



Glasgow City Council

City Administration Committee

**Report by Councillor Richard Bell, Depute Leader and City Treasurer
and Convener for Financial Inclusion**

Contact: Morag Johnston Ext 74316

Item 2

19th June 2025

PROPOSED VISITOR LEVY SCHEME FOR GLASGOW

Purpose of Report:

- To note the outcome of the formal consultation stage
- To seek approval to introduce a Visitor Levy Scheme for Glasgow

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and approve the recommendation to introduce a Visitor Levy Scheme for Glasgow.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐

Consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 28 May 2024 and received Royal Assent on 5 July 2024. As outlined in the previous report that went to the City Administration Committee on 30 January 2025 this Act gives Glasgow City Council (GCC) the legal power to introduce a Visitor Levy (VL) Scheme.
- 1.2 The guidance to support the implementation of the Act was developed by Visit Scotland and was published in October 2024.
- 1.3 The City Administration Committee gave permission to proceed to the formal consultation stage for a period of 12 weeks. This report details the findings from the consultation and outlines a potential scheme for Glasgow.

2. Formal Consultation Findings

- 2.1 As part of a consultation process on the proposed Glasgow VL Scheme, a survey was created that invited feedback and comment from stakeholders, organisations and members of the public. The consultation was promoted through the Council's social media channels and made available publicly on the Council's Consultation Hub. A report of the full consultation main findings, including additional comments that were received is available in Appendix A.
- 2.2 The consultation was carried out over a 12-week period, from 7th February to 2nd May 2025. In total, there were 1,312 responses received. The majority of respondents were Glasgow residents (79%), followed by visitors to Glasgow from elsewhere in the UK (8%), those who run, or responding on behalf of, a business in Glasgow (not accommodation provider) (4%) and visitors from overseas (4%).
- 2.3 The main themes that emerged from the consultation exercise include that three quarters of respondents (75%) were aware that Glasgow is planning to introduce a Visitor Levy. Views were evenly split in terms of how much respondents know about the proposals, with half (50%) indicating, they knew a great deal / fair amount about the proposed Levy, while 49% knew not very much / nothing at all.
- 2.4 Views were again split in terms of the Visitor Levy Scheme coming into force around 18 months after the council has approved and published the final scheme, with 45% of respondents agreeing with this approach, while 43% disagreed. Similarly, 45% of respondents agree the rate should be set at 5%, with 44% who disagree.
- 2.5 More than half of respondents (54%) agree the Levy rate should be applied to overnight accommodation across the whole Glasgow boundary area, while four in ten (41%) disagree.

- 2.6 A majority (52%) agree with the proposal to apply the Levy for the entire length of a stay, with 41% of respondents disagreeing with this approach.
- 2.7 In terms of the Levy Scheme being applied indefinitely and subject to regular review, the majority of those responding (58%) agree this should happen, while around a third (34%) disagree.
- 2.8 When presented with a list of areas the Visitor Levy Scheme would help sustain, support and develop the majority agree that all areas listed should benefit (Table 1).

Table 1	Agree	Neither nor	Disagree	Don't know	Base
Public services, programmes and infrastructure that provide a positive experience for visitors and citizens	61%	8%	27%	2%	1276
Glasgow's culture and events portfolio, to ensure they remain world class, attractive and accessible to visitors and residents	61%	10%	27%	2%	1273
Our key markets to ensure visibility and drive the value of tourism to Glasgow's economy	53%	14%	31%	2%	1269
The experiences that we offer to visitors and residents, such as events and bookable products to drive additional spending	54%	14%	31%	2%	1269
Vibrant places across the city by working with local businesses and communities, supporting the case for investment in key assets and creating more reasons for residents and visitors to the city	61%	11%	26%	2%	1270
Valued jobs for Glasgow's people from the tourism sector	61%	10%	27%	2%	1260
Tourism to be delivered in a sustainable and inclusive way	59%	12%	26%	2%	1276

- 2.9 Just under half of respondents (47%) disagree accommodation providers should be reimbursed 1.5% of the Levy collected to cover any cost they might incur as a result of the Scheme, while around a third (35%) agree.
- 2.10 Almost six in ten respondents (57%) agree with Glasgow's proposed approach not to add further groups to the list of exemptions that fall within the scope of the Act, while a third (32%) disagreed with this approach.
- 2.11 Respondents provided a number of common themes and suggestions relating to the proposed Levy Scheme. Although some were not within the scope of the consultation questions, they were still relevant. These included:
- A number of respondents disagreed with the introduction of a Visitor Levy, for example, citing concerns regarding the current appearance of the city. Respondents also commented that visitors already contribute to the city by paying for accommodation and spending money during their stay, and any Levy could reduce the number of tourists visiting.
 - Respondents mentioned a lack of detail preventing them from making an informed choice or decision. There were a number of calls for further

assessment of the impact of a Visitor Levy, particularly on small providers and businesses.

- Some respondents thought the levy should be flat rate rather than a percentage. They felt that this would be simpler to understand for both the visitor and the accommodation provider and for the Council to administer.
- It was suggested that rather than introduce a Visitor Levy the Council should start charging visitors for city attractions like museums and galleries.
- Respondents commented that all Glasgow residents should be exempt from any Visitor Levy, with some even suggesting all Scottish residents should be exempt when visiting the city.
- A number of organisations and associations which represent accommodation providers have suggested a national pause on the introduction of visitor levy. This would give both national and local government the opportunity to work through accommodation provider's issues and concerns, including:
 - National digital platform
 - Fixed flat fee
 - Cap Levy based on length of stay
 - Guidance on exemptions
 - Impacts on small/micro businesses
 - Implementation period
 - Flexibility on how and when levy is collected

2.12 In addition to the formal consultation findings reported above a working group was also set up to carry out informal consultation and co-design events with a range of city stakeholders, the findings are attached at Appendix B and have been updated since the last report to CAC in January. The purpose of the engagement was to work with trusted partners in the sector to gain:

- A sense of consensus and ownership around the scheme objectives
- An idea of what the Visitor Levy Forum might look like
- Views on what the money should be spent on

Key partners and stakeholder organisations included in this process were:

- Greater Glasgow Hoteliers Association
- The Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers
- UK Hospitality Scotland
- Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Glasgow Life
- GCC Economic Development service
- VisitScotland
- Accommodation providers
- Airbnb
- Scottish Bed & Breakfast Association

2.13 There were also information sessions provided for Area Partnerships and Community Councils to help inform their response to the formal consultation.

3. The Proposed Scheme for Glasgow

- 3.1 Following full formal consultation and direct engagement with a range of industry stakeholders and city bodies, the following VL scheme for Glasgow is proposed. A summary is attached at Appendix C.
- 3.2 **Start Date** – The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act provides that the earliest date that a visitor levy scheme can come into force must be at least 18 months after the date on which the local authority publishes its final scheme. If approved at City Administration Committee then the recommended implementation date would be 25 January 2027. Consultation feedback suggested that the scheme should be implemented sooner but this would not be possible due to the legislative lead in period.
- 3.3 **Levy Rate** – 5% - This rate is still recommended as it would provide a reasonable level of income to achieve the scheme objectives after allowing for administration costs. The net income has been reviewed and would now be between £15.9m and £16.1m. It is also assessed as being low enough to minimise the risk to wider visitor spend, as on average, £4.83 for one night's stay would be payable. The majority of consultation respondents either tended to agree or strongly agree with the 5% levy rate.
- 3.3.1 The consultation feedback highlighted, that for some, a flat rate rather than a percentage may have been preferred. However, the Scottish Government has recently confirmed that a flat rate fee is not an option, and the percentage rate will be retained within the legislation.
- 3.3.2 The levy should apply to online booking made 12 months in advance of the scheme implementation date. These monies would be paid to the council after the customer stayed at the accommodation.
- 3.4 **Accommodation Liable for the levy** - The levy would still apply to all hotels, hostels, guest houses, bed & breakfasts and self- catering accommodation, including those with an annual turnover under the VAT threshold, within Glasgow.
- 3.5 **Geographic Areas** - Applies across the entire local authority area. There was varying feedback during the consultation but the majority of consultation respondents tended to agree or strongly agreed with the scheme being city wide.

