

# Redesigning the Film Charter and Code of Conduct for Glasgow

## INTRODUCTION

### CONTEXT TO REPORT

The Strategic Projects team within Economic Development were tasked with undertaking a **review and potential re-design of the Film Charter and Code of Practice** for filming in Glasgow.

The focus of this review was to gather the **thoughts and views of those most impacted by filming** in the city and ask them to generate some ideas on how we might improve their experiences and mitigate any challenges.

Glasgow is and will continue to be a **film friendly city**. There is already a Film Charter and Code of Practice in place. At the forefront of this, is the **health, safety and wellbeing of residents and visitors** and there is a multi-disciplinary team from across GCC to ensure that this is maintained.

The Film Office and Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability actively work with production companies, businesses and residents to ensure that the impact is minimal. This is the case for all events in the city. Filming is often high profile and therefore can draw more attention.

As filming is not a licenced industry, interactions between residents and production companies are private agreements and we are mindful of this in our recommendations.

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## INSIGHTS REPORT

On Tuesday 26th March and Wednesday 10th April, 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. Some early insights include:

### COMMUNICATION

- Communication with Elected members could start earlier, in particular early stage communications for areas with repeat filming;
- Ensure all residents are communicated to and there is consistency, e.g. explore the option of a system that residents can sign up to with and early warning alert via email or text;
- Encourage relationship building with areas that are popular filming locations, especially with residents.

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Parking remains a challenge and while this is already covered in the Code of Practice and difficult to enforce, Elected Members ask that existing traffic issues are addressed before additional pressures such as filming are approved;
- Find an approach to compensate drivers who have paid for permits;
- Ensure greater focus on not blocking disabled parking bays;
- Ensure greater consideration is given to local greenspace;
- Look at other practice around use of space for cafes or new powers around busking and adapt for use of public spaces.

# Redesigning the Film Charter and Code of Conduct for Glasgow

## INSIGHTS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

In addition to discussion around current challenges, Elected Members also highlighted areas that could be capitalised on and could create more of a legacy and touristic draw.

### LEGACY, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Look at how we might **capitalise on Glasgow as a location** and develop touristic destinations for example a film trail or walks. A Glasgow Film Experience permanent exhibition in partnership with Glasgow Life could also be explored as well as utilising QR codes to link people to information at sites of interest;
- Create a better **community benefit** by establishing a **small community benefit fund** for area partnerships via a small levy on the larger production companies. This could be used to stimulate local arts and film events. Merchant City has been cited as a good practice that could be looked at;
- Encourage relationships with **local schools** to help foster better relationships, e.g. location tours for school groups;
- Create a **legacy programme with FE/HE** to open opportunities to local students;
- Highlight more the **economic and educational benefit of filming in the City**.

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## **BUSINESS SURVEY**

### **ENGAGING LOCAL BUSINESSES**

One of the key areas of understanding we needed to explore was the impact of filming on local businesses in the City.

During May, we conducted an online survey with businesses in the 2 wards that are impacted most by filming and mentioned most as areas of disruption. Businesses were asked what their experiences of filming in the city were and if they had any ideas for the future.

This survey was distributed via email, with a follow up of business visits by the Strategic Projects Team to encourage feedback and answer any questions.

### **KEY NUMBERS**

- 52 survey responses
- 142 businesses visited
- 19 from hospitality
- 16 from service sector
- 6 from health sector
- 6 from retail
- 5 from other sectors

# Redesigning the Film Charter and Code of Conduct for Glasgow

## SURVEY RESPONSES

To gather data on their experiences, we asked businesses 2 key questions:

- ***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***

***Of the 52 respondents, 45 (87%) had seen an impact on their business with 7 (13%) reporting no impact.***

***27 (52%) reported a positive impact with 25 (48%) reporting a negative impact.***

Some of the qualitative responses were of a neutral nature. We have pulled out the key data around businesses positive and negative impacts of local filming.

