residents. They will also be required to provide a named contact to deal with any issues that arise. Elected Members in Wards that are scheduled to be used for filming will continue to be notified in advance to ensure they can manage any enquiries from businesses and residents.

5.3.5 Design a plan to encourage film based tourism

Film based tourism will be explored to highlight filming within the city that could be to the benefit of the local business community. Again, working with key stakeholders, such as Glasgow Life, Screen Scotland, Visit

Scotland and Elected Members, work will be carried out to promote Glasgow's legacy as a popular film location.

Action: A stakeholder group will be established, chaired by the Film Office, to explore ways of maximising the economic impact of filming in the city.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 In terms of next steps, the actions outlined in Section 5 will be progressed by the Film Office and progressed with the appropriate key stakeholder groups by the end of the calendar year.
- 6.2 Progress on all the actions will be included in the Film Office Annual Report, and will be presented to committee in August 2025.

7 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	None.
<i>Legal:</i>	None.
<i>Personnel:</i>	Principally Film Office and NRS staff.
<i>Procurement:</i>	None.

Council Strategic Plan: The report supports grand challenge 2: Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens
Mission 2: Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and net zero carbon economy by ensuring that the growth and success of Glasgow's film and TV industry contributes to the local economy with local business, training, and employment opportunities.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.</i>	No specific equality related outcomes.
<i>What are the potential equality</i>	No equality impacts identified.

impacts as a result of this report?

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. n/a

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

Glasgow Film Office's activities broadly support GCC's Climate Plan.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

None identified.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

No.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
N

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

8 Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- i) Notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) Considers the recommendations provided.