- 3.6 **Length of stay** – Applies for entire stay. Feedback from the industry stakeholder group is that the charge should apply at all times. They saw no merit in capping the length of stay as it would be an unnecessary administration burden as most visitors stayed for a few days. This was further supported by the quantitative data where more than half of respondents believed it should apply for the entire stay.
- 3.7 **Levy Duration** - Indefinite scheme subject to regular review. The majority of consultation respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this approach.
- 3.8 **Scheme Objectives** - The scheme objectives must relate to developing, supporting or sustaining facilities or services which are substantially for or used by persons visiting the scheme area for leisure or business purposes (or both).

3.8.1 The overarching aim of the scheme is to grow the value of tourism in Glasgow by delivering for our visitors, our businesses, our communities and the environment. The scheme will align with a variety of city strategies such as the Glasgow Tourism Strategy, the City Centre Strategy, Culture Strategy, and Events Strategy.

The objectives of the scheme are there to sustain, support and develop:

- Public services, programmes and infrastructure that provide a positive experience for visitors and citizens. 61% agreed/strongly agreed.
- Glasgow's culture and events portfolio, to ensure they remain world-class, attractive and accessible to visitors and residents. 61% agreed/strongly agreed.
- Our key markets to ensure visibility and drive the value of tourism to Glasgow's economy. 53% agreed/strongly agreed with 31% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.
- The experiences that we offer to visitors and residents, such as events and bookable products to drive additional spending. 54% agreed/strongly agreed.
- Vibrant places across the city by working with local businesses and communities, supporting the case for investment in key assets and creating more reasons for residents and visitors to visit the city. 61% agreed/strongly agreed.
- Valued jobs for Glasgow's people from the tourism sector. 61% agreed/strongly agreed.
- Tourism to be delivered in a sustainable and inclusive way. 59% agreed/strongly agreed.

3.9 **Collecting the Levy** – Accommodation providers will be liable for the levy. They will be required to submit quarterly reports, detailing the total accommodation charges and the total levy due via the national online portal. Payment to GCC will be made at the same time.

3.10 **Accommodation Providers Costs** – Accommodation providers advised that they are likely to incur some costs so it is proposed that accommodation providers retain 1.5% of the levy monies they collect.

3.10.1 There were a range of views in relation to this particular element of the proposed scheme. Some Industry stakeholders stated that their costs could exceed the proposed 1.5% reimbursement and would support a higher percentage. However, the survey results showed that the majority of respondents did not support this element, and some felt that the costs should be absorbed by businesses and the monies collected be used in full to support the scheme objectives.

3.10.2 The recommendation is that the percentage rate should not be removed completely or increased and that the 1.5% reimbursement seems a fair middle ground and should be retained in the final scheme.

3.11 **Exemptions & Reimbursements** – A number of groups do not fall within the scope of the Act and are therefore not liable to pay the levy. These groups are not considered visitors.

3.11.1 Those who are using overnight accommodation as their only or primary residence, which could be due to:

- being homeless or at risk of homelessness
- very poor housing conditions such as overcrowding or disrepair
- experiencing domestic abuse or other forms of violence
- being an asylum seeker or refugee

3.11.2 In addition, the levy does not apply to:

- someone staying on a gypsy/traveller site
- those in receipt of specific disability benefits – Disability Living Allowance; Disability Assistance; Attendance Allowance; Pension Age Disability Benefit and Personal Independence Payment. These visitors would pay the levy to the accommodation provider then, with proof of their overnight stay and benefit entitlement, would apply to have the charge reimbursed via BACS by the council, in accordance with the

reimbursement process permitted under the Act. Monies should be reimbursed within 28 days.

- The accommodation providers would not be expected to make a decision on eligibility at the point of sale.
- No other exemptions are recommended, as to administer would create additional administrative burden and costs.

3.12 Visitor Levy Forum –The Act sets out that a Visitor Forum must be set up within six months of GCC publishing the final scheme for Glasgow. The function of the Forum is advisory, with the purpose of providing advice to the council relating to the VL. The Accommodation Providers highlighted the need for transparency throughout the process so it is proposed that the forum includes representatives that already have a key role in the development of the local visitor economy as well as representatives from Glasgow communities. Feedback from industry stakeholder group is that the Chair should be selected from accommodation providers. If the Scheme is approved a report will be brought back to the City Administration Committee on the proposed membership and terms of reference for this advisory group.

3.13 Use of Funds - The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act stipulates that the net proceeds of the VL must be spent on facilitating the achievement of the scheme's objectives and 'developing, supporting and sustaining facilities and services which are substantially for or used by persons visiting (overnight) for leisure or business purposes (or both)'. After administration costs, the remaining funds will be split across the following investment areas:

3.13.1 City Operations and infrastructure - The look and feel of the city significantly contributes to the overall visitor experience. Investment in the built and natural environment and infrastructure will support the tourism aspirations for the city. 65% agreed/strongly agreed with this approach and 24% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

3.13.2 Culture and Events - Culture and Events are a key driver of the city's visitor economy, as well as an important tool in the positive positioning of Glasgow both national and internationally. Additional funding will help support the successful delivery of the city's Events Strategy 2035 and Cultural Strategy 2030, investing in the city's long-term attractiveness and sustainability, as well as supporting the advocacy and promotion of Glasgow as a leading culture and events destination. 62% agreed/strongly agreed with this approach and 22% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

3.13.3 Destination Marketing and Management – In an increasingly competitive market, successful destination marketing initiatives will grow Glasgow's market share of leisure visitors coming to Scotland and the UK. Additional funding will support initiatives that align with the city's tourism goals, as outlined in the Glasgow Tourism 2030 action plan. 43%

agreed/strongly agreed with this approach and 37% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

- 3.13.4 During the consultation there were a range of suggested projects that could be funded by the VL scheme. Respondents were clear that the levy should be used to support new projects, providing additional value, rather than filling gaps in existing budgets.
- 3.13.5 It should be noted that no specific projects will be initiated until the VL monies are collected from accommodation providers. Based on the recommended start date of the scheme the first quarterly return would be paid in April 2027.
- 3.13.6 Proposals on the application of funds collected will be brought back to a future City Administration Committee for approval. In line with the guidance this will be after the set-up of the Visitor Levy Forum to allow its input into the proposals for funds use.
- 3.14 **Enforcement** – Accommodation providers are required to keep accurate records of all information relating to the VL. The council has the powers to conduct inspections with accommodation providers to ensure that they are compliant with the scheme. Accommodation providers who fail to comply could be subject to penalties. There is an internal review and appeals process to review council decisions, if necessary. The intention is to review and process appeals within 28 days.
- 3.15 **Reviewing the Scheme** – GCC would be required to review the VL scheme. The first review must be carried out within three years of the scheme coming into force. Second and subsequent reviews must be carried out within three years of the previous review. The results must be published and copied to the VL Forum.
- 3.16 **Annual Reporting** - Within the first 18 months from when the scheme is introduced, and for each 12-month period thereafter, the council must prepare a report setting out:
- The amount of money collected
 - How the net proceeds have been used
 - The performance of the scheme in relation to its objectives

4. Potential Revenue

- 4.1 To estimate potential revenue from the VL the Economists within Glasgow City Region's Intelligence Hub have further analysed available data to determine the likely effect of VL on Glasgow City's economy.
- 4.2 The Hub previously estimated the potential impact of a VL being implemented based on data from Glasgow Life's STEAM access which may have undercounted the number of accommodation rooms purchased. The following figures have since been updated to a more robust and more recent source from the CoStar platform which presents a higher number of accommodation rooms purchased and therefore a higher revenue from the VL scenarios.

The updated figures are now:

Average daily hotel room rate: **£96.61**

Annual number of rooms rented: **3,489,865**

Annual accommodation expenditure: **£337.16m** (average room rate multiplied by annual number of rooms rented)

- 4.3 Five different levies were analysed ranging from 1% to 5% of accommodation spend. The table below shows the likely revenue raised.

Levy (% of spend accommodation spend)	Likely revenue raised
1%	£3.4m
2%	£6.7m
3%	£10.1m
4%	£13.5m
5%	£16.9m

Note: The likely revenue figures could increase if accommodation prices increase in advance of the levy being introduced.