# Redesigning the Film Charter and Code of Conduct for Glasgow

## SURVEY RESPONSES

### NEGATIVE IMPACT

- The most common negative impact was the **loss of trade due to road closures**. Many businesses reported loss of trade due to lack of footfall and loss of any passing trade;
- There was a number of reports of **road closures** completely **restricting access to business** for both customers and staff with some businesses reporting they had to **completely close and lost significant revenue**;
- Some businesses reported that the **compensation they received of £2,000 wasn't enough** with one business reporting their loss of income was over £10,000 with another stating a **weeks trade was down 70-80%**;
- Businesses reported **disruption to deliveries** a particular issue - some stating loading bays were completely blocked off;
- **Lack of notification and communication** were mentioned on a number of occasions. Businesses reported closures and areas of the street being cordoned off with no notice;
- There were some reports of **noise and general disruption** being an issue, but this was mentioned less.

"We run 1 hour sessions all day... so we decided to close to customers rather than have them deal with the inconvenience and be short changed . We would not have been able to operate profitably on a walk in basis."

"We are often down several hundred pounds per day. The filming companies bring their own catering, so their staff do not spend locally and because some of our customers come in by car, they cannot park, so we are down this money too."

"Filming days have caused limited access in and out of our building...we had to reschedule all of our appointments due to extensive road closures and we're not receiving mail or allowed in and out the building. It cost us time and money and we were never recompensed for this."

"Most recently was last Friday...street was unexpectedly cordoned off without any notification. We had contractors scheduled for one of the offices and as they could not park their work had to be rescheduled. We also had a stock delivery from our warehouse that could not be delivered outside the office."

# Redesigning the Film Charter and Code of Conduct for Glasgow

## SURVEY RESPONSES

### POSITIVE IMPACT

- There were some reports of **increased footfall** due to interest in nearby filming;
- One business reported that this increase in footfall was welcome after covid, and despite some disruption, it was welcome income;
- One respondent reported a film company **hiring their space** and this had a good impact on their business;
- Some businesses reported that there was minimal disruption and that clients were very **understanding** when they had to park further away;
- Road closures had minimal disruption that was **well managed and often generated some more interest from their clients in coming into their business**;
- Overall, the businesses reported that the general **"buzz"** and interest in filming had a positive impact on their business, and did not feel there were any major disruptions that they could not handle.

*"Roads were closed so clients had to take a longer route round but everyone was understanding of this and we made sure to give people more time to get to appointments."*

*"Brilliant for the City of Glasgow and brings pride to the people living and working here. Its exciting too."*

*"Although made the shop quieter, I am sure that some businesses benefitted. We did notice a buzz with customers talking about the filming."*

*"There was minor disruption but anyone complaining about it couldn't see the bigger picture. We enjoyed it and we got plenty of notice and the people from the film company were very friendly."*

# Redesigning the Film Charter and Code of Conduct for Glasgow

## BUSINESS IDEAS

We wanted to gather insights and ideas from businesses on how we could improve their experience of filming in the city.

### COMPENSATION AND FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

The most common idea was to look at how we **compensate** businesses for loss of trade. Some businesses suggested introducing a **matrix of amounts** that are calculated based on a questionnaire completed by business and takes into account duration of filming, location, etc. There was even a proposal to perhaps **suspend business rates** during filming.

*"Set amounts or at least a matrix of amounts that businesses should be paid in compensation. Business always have to pick up the slack and it's unfair. A production company might bring business to the city (which I very much support) but they cost us thousands and we didn't benefit from any money they spent locally."*

### COMMUNICATION AND NOTIFICATION

The most next most common idea was to **improve communication and notification** to businesses who will be affected by filming. Some felt that notification methods were inconsistent so a **system** should be put in place. For larger productions, a suggestion was put forward to ensure a council **liaison officer** is put in place to consistently communicate with businesses.

*"Warn people on multiple platforms including but not limited to postal campaigns, so that businesses are aware in advance as to ways in which they could be impacted."*

*"It would be nice to receive notification via email rather than physical letters as these can be misplaced by staff or never received in the first place."*



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## BUSINESS IDEAS

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### INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

There were a number of suggestions of involving local businesses more in filming in the city, either by consulting early or by ensuring they are being promoted as local suppliers. There was a feeling we could do more to support and encourage film companies to use local businesses.

