

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 10 November 2020

## Filming in Edinburgh – costs and income

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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Policy and Sustainability Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 note the findings of the comparative study into city location filming costs and income (Appendix 1) and Edinburgh's continuing competitiveness; and
  - 1.1.2 note the planned film and TV sector engagement on the feasibility of introducing a 'Film Permit' procedure to further support the effective management of filming in the city.

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## Filming in Edinburgh – costs and income

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 Further to the meeting on [25 February 2020](#), the Committee requested a further report looking at costs and income of filming, comparing Edinburgh's results with cities that charge for the use of public space for filming, to inform future Council policy in this area.
- 2.2 The comparative study, shown in Appendix 1 'UK Filming: Cost and Impact, 2019/20', found that the costs to filmmakers of Council services and locations are broadly in line with UK market norms for film work. The economic benefit to the city from filming is greatly increased by hosting major international feature films. The study also found that 'Filming Permits' are employed by most local authority film offices outside Scotland to manage filming in public spaces. Consideration of this option for Edinburgh will take into account the need to remain competitive in attracting high value filming to the city.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Filming is a highly competitive global industry, with countries and regions around the world vying to attract filming for the economic and promotional benefits it can bring.
  - 3.1.1 The value of filming to the UK economy in 2019 increased by 16% to £3.6 billion. Of this, £3.07 billion came from inward investment film & TV productions, with 21 studio-backed films accounting for 71% of the total spend on production.<sup>1</sup>
  - 3.1.2 The growth of the creative industries in the UK has led to the number of jobs increasing at twice the rate of the rest of the economy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/announcements/bfi-statistics-20>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/industries/tv-film/tv-film-facts-and-figures/uk-tv-film-government-economic-data>

- 3.2 The City of Edinburgh Film Charter, approved by the Economy Committee on [6 March 2014](#) confirms the Council's intention to welcome filming to the city and sets out how the Council will realise 'best value' on returns from property rental and services with fees in line with UK market norms for film work. It includes the following parameters:
- 3.2.1 Location fees will reflect disruption and dedicated personnel time and will be negotiable.
  - 3.2.2 Fees for Council services should reflect recoupment of costs to the city, including materials, permits and dedicated personnel's time.
- 3.3 The Culture and Communities Committee agreed an update to the Code of Practice for Filming in Edinburgh on [29 January 2019](#), detailing the procedures and expected conduct of filmmakers working in Edinburgh and introducing policies for night filming and drone filming.
- 3.4 On [25 February 2020](#) the Policy and Sustainability Committee received the annual report of Film Edinburgh, the film office for Edinburgh, East Lothian and Scottish Borders. This outlined that 340 films, TV programmes and commercial shoots took place in the Edinburgh region in 2019 with an economic impact of £14.4m. The City of Edinburgh Council's revenue from filming in that period was £250,000.
- 3.5 In March 2020, First Stage Studios was appointed to run the new film and TV studio space in Bath Road in Leith. This is expected to enhance the city's production capability, enabling film and TV productions to shoot not only on location over short periods of time, but also to base the entire production in the city, creating employment in the city over several months.
- 3.6 On 1 April 2020 responsibility for Film Edinburgh transferred from Marketing Edinburgh into the Council's Culture Service.
- 3.7 Filming in Edinburgh is expected to contribute to the city's economic and cultural recovery. While the amount and value of filming to the city in 2020/21 will inevitably fall short of previous years due to the on-going impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic, mainstream factual and commercial filming recommenced in July under sector guidelines for Covid-19, and drama returned in September 2020 following guidelines for the genre.
- 3.8 On 7 August 2020 the Council's Incident Management Team (CIMT) approved the City of Edinburgh's Covid-19 Location Filming Action List, an annexe to the Code of Practice focusing on the management of filming under Covid-19.

## **4. Main report**

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- 4.1 Definitions for the purposes of this report:
- 4.1.1 Costs: costs attributed to filmmakers for hiring Council locations and services to facilitate film and television productions; and

- 4.1.2 Income: income derived by the city or the Council (as defined) from the activity of film and television productions.
- 4.2 Film Edinburgh obtained cost and income data for the 2019/20 period from city filming destinations within the UK: Glasgow, Bath, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Cardiff, Belfast. This is laid out in Appendix 1, 'UK Filming: Cost and Impact, 2019/20'.
- 4.3 Costs:
- 4.3.1 Council parks, green spaces and beaches for filming - in March 2017, the Council introduced tiered pricing for filmed productions, distinguishing between very low impact filming such as documentaries which may have only three or four people working on them and do not require exclusive use of a site, and larger-scale productions like drama and commercials which have workforces of 20 to 100 people and may in some cases ask for exclusive use of an area for a short period of time. Cities around the UK have varying pricing models for the use of parks and open spaces (see Appendix 1), and Edinburgh's fees are broadly competitive.
- 4.3.2 Public streets - the Council charges fees for services to support filming on public streets where filming will cause disruption or require officer support. Services include temporary traffic orders to close, partially obstruct or control traffic on public streets; the recuperation of lost revenue from parking bays affected by filming; permits for heavy equipment and temporary structures; and service charges for removal or alteration of street furniture. These fees are broadly comparable to most UK cities.
- 4.3.3 Furthermore, businesses in streets that are closed or partially closed for filming are compensated for loss of revenue by the film production company, and residents' associations and community groups can receive funds to compensate for clear disruption.
- 4.3.4 Film Edinburgh charges an administrative fee for its services in supporting and advising large-scale productions which may have an impact on the community. Local authority film offices outside Scotland claim a percentage of council service costs as an administrative fee.
- 4.3.5 In addition to costs and services outlined above, local authority film offices outside Scotland issue 'Filming Permits' to confirm that specified filming in public streets and spaces complies with their own Codes of Practice, whether this is non-obstructive or high-impact filming. Prices range from £50 (less than 10 crew) to £500 (more than 100 crew), with exemptions for local production companies, news, students and non-commercial filming. Cities (outside London) that deal with high levels of filming can recover up to £10,000 from 'Filming Permits'.
- 4.3.6 The majority of film and TV programmes filmed in Edinburgh bring production crew with them and therefore have to build in accommodation and travel costs.