5. Administration Costs

- 5.1 A range of employee roles with specific skills will be required to support the successful start-up and delivery of the scheme. These have been slightly increased since the last report and will still include a Project Manager, IT Support, Legal, Finance, Data Analytics, Communications, Decision Makers, Call Handlers, Enforcement and Compliance Officers.
- 5.2 Additionally there will be the costs for the use of the national online portal that is currently being developed by the Improvement Service. The costs are likely to be around £60K for set up and £122K for year one provision, depending on the number of Local Authorities that sign up to use the platform.
- 5.3 With the information available now, it is estimated that start-up costs could be up to £400K, this is a slight increase from the figures in the last report as costs

to support appropriate communication with industry and visitors is now included. The start-up costs will be funded from the Support for Service Redesign and Future Income Generation Fund, approved in the 2024/2025 budget.

- 5.4 The overall annual costs are still likely to be around £750K to £950K to deliver the core scheme.

6. Online Portal

- 6.1 Work is well underway with the development of the Online Portal being designed by the Improvement Service. A VL Digital Group has been created with representatives from the Improvement Service, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Highlands and Argyll & Bute. The system is still on track for delivery by spring 2026.
- 6.2 Accommodation providers will be able to upload their levy data and payments. The system will also have an admin hub to assist with key administrative duties to support the delivery of the scheme.
- 6.3 The assumption is that GCC will use this system and the costs associated would be funded from some of the revenue raised from the scheme.

7. Business Impact

- 7.1 At this stage, the only empirical evidence available is from the assessment of other cities. Those that have introduced these types of schemes recently did show evidence that generally growth in visitor numbers has continued. Barcelona, Lisbon, Berlin, Hamburg and Paris all continued to show growth in overnight visitor numbers.
- 7.2 As noted in the previous report, the Scottish Government conducted a Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment and there is no change to their findings that cities that have introduced these types of schemes did show evidence that generally growth in visitor numbers has continued after the introduction of their schemes.
- 7.3 The City of Edinburgh Council have been researching the VL for a number of years now and have had the opportunity to work with the University of Edinburgh and commission a study on the impact of a visitor levies on visitor behaviour. The Edinburgh scheme comes into force in the summer of 2026 so real empirical Scottish data should become available.

- 7.4 People will continue to come to Glasgow for many different reasons whether for business or to take full advantage of our many events and cultural offerings. At this stage there is no evidence to suggest that the introduction of a VL in Glasgow will have an adverse effect on visitor numbers.
- 7.5 At this time, it is difficult to assess whether the introduction of a VL will result in a change of visitor behaviour which would result in either a drop in demand, or a shift to less expensive accommodation. The potential impact on the economy was raised during the VL consultation, so if approved, the Economists from Glasgow City Region's Intelligence Hub will continue to track and analyse data and report via the approved governance channels.

8. Governance

- 8.1 A robust governance structure will be developed to ensure delivery of the VL scheme for Glasgow in line with the legislative requirement of the Act, including:
- City Administration Committee
 - Political Oversight Group
 - Appropriate Officer Groups
 - VL Forum
 - Project, Operations and Communications officers to support the process

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 If the committee approves a VL scheme for Glasgow then the next steps will be as follows:
- Notify Ministers and formally announce the VL Scheme for Glasgow
 - Assign Communications officer to develop robust Communications Strategy for key stakeholders
 - Prepare proposals for the VL Forum membership and terms of reference to bring back to CAC for approval
 - Develop full project plan for key deliverables during the 18-month implementation period and governance requirements

10. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:

Initial start-up costs will be funded from the allowance in the 2024-25 budget for Service Redesign and Future Income Generation. Ongoing annual running costs will be funded by the scheme as set out in the Act. The proposed scheme would generate net revenue for the delivery of the scheme objectives.

Legal: Legal Services will continue to support the implementation of the Visitor Levy Scheme in line with the requirements under the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024.

Personnel: Additional employees will be required for the administration of the system including, Project Manager, IT Support, Legal, Finance, Data Analytics, Communications, Decision Makers, Call Handlers, Enforcement and Compliance Officers.

Procurement: No procurement requirements as bespoke national system being developed by the Improvement Service.

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge One – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities. Mission 4 – Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant.

Grand Challenge Two – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens. Mission 2 – Support the growth of an innovative, resilient and carbon zero economy. Develop a business case for using new local Visitor Levy powers and consult on how this could be implemented.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify. Yes, Outcomes 2; Regular and systematic design of service delivery across the Council Family to enable meaningful participation; and also Outcome 3 providing access to information.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? No significant impact identified at this stage. However there will be further ongoing review as outlined in the [EqIA Visitor Levy Scheme for Glasgow](#)

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help There is a positive impact for those in receipt of UK disability benefits. Also, exemptions in place

address socio-economic disadvantage.

for homelessness and refugees as well as gypsy and traveller sites.

Climate Impacts:

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

Links to the climate ambitions of the Tourism Strategy 2030

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

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

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

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

No there are no immediate privacy or data protection impacts as accommodation providers will not share any individual's information on the online portal.

Information and Data Protection Team with support from Legal Services will ensure compliance. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be completed if permission to proceed is granted.

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

11. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to approve the recommendation that a Visitor Levy Scheme for Glasgow be implemented from January 2027.

Appendix A

Findings from Formal Consultation

Introduction

This report provides a summary of the main findings from the Glasgow Visitor Levy Scheme consultation.

Background

As part of the consultation process a survey was created that invited feedback and comment on the proposed Glasgow Visitor Levy. The consultation was carried out over a 12-week period between 7th February and 2nd May 2025. The survey was distributed to a range of stakeholders and organisations, promoted through the Council's social media channels and made available to the public on the Council's [Consultation Hub](#). This formal consultation phase, was built on the initial and ongoing discussions with stakeholders, including accommodation providers, their representatives, as well as Community Councils across the City.

In total, there were 1,312 responses received. However, it should be noted that 588 additional responses were received over a two-day period from a single IP address. As these responses were identical, for the purposes of this report, they are treated as a single response.

This report contains several charts and tables, where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories or multiple answers.

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not aim to produce a quantifiable or generalisable summary of the populations, but to identify and explore the different issues and themes relating to the subject being researched. The assumption is that issues and themes affecting respondents reflect the issues and themes in the wider population concerned. Although the extent to which they apply to the wider population, or specific sub-group, cannot be quantified, the value of qualitative research is in identifying the range or different issues involved and the way in which these impact on people.

General Comments

Respondents provided a number of common themes and suggestions relating to the proposed Levy Scheme. Although some were not within the scope of the consultation questions, they were still relevant. These included:

- A number of respondents disagreed with the introduction of a Visitor Levy, for example, citing concerns regarding the current appearance of the city. Respondents also commented that visitors already contribute to the city by paying for accommodation and spend money during their stay, and any Levy could reduce the number of tourists visiting.
- Several respondents mentioned a lack of detail preventing them from making an informed choice or decision. There were a number of calls for further assessment of the impact of a Visitor Levy, particularly on small providers and businesses.
- Some respondents thought the levy should be flat rate (progressive) rather than a percentage. They felt that this would be simpler to understand for both the visitor and the accommodation provider and for the Council to administer.
- It was suggested that rather than introduce a Visitor Levy the Council should start charging visitors for city attractions like museums and galleries.
- Respondents commented that all Glasgow residents should be exempt from any Visitor Levy, with some even suggesting all Scottish residents should be exempt when visiting the city.
- A number of organisations and associations which represent accommodation providers have suggested a national pause on the introduction of visitor levy. This would give both national and local government the opportunity to work through accommodation provider's issues and concerns. These included:
 - National digital platform
 - Fixed flat fee
 - Cap Levy based on length of stay
 - Guidance on exemptions
 - Impacts on small/micro businesses
 - Implementation period
 - Flexibility on how and when levy is collected

Respondents Information

Question 1: Which category best describes you as a respondent to this consultation.