*"Use local businesses to create awareness and buzz about a project by encouraging one off deals, offerings, or collaborations."*

*"Get local businesses involved. Hire their spaces, or eat their food involve the local businesses so they can feel part of something."*

### CAPITALISE FOR TOURISM

It was widely noted that despite disruptions, filming was an asset to the city and businesses suggested capitalising on this by using it more as a tourist draw. Suggestions included more public awareness and involving and promoting businesses more during filming periods.

*"Increase the tourist aspect and increase public awareness by integrating filming with opportunities for the business community."*

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## BUSINESS IDEAS

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## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Inviting business to film sets or to meet cast and crew;
- Offer relaxed parking options nearby for those directly affected;
- Find a way to support local charities and communities when filming takes place;
- Try and encourage more filming to take place away from peak periods;
- Encourage greater consideration for those with mobility issues and work with film companies to resolve this;
- Be more firm with productions companies who exhibit poor behaviour and do not respect local area;

***"I fully support the Film and TV industry and hope that more filming continues in the City."***

***"Glasgow should capitalise on its filming. It was very exciting to see on our doorstep. There was minor disruption but anyone complaining about it couldn't see the bigger picture. We enjoyed it and we got plenty of notice and the people from the film company were very friendly."***

***"Brilliant for the City of Glasgow and brings pride to the people living and working here. It's exciting too."***

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## POINTS TO NOTE

As a result of this research, there are some initial insights we can gather and recommendations we can make.

It is **worth noting that many of the comments, complaints and ideas are already covered by the Code of Conduct and the Film Charter**, with production companies being encouraged to use local businesses and respect the local environment.

**Filming itself is not a licensed activity** and there is no specific permission required for filming. Glasgow 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**. Permissions which may be required for filming to take place, **similar to other events or works taking place** in the city, can include parking dispensation, traffic orders, traffic management, road and footpath occupation permits, etc.

With this in mind, many of the recommendations are **not direct changes to the Code of Practice**, but are ways to **mitigate the negative effects** of filming and reinforce our standing as a **Film Friendly City**.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE

### **RECOMMENDATION 1: CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AND ADVOCATE FOR COMMUNITY LEGACY**

Existing models are working well, although we appreciate that on occasion, there can be minor issues that we try to minimise or mitigate. Procedures are followed as outlined, however we recognise the needs of the local area. Legacy agreements have worked well and are a private agreement between communities, business and production companies. Encouraging production companies to invest in small community activities or contribute to community funds is a positive and lasting contribution and perhaps generate more empathy to filming, without being a prerequisite for permission to film.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2: EXPLORE INTERRUPTION TO TRADE**

Explore options to supports businesses with interruption to trade. This could be signage, promotion that businesses are open as usual or stewards. If businesses are asked to close then the production will enter legal negotiation with said business and GCC will encourage both parties for find a mutually beneficial outcome, that minimises interruption to trade. GCC cannot be involved in negotiations but would encourage active engagement between parties.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: EXPLORE METHODS OF PROMOTING LOCAL BUSINESS**

Local businesses could be promoted via a register or directory of businesses that is supplied to production companies. Promotional activities could be undertaken to sell the Glasgow business offer and showcase what benefits local companies could bring to filming in the City. Screen Scotland and other external agencies, for example the Chamber of Commerce could be engaged to explore this option as they often engage with productions at an early stage.

# *Redesigning the Film Charter and Code of Conduct for Glasgow*

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE

### **RECOMMENDATION 4: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION**

The Film Charter and Code of Conduct could be reviewed to firm up the language around how and when production companies communicate with businesses and communities that will experience disruption, ensuring that production companies are continually aware of our expectations.

GCC is not responsible for communication and there is no legal obligation on film companies however we currently ask that there is a 3 letter notice policy. We are currently trying to address the challenges of production companies changing schedule.

If productions fail to communicate it may impact on future production permissions - if they have not met the standards we expect, they could face further scrutiny if they seek future filming.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5: DESIGN A PLAN TO ENCOURAGE FILM BASED TOURISM**

Film based tourism could be explored to highlight the filming that has taken place in the city as well as working with Glasgow Life, Screen Scotland and other partners to create a strategy or plan to promote Glasgow's legacy as a popular film location.