	Number	Percentage
I am a Glasgow resident	1030	79%
I run, or am responding on behalf of, a business that provides accommodation in Glasgow	32	3%
I run, or I am responding on behalf of, a business in Glasgow (not accommodation provider)	47	4%
I'm part of a representative group for business or tourism	18	1%
I invest or own property in Glasgow, but don't live there	9	1%
I'm a visitor to Glasgow from elsewhere in the UK	108	8%
I'm a visitor to Glasgow from overseas	49	4%

Base: 1298

Awareness and Knowledge

Question 2: Were you aware that Glasgow is planning to introduce a Visitor Levy?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	965	75%
No	315	24%
Don't know	15	1%

Base: 1295

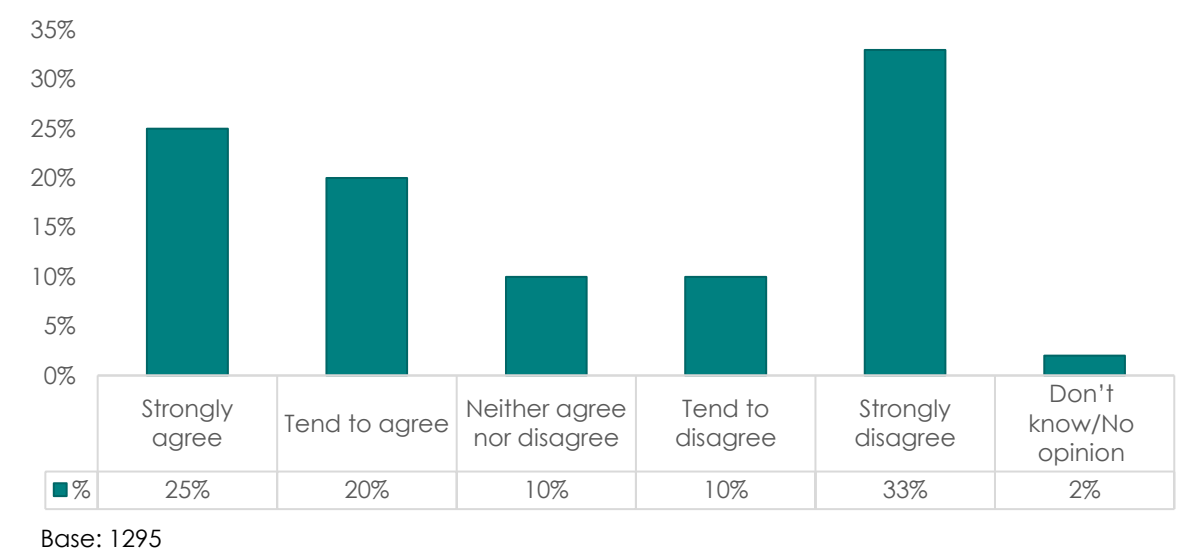
Question 3: How much, if anything, do you feel you know about Glasgow's proposed Visitor Levy Scheme?

	Number	Percentage
A great deal	121	9%
A fair amount	538	41%
Not very much	466	36%
Nothing at all	165	13%
Don't know	10	1%

Base: 1300

Question 4: The proposed Visitor Levy Scheme would come into force in Glasgow around 18 months after the council has approved and published the final scheme.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the council introducing the scheme 18 months after approval?

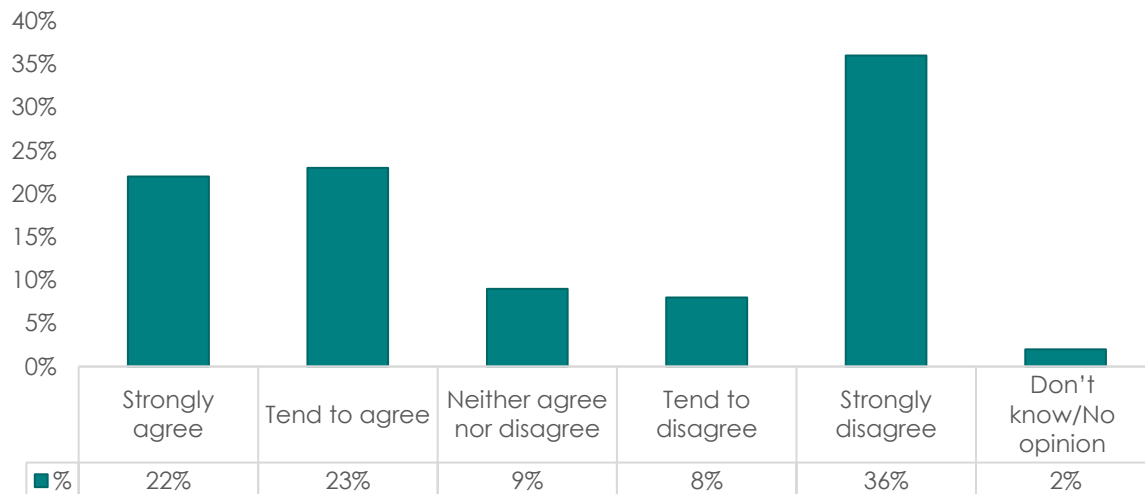


A number of respondents stated that they would like to see the Levy introduced earlier; with particular mention of introducing it before the Commonwealth Games in 2026, taking advantage of the increase in visitors to the city. It was suggested that 12 months would be better, and that we could look at other cities who have already introduced a levy to help speed up the process and roll-out.

‘Surely we could move a bit faster with this? We’ve seen plenty of other cities around Europe implement this so we surely must be able to look at the learnings and move more quickly.’

There was also a suggestion that the introduction should be done on a phased approach with larger hotels and chains that have sufficient staff and infrastructure bringing it in quicker, while smaller operators are given more time and support, if needed. It was highlighted that if some bookings, particularly those linked to conferences are made in advance, then consideration needs to be taken on how they are affected by the introduction of a levy.

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to set the visitor levy rate at 5%?



Base: 1283

Respondents provided some comments on the proposed 5% Levy rate, stating that it felt about right, and was not high enough to put people off and not low enough that it wouldn't make a difference in the amount generated. There was some suggestion that the rate could be higher or perhaps start off at 5% and increase gradually overtime.

It was mentioned that most major cities have some sort of visitor tax, and it was a great way to generate additional income to clean and maintain the city, making it more attractive for visitors and businesses, as well as to improve services and infrastructure.

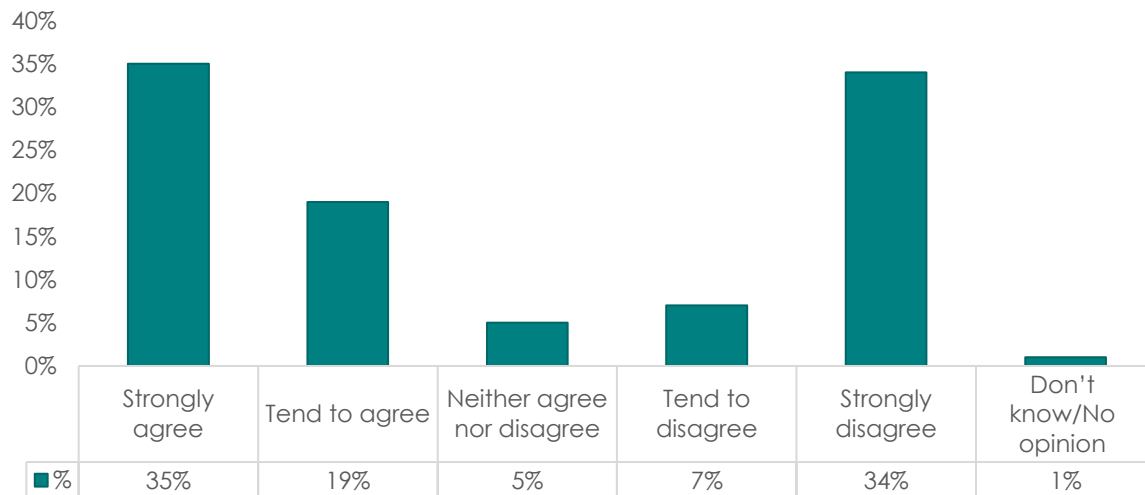
There were also several issues raised as to the proposed Visitor Levy being set at 5%. Some respondents stated that implementing a levy at 5% would put people off visiting the city and act as a deterrent for those considering Glasgow as a destination to visit. Once introduced there would be no incentive to visit the city. There was a general feeling that tourists should not be charged for visiting, as they already contribute to the city by paying for accommodation, which is expensive enough in its own right, and spend money within the city during their stay.

If implemented, a 5% rate was considered by some respondents to be too high and should initially be made lower with the option to increase gradually over time. It was suggested that a flat-rate fee per night would be more suitable, as opposed to a percentage rate. This could be in the region of £1 or £2 per night per booking. Alternatively, any levy introduced could be linked to the star rating of the accommodation, with 5-star properties having a higher charge rate than those rated lower.

The overall standard and state of the city was raised as an issue to implementing a visitor levy, with respondents commenting that the city is in a

poor condition (cleanliness issues, graffiti, chewing gum, litter, empty buildings, etc.), and should be cleaned up before the levy scheme is even considered. Some felt Glasgow was not comparable to other major cities who already have or are considering a Visitor Levy.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Levy rate being applied to overnight accommodation across the whole boundary area of Glasgow City Council?



Base: 1286

Respondents who were supportive of the Levy Rate being applied across the whole Glasgow City Council boundary felt that this would make it more consistent and was the fairest option available. For example, if the Levy was only applied to accommodation in a specific area (e.g. city centre), then that would place those accommodations at a disadvantage. It was also commented that imposing the Levy citywide would make it easier to implement and administer, as well as easier for people to understand.

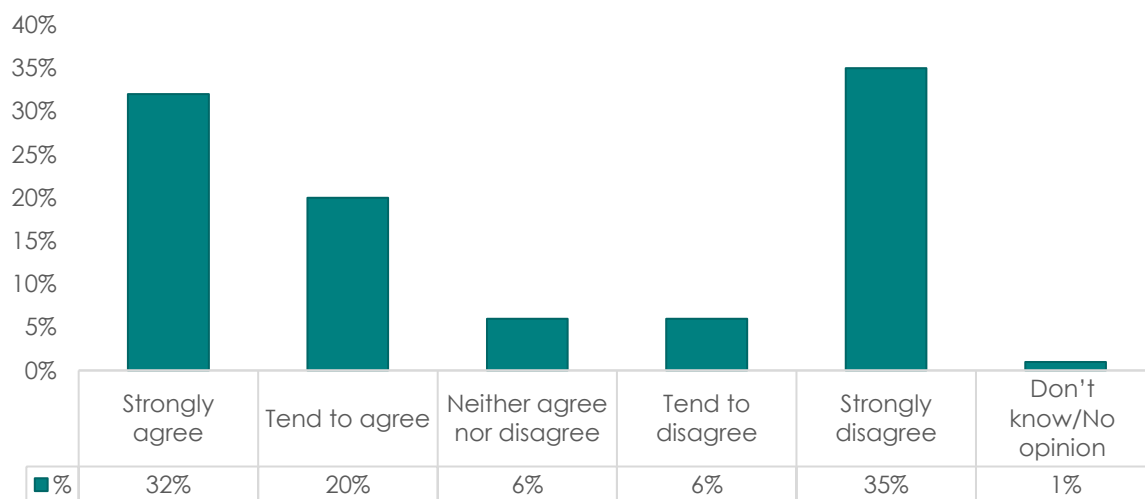
A number of comments were received opposing the Levy rate being applied citywide, indicating that the rate should only be applied to the city centre, and perhaps west end accommodation. There was a feeling from some that there should be a targeted approach across the city, with the rate being applied in areas of high demand for accommodation next to event venues such as Hampden Park and concert venues, etc. There was also some suggestion that the Levy should be introduced at certain times of the year, such as during the peak tourist season, and withdrawn during the low season.

Certain exemptions were suggested by respondents for consideration, including any geographical areas the Council was keen to develop, which could incentives development. Some respondents also thought that if certain areas of the city were exempt, this may encourage tourists to visit areas they might not usually consider, which in turn would spread the benefits of tourism.

Some respondents indicated that specific areas across the city with multiple levels of deprivation or with insufficient numbers of accommodation should be exempt. As well as comment made that the Levy should only be applied in areas where there was a guarantee the money would be re-invested and spent in.

Question 7: It is proposed that the Levy is applied for the entire length of a stay.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



Base: 1281

There was a general feeling from respondents that the Levy should be applied for the entire length of the stay, like the procedure in other major cities around the world. They commented that visitors use services within the city when visiting and the implementation of the Levy during a stay would help contribute to these services and the general upkeep of the city. It was noted that a Visitor Levy was a good way to raise funds to help improve the city. If the Levy was applied for the entire length of the stay, then this would help keep it simple, consistent and easy for everyone to understand.

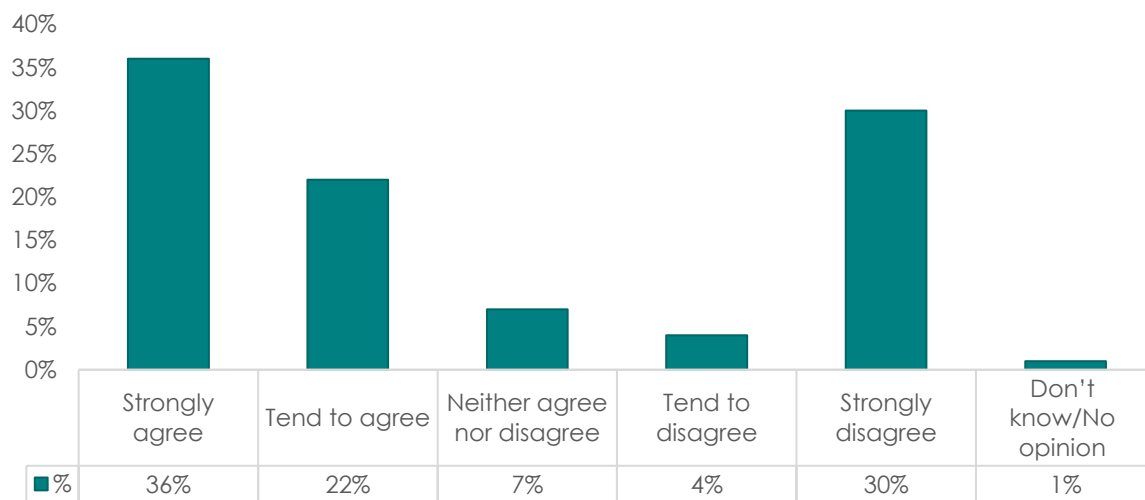
In terms of those respondents who disagreed with the proposal to apply the Levy for the entire length of stay, the main comments received suggested that there should be no Levy at all, and tourists should not be charged for visiting the city. It was felt that it would put people off visiting the city and damage tourism by making the city more expensive to visit.

If the Levy was to be implemented respondents provided comments on various approaches that could be used, as opposed to the 5% per room, per night as proposed. It was suggested that a flat-rate daily fee be used as an alternative (e.g. £1 or £2 per night), or a one-off fee per visit. Some commented that a tiered approach could be adopted, such as a certain amount for the first few days, and then an alternative amount thereafter. Respondents also felt that any Levy charge should be reduced for longer

stays, or capped at a maximum number of nights, not the entire duration of the stay.

Question 8: The Levy Scheme will be applied indefinitely and subject to regular review.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach?



Base: 1278

Several comments were received stating that regular reviews of any proposed Levy must be implemented. This would contribute to measuring and ensuring the effectiveness of the Levy. Respondents noted that regular reviews would be a way of checking how the money gathered through the Levy was being spent, as well as identifying any potential impacts on tourism or the economy in the city. Comments received indicated that regular reviews, perhaps annually or every two years would provide evidence to potentially amend the Levy Scheme moving forward if needed.

Alternatively, it could provide the opportunity for the Scheme to be scrapped if unsuccessful. For regular reviews to be successful, respondents felt they should be carried out by an independent body to ensure impartiality.

In terms of the Levy Scheme being applied indefinitely, some respondents commented that nothing should be applied indefinitely and should always be open to review or amendment. It was suggested that the Scheme should be implemented for a fixed period initially, or for a trial basis (e.g. 6 to 12 months), to allow time to pass before being reviewed.

Question 9: The overarching aim of the scheme is to grow the value of tourism in Glasgow by delivering for our visitors, our businesses, our communities and the environment. The scheme will align with a variety of city strategies such as the [Glasgow 2030 Tourism Strategy](#), the [City Centre Strategy 2024 - 2030](#), [Culture Strategy 2024 - 2030](#), and [Events Strategy 2035](#).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the objectives of the scheme sustaining, supporting and developing the following?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Base
Public services, programmes and infrastructure that provide a positive experience for visitors and citizens	42%	19%	8%	3%	24%	2%	1276
Glasgow's culture and events portfolio, to ensure they remain world class, attractive and accessible to visitors and residents	39%	22%	10%	6%	21%	2%	1273
Our key markets to ensure visibility and drive the value of tourism to Glasgow's economy	30%	23%	14%	7%	24%	2%	1269
The experiences that we offer to visitors and residents, such as events and bookable products to drive additional spending	29%	25%	14%	8%	23%	2%	1269
Vibrant places across the city by working with local businesses and communities, supporting the case for investment in key assets and creating more reasons for residents and visitors to the city	39%	22%	11%	4%	22%	2%	1270
Valued jobs for Glasgow's people from the tourism sector	40%	21%	10%	5%	22%	2%	1260
Tourism to be delivered in a sustainable and inclusive way	38%	21%	12%	5%	21%	2%	1276

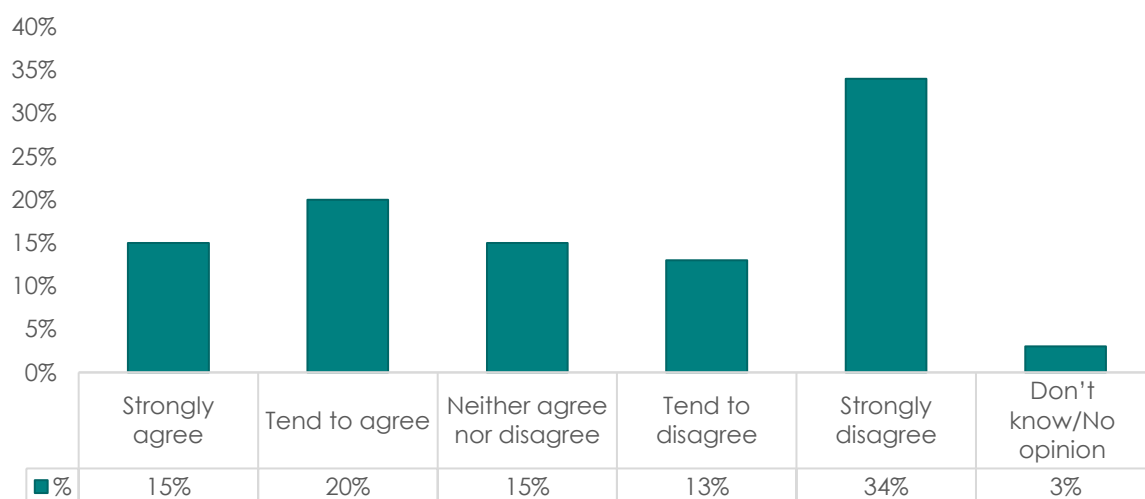
In addition to the various city strategies the Levy Scheme would be aligned to, respondents provided a number of comments and suggestions relating to how money generated should be used. There was a strong feeling that any money generated should be ringfenced to improve the city and its local communities. Improvements specifically mentioned included, improved cleanliness of the city, potholes, graffiti removal and transport. There was a general feeling from some that the proceeds from the scheme should feed into upgrading Council services and the overall city infrastructure. Tackling the homelessness crisis in Glasgow was also an area some respondents felt could be improved through the Levy Scheme.

Some additional comments did indicate that the money from the Scheme should be invested in tourism and culture in the city, as well as to help local businesses. It was suggested that any investments made, and their potential impacts should be evidenced by impact assessments and annual reports.

There were suggestions that the Council should deliver better services before any Levy is considered, and that any money raised through the Levy should not be wasted or spent on pointless projects. There was also a feeling that the money should not be used to top up the Council budget, or to help offset any shortfall or gaps in the budget.

Question 10: It is proposed that accommodation providers would be reimbursed 1.5% of the levy collected to cover any costs they might incur as a direct result of the Levy Scheme (Visitors will pay for the levy at the point that they pay for their accommodation in a single transaction).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with proposal?



Base: 1272

A number of respondents felt that the reimbursement to providers for administrating the scheme was either too high or should not be given at all. It was suggested that if there was any additional cost to the provider, that they should either absorb these costs or increase their prices. Some respondents suggested that there should be a tiered approach with large providers not being reimbursed or being reimbursed less than small providers. There was comment made that providers could be reimbursed for the initial implementation (staff training, system changes, etc.) and then the rate reduced to cover the ongoing administration.

'Accommodation providers reimbursement could be dropped after 12 months to 1%. This would help cover any set up costs involved but ongoing cost should be

minimal to the accommodation provider.'

It was highlighted that businesses do not get reimbursed for collecting any other form of taxation (i.e. VAT) and should not be reimbursed for collecting the levy on behalf of the Council.

There were some respondents who felt that the reimbursement was not enough to cover the administrative and transaction costs which the levy will require. It was suggested that the fee should reflect the actual cost to the provider and that there should be further investigation to ensure, particularly small businesses, do not lose out as a result of implementing the levy.

Question 11: A number of groups do not fall within the scope of the Act and are therefore not liable to pay the levy. These groups are not considered visitors. Glasgow does not propose any further groups be added to this.

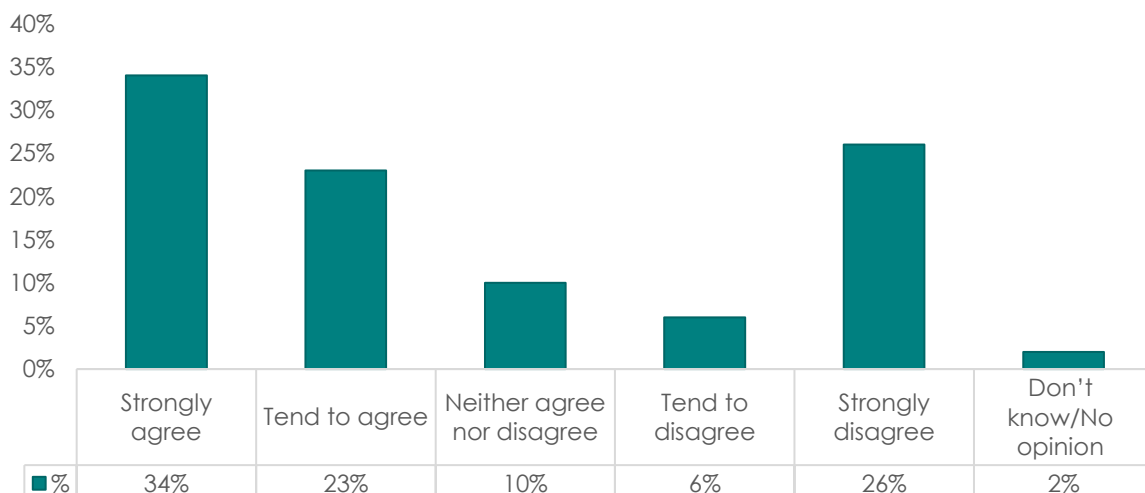
These include those who are using overnight accommodation as their only or primary residence, which could be due to:

- Being homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Very poor housing conditions such as overcrowding or disrepair
- Experiencing domestic abuse or other forms of violence
- Being an asylum seeker or refugee

In addition, the levy does not apply to:

- Someone staying on a gypsy/traveller site
- Those in receipt of specific disability benefits – Disability Living Allowance; Disability Assistance, Attendance Allowance; Pension Age Disability Benefit; and Personal Independence Payment. These visitors would pay the levy to the accommodation provider then, with proof of overnight stay and benefit entitlement, would apply to have the charge reimbursed by the council.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



Respondents highlighted a number of additional groups who should be exempt from the Visitor Levy scheme. There was significant support for Glasgow's residents being excluded, since they already pay council tax and them not being visitors in their own city. There was also strong support for extending this to Scottish residents.

There was a range of circumstances put forward where respondents felt there should be exemptions. These included:

- Attending hospital/medical appointments
- Temporary accommodation due to building works/damage
- Escaping domestic abuse/violence
- Undertaking care or bereavement responsibilities
- Travelling for work and business

It was also mentioned that Glasgow should follow a similar route to Edinburgh and exempt charitable organisations or stays, which are related to charitable purposes.

With regards to the exemption for those with a disability, it was believed that this was too vague a term which would leave it open to abuse. It was suggested that it should only apply to visitors with mobility and visual disabilities. There was also some concern about how to define disability for visitors from other countries and regions, as eligibility would be different. Several respondents also highlighted the requirement for those with a disability feeling the need to explain and justify this in order to claim for reimbursement.

Some respondents did feel that those in receipt of benefits should not automatically be exempt from the Visitor Levy. They highlighted that this alone should not be seen as an indication of affordability.

It was felt that the process of payment then refund for exemptions was neither efficient nor cost effective. Dealing with exemptions at the point of sale or arrival would prevent the visitor from having to go through a reimbursement process and also save the Council money in having to administer and process reimbursements.

This view was countered by those stating that there could potentially be GDPR requirements with providers collecting the necessary information regarding exemptions and possibly sharing this information. It was also highlighted that a reimbursement scheme would prevent any potential conflict or debate. This is summed up by a respondent stating,

'Exemptions must be administered by the Council, for

example, visitors who are entitled to an exemption should be able to claim it back from the Council to avoid debate and possible conflict for the accommodation service providers team who manage the guests arrival'

Question 12: The Visitor Levy (Scotland Act) stipulate that the net proceeds of the Visitor Levy must be spent on facilitating the achievement of the scheme's objectives and "developing, supporting and sustaining facilities and services which are substantially for or used by persons visiting (overnight) for leisure or business purposes (or both)".

To what extent do you agree or disagree, that after costs, the remaining funds are split across the following investment areas?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Base
City Operations and Infrastructure	47%	18%	10%	4%	20%	2%	1262
Culture and Events	37%	25%	13%	4%	18%	2%	1263
Destination Marketing and Management	20%	23%	18%	12%	25%	2%	1263

A number of respondents felt that the visitor levy should be spent on improving services and addressing issues which will benefit residents of Glasgow. Areas identified included local environment, street cleaning and housing, which reflect both the housing and climate emergencies declared by the city. It was also mentioned that monies should be distributed across the city and not just focused on city centre.

In terms of infrastructure, respondents believed that the focus should be on travel and transport. A number of areas were suggested including a more joined up transport network both to help visitors get to the city as well making it easier for them and residents to travel around. An integrated ticketing system was mentioned as a key infrastructure project which should be supported. Respondents also highlighted road and pavement improvements to help local residents while making the city more appealing to visitors.

Respondents highlighted that the areas identified should be prioritised or ordered, as they are all linked. Infrastructure was seen as fundamental to improving the visitor offering (culture and events), which could then be marketed and promoted.

'I think destination marketing and management is less important than infrastructure and culture, which are things that affect Glasgow residents on a daily basis.'

It should be noted that accommodation providers, and organisations / associations which represent them, were more likely to support greater funding to improve the visitor experience, as well as more marketing and promotion to offset any impact of the levy being introduced. There was some mention that marketing and promotion are already carried out by a range of external providers and national agencies and that the levy should not be used to duplicate this.

Comment was made that the levy should be used to support new projects providing additional value rather than filling gaps in existing budgets, or funding ongoing projects and services. Visitors and residents are much more likely to support a levy if they can see the impact it has on them.

Appendix B

Feedback from all informal consultation sessions held with the working group and wider key stakeholders:

1. Feedback of Initial Engagement Session for Visitor Levy Group –

Wednesday 4 December 2024:

Following an initial meeting with between council family staff and key business and sector representatives a working group was created.

The Working Group members are:

- Greater Glasgow Hoteliers Association
- The Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers
- UK Hospitality Scotland
- Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Glasgow Life
- VisitScotland
- Airbnb
- Scottish Bed & Breakfast Association

2. How we worked during this phase:

- Invited a representative working group
- Held initial Session to share plan, review VS Guidance and build consensus/ownership on objectives
- Held further sessions or methods to capture and discuss based on initial session and understanding what the group require to co-design the proposal
- Share more widely to industry colleagues - forums, email, in person events
- Collate learning and finalise proposal.
- Share for comments
- Prepare for Public Consultation

3. Kick-Off Engagement

The purpose of the engagement was to work with trusted partners in the sector to gain:

- A sense of consensus and ownership around the scheme objectives
- An idea of what the Visitor Levy Forum might look like
- Views on what the money should be spent on

The work aimed to gather opinions and knowledge to support and shape the proposals for a Visitor Levy scheme that works as effectively as possible for all stakeholders in the city.

4. What we learned

i) Levy Value

We asked... Should we have a 5% levy?

Universally, the response was that there needs to be clear and transparent reason for settling on 5% and that it should not be because Edinburgh has settled on that percentage. The key point raised is that there should be an independent Economic Impact Assessment of the Levy to allow the city to avoid or mitigate against potential unintended consequences.

“Why are we looking at a 5% Visitor Levy?”

The stakeholders raised:

- There needs to be justification as to why this rate had been selected given i.e. Sufficient Economic Impact Assessment
- “Edinburgh and Glasgow are very different - higher risk of displacement in Glasgow”

The stakeholders raised:

- They believe the difference between the cities means that Glasgow’s tourists are more likely to be displaced on factors such as cost of room so making the VL 5 percent because Edinburgh has is a risk.

“What’s the economic impact of the levy and can we mitigate unintended consequences?”

The stakeholders raised:

- Would or could the rate be capped? And what would the implications be for the compound cost of the Levy and other taxes, for example VAT?

ii) Additional Resources

We asked... If Glasgow introduces a Tourist Levy...

“What additional resources are required by the industry to support the Levy?”

The stakeholders raised:

- Staff time for training.
- Systems costs including upgrades.
- Additional transaction costs for credit cards.
- Communications to customers.

“What are the likely additional administrative resource requirements?”

The stakeholders raised:

- Administrative burden for smaller accommodation providers who will have their own systems.
- Staff time.
- Accounting resources.
- How would this be managed or policed by staff if customers don't want to pay?

“Should there be a top slicing of costs?”

The results on this were mixed. Some said “yes”, others were not sure and the final point was on whether the percentage could be higher than the 1.5% outlined in Edinburgh’s proposal. There was no indication of a preferred figure, however it was noted again that an economic impact assessment might support the development of this.

iii) Exclusions and Duration

What are your thoughts on duration and exclusions of the scheme?

Edinburgh has a 7-night cap, but it there was unanimous view that it would make little or no difference in Glasgow as they are two very different cities. The average stay in the city is less than 2 days. With regard to exclusions, again, the general consensus was that the least number of exclusions the better in terms of compliance, transparency, and administration. It was felt by all hotel representatives that there should be consideration for exclusions for emergency incidents, travel cancellations and for employees who have to stay over in unusual circumstances.

iv) How the fund should be spent

The clear message from the industry is that this money should not be used by the council to plug budget gaps. There is a desire for something being done with the money to support strategic assets, such as the SEC Campus, rather than lots of smaller activity that makes less impact.

The council should make it clear that the money will be used to support the Glasgow Tourism Strategy which has wide support in the industry.

There was also a clear view that the money should not be used to administer the Visitor Levy - this should come from the existing business rates paid in the city.

It was felt that Governance and transparency are critical to ensure industry buy in and a clear strategy on how, where and when the money will be spent should be a priority. Having an annual report for the scheme and a published plan for the next spend should be publicly available.

We asked... What are your thoughts on using the funds for...

administration...

The stakeholders told us:

- Governance and transparency are critical: there needs to be a strategy and process for the system.
- Implementation and recovery costs: recompense for businesses
- No administration costs: business rates should cover this.
- Annual reporting online of spend.

For City operations and Infrastructure...

The stakeholders told us:

- It should not be used for core services: it shouldn't be plugging gaps. City operations and infrastructure should be dealt with separately.
- Additional resources should be investing in enhance user experiences of the city such as Heritage sites.

For Culture and Events...

The stakeholders told us:

- Use the fund to drive visitors to the city: free tourist travel, city wide travel investment in assets such as the Clyde metro, SEC and event venues. Support culture and big events

For Destination Marketing...

The stakeholders told us:

- This should not be cut. It is already funded and should be subsidised.

About how to use the fund...

The stakeholders told us:

- This should not be used for housing. There should be transparency on the current financial position.
- Finally it should be used for something additional, not fund something already planned

About additional cost that the fund could cover...

The stakeholders told us:

- Finance: Payroll subsidies, business rates and the cost of a baseline study
- Spaces: Civic spaces, activation of the East End and heritage protection (Mackintosh).
- Transport: Free parking and airport subvention

v) What else should we be thinking about?

We asked... Is there anything else you think we should consider at this stage?

About Economic Impact...

The stakeholders told us:

- An Economic Impact Assessment and robust economic forecasting should be carried out.
- Adequate time to allow accommodation providers to be prepared for the scheme start date to ensure they comply with pricing legislation is extremely important. Contracts and bookings are already being set up for 2026 and accommodation providers would like to see discussion on this particular aspect of the proposal as a matter of urgency.
- Will the wider economic impact be balanced with any negative impact e.g. if the consequences of introducing a levy outweigh the positive effects? The industry is already fragile with 30% of the industry considering leaving the industry.
- Ensure the VL is considered in the cumulative impact with other measure on tourism accommodation providers -look at all factors that create inflation and increase costs.
- There must be transparency about spend.
- Will there be regional displacement and could this push people to other locations?
- Is there a financial tipping point that could deter tourists?

vi) About the Impact in the City Centre...

The stakeholders told us:

- What will the impact be on city centre businesses and how will it overlap with the City Centre BID?
- How will it interact with the event levy and city centre parking levy?
- There needs to be a whole City approach.

vii) Additional Comments raised...

The stakeholders told us:

- Big venues are at capacity.
- What are the tangible benefits to the accommodation providers?
- Lack of direct flights and the city isn't a bucket list destination.
- There should be a handbook of guidance for businesses.
- How long to generate revenue and how long until it is spent?
- This is a risky policy that needs to be explained clearly. So far, publicity has been negative. The council requires a coordinated strategy to communicate why the VL is being introduced and why it will do good. Perhaps a scheme that flags positive outcomes could work, e.g. a plaque or sticker saying "This was funded by the VL" would make a clear and visible statement. This could be a national scheme potentially.

viii) Forum Composition

We asked... What are your thoughts on who should be on the forum...?

The stakeholders told us:

The key stakeholder are...

- UKH Scotland
- Senior Council officer or Director
- ASSC
- Glasgow Airport
- Tourism DMO
- Scottish Hospitality Group
- Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Glasgow Tourism Advisory Forum
- Glasgow Life
- Scottish Tourist Guide Association
- Tax Accountant

We should meet...

Various suggestions, we agreed that we would meet as required at this stage in the process and look to formalise things as the longer-term remit of the group becomes clearer.

We will meet...

- Face to face and on teams.
- When there is a focused issue.
- To be an accountability review.
- For Public reporting of spend deliverables.

Comments on the forum

- It should link to other forums.
- It should be adaptable to stages of VL.
- There should be informal engagement with other visitor levy destination

Follow up sessions:

Accommodation Providers Session – Thursday 6th March:

- General agreement that flat rate rather than percentage was more appropriate;
- Potential additional costs to providers include new systems and upgrading, staff training, additional staff time for maintenance and reporting, and any additional marketing and comms costs;
- Seasonal approach suggested e.g. only drawn down during peak season months – May to September;

- Concerns around exclusions focus on “policing” these exemptions and how they can be applied e.g. do providers charge then claim back? Particularly with tour groups with mix of exempt and non-exempt;
- Various fund use options raised but more consistently was the issue of transparency and the funds not being used to full budget gaps;
- Attracting more large events, building event infrastructure, tourism and marketing, and improving city transport all raised;
- City aesthetics a consistent suggestion for investment;
- Complexities around package/tour breaks raised as difficult to breakdown costs – there are challenges around competition laws in this area and would need further examination.

Glasgow Life Session – Thursday 3rd April

- Flat rate rather than percentage was the general consensus;
- A dynamic levy to suit season could be considered;
- This could be challenging for events/festivals in the city e.g. Could cost more for Celtic Connections as the hosts pay the hotel accommodation for major artists;
- Suggestions for fund use include strengthening the visitor journey (marketing sign-posting etc), better city transport, SEC expansion, improving airport and improving the appearance of the city;
- Very mixed views on exclusions, ranging from no exclusions to many more including all Glasgow residents exempt, school trips, medical travel;
- Could an arms-length destination marketing organisation be set up?

Economic Development Session – Wednesday 30th April

A session with Business Advisors, Invest Glasgow and the Film Office.

General Comments

- In general, no major opposition to levy but varying degrees of concern about how it would be implemented and managed;
- Transparency of how funds being spent vital;
- Concerns around displacement – pushing people to stay in neighbouring authorities;
- As simple a system as possible;
- Learn from other cities who have implemented – Manchester regularly mentioned.

Appendix C

Summary of Proposed Visitor Levy Scheme for Glasgow

1. **Start Date** – 18 months after GCC publishes final scheme.
If approved, the recommended implementation date is 25 January 2027, subject to the date the scheme is published.
2. **Levy Rate** – 5%
3. **Accommodation Liable for the levy** - The levy applies to all hotels, hostels, guest houses, bed & breakfasts and self- catering accommodation.
4. **Geographic Areas** - applies across the entire local authority area
5. **Length of stay** – Applies at all times.
6. **Levy Duration** - Indefinite scheme subject to regular review
7. **Scheme Objectives** - The overarching aim of the scheme is to grow the value of tourism in Glasgow by delivering for our visitors, our businesses, our communities and the environment. The scheme will align with a variety of city strategies such as the Glasgow Tourism Strategy, the City Centre Strategy, Culture Strategy, and Events Strategy. The objectives of the scheme are there to sustain, support and develop public services, programmes and infrastructure that provide a positive experience for visitors and citizens.
8. **Collecting the Levy** – Accommodation providers will be liable for the levy. They will be required to submit quarterly reports, detailing the total accommodation charges and the total levy due via the national online portal. Payment to GCC will be made at the same time.

The levy will apply to all advance bookings made up to a year before the implementation date. Accommodation Providers will have to apply charges for advance bookings from January 2026.
9. **Accommodation Providers Costs** – 1.5% of the levy monies collected at each establishment will be retained by accommodation providers.

10. Exemptions & Reimbursements – A number of groups do not fall within the scope of the Act and are therefore not liable to pay the levy. These groups are not considered visitors.

- Those who are using overnight accommodation as their only or primary residence, which could be due to:
- being homeless or at risk of homelessness
- very poor housing conditions such as overcrowding or disrepair
- experiencing domestic abuse or other forms of violence
- being an asylum seeker or refugee

In addition, the levy does not apply to:

- someone staying on a gypsy/traveller site
- those in receipt of specific UK disability benefits – Disability Living Allowance; Disability Assistance; Attendance Allowance; Pension Age Disability Benefit and Personal Independence Payment. These visitors would pay the levy to the accommodation provider then, with proof of overnight stay and benefit entitlement, would apply to have the charge reimbursed by the council within 28 days.

11. Visitor Levy Forum –The Act sets out that a Visitor Levy Forum must be set up within six months of GCC publishing the final scheme for Glasgow. The function of the forum is advisory, with the purpose of providing advice to the council relating to the VL.

12. Use of Funds - The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act stipulates that the net proceeds of the visitor levy must be spent on facilitating the achievement of the scheme's objectives and 'developing, supporting and sustaining facilities and services which are substantially for or used by persons visiting (overnight) for leisure or business purposes (or both)'. The City Administration Committee will make decisions on the use of funds. After administration costs, the remaining funds will be split across the following investment areas:

- **City Operations and infrastructure** - The look and feel of the city significantly contributes to the overall visitor experience. Investment in the built and natural environment and infrastructure will support the tourism aspirations for the city.
- **Culture and Events** - Culture and Events are a key driver of the city's visitor economy, as well as an important tool in the positive positioning of Glasgow both national and internationally. Additional funding will help support the successful delivery of the city's Events Strategy 2035 and Cultural Strategy 2030, investing in the city's long-term attractiveness and sustainability, as well as supporting the advocacy and promotion of Glasgow as a leading culture and events destination.

- **Destination Marketing and Management** – In an increasingly competitive market, successful destination marketing initiatives will grow Glasgow's market share of leisure visitors coming to Scotland and the UK. Additional funding will support initiatives that align with the city's tourism goals, as outlined in the Glasgow Tourism 2030 action plan.

13. Enforcement – Accommodation providers are required to keep accurate records of all information relating to the VL. The council has the powers to conduct inspections with accommodation providers to ensure that they are compliant with the scheme. Accommodation providers who fail to comply may be subject to penalties. There is an internal review and appeals process to review council decisions.

14. Reviewing the Scheme – GCC would be required to review the VL scheme. The first review must be carried out within three years of the scheme coming into force. Second and subsequent reviews must be carried out within three years of the previous review. The results must be published and copied to the VL Forum.

15. Annual Reporting - Within the first 18 months from when the scheme is introduced, and for each 12-month period thereafter, the council must prepare a report setting out:

- The amount of money collected
- How the net proceeds have been used
- The performance of the scheme in relation to its objectives