#### 4.4 Competition:

4.4.1 Edinburgh's proximity to Glasgow, which is currently home to 65% of Scotland's film and TV production workforce, makes for clear cost comparisons between the cities when film and TV companies are considering where to film.

4.4.1.1 Appendix 1 shows that Glasgow's charges for roads services and parking are broadly comparable with those of Edinburgh. Glasgow charges for use of public land only when exclusive use is required by filmmakers and does not currently use Film Permits nor charge film office administrative fees. Glasgow hosts several large-scale feature films and TV dramas every year thanks to its resident crew depth, build space options as well as its physical similarity to some US cities.

4.4.2 Until such time as First Stage Studios is established and there is related greater depth of production workforce based in Edinburgh, the city must balance costs to remain competitive.

4.4.3 London cannot be used as a direct comparator:

4.4.3.1 London comprises of 33 local authorities. 75% of the UK's film/TV production workforce is based in London as well as 27 of the UK's 39 dedicated film studios, each with multiple sound stages. Rather than hosting eight-12 dramas a year, London hosts eight-12 dramas every month. The economic impact of filming in London in 2019 was £1.3 billion – a third of the total economic impact of film and TV production in the UK. Production teams on most shoots in London are largely local, reducing the overhead costs of travel and accommodation for production companies.

#### 4.5 Income:

4.5.1 Edinburgh records between £5m and £7m in economic impact per annum, increasing to between £14m and £16m when major international feature films or TV dramas choose Edinburgh as a key location.

4.5.2 The filming of *Fast & Furious 9* in 2019 Edinburgh provided a £5.2m boost to the city, of which £5m was spent on local private businesses which either closed to facilitate filming or provided services to the production.

4.5.3 The City of Edinburgh Council derived nearly £250,000 of revenue for location fees and services for filming in 2019.

4.5.4 Two other cities, Glasgow and Liverpool, provided information on local economic impact of between £11m and £20m per annum as a result of the relatively high number of international feature films and TV dramas hosted.

4.5.5 Further revenue to Edinburgh is derived from promotional benefits of a successful film or TV show. *Outlander*, for example, has been a driver of film

tourism in the city. Many of Edinburgh's tour operators now run *Outlander* tours and the city's Destination Marketing Operators offer *Outlander*-themed hospitality events. By March 2019, Historic Environment Scotland reported that visitors to Craigmillar Castle had increased 80% since it became an '*Outlander*' location three years earlier<sup>3</sup>.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 It is intended that Film Edinburgh will continue to encourage production and filming to locate in Edinburgh, in line with the Film Charter and Code of Practice for Filming.
- 5.2 It is proposed that Film Edinburgh engage with the film and TV production sector to explore the feasibility, benefits and competitiveness of introducing Filming Permits for filming in public spaces.

## 6. Financial impact

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- 6.1 Filming in Edinburgh during 2019 generated £249,186 in income to the Council.
- 6.2 Revenue from filming fluctuates with the amount and type of filming in the city, as well as the chosen locations: not all filming takes place in public spaces.

## 7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

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- 7.1 The recent re-introduction of location filming in Edinburgh is expected to contribute to the city's economic recovery. Based on local businesses deriving c.£12m from filming in 2019.
- 7.2 The indirect yet long-lasting benefits of filming include the promotion of the city to a local, regional, UK and global audience, and the civic and business pride and commercial benefits generated in the longer term by association with a successful film or TV production.

## 8. Background reading/external references

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- 8.1 [British Film Institute Statistics 2019](#)
- 8.2 [Department of Culture Media and Sport Sectors Economic Estimates](#) June 2019.
- 8.3 [Historic Environment Scotland](#) report Feb 2019 and historic data relating to previous years.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/about-us/news/another-record-breaking-year-for-scottish-heritage-sites/>

- 8.4 Glasgow City Council Neighbourhoods and Sustainability Charges 2019/20.  
(2020/21 charges <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=31466&p=0>)
- 8.5 Liverpool Film Office charges <https://www.liverpoolfilmoffice.tv/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/LFO-FILM-PERMIT-FEES-2019-20.pdf>
- 8.6 Bristol Film Office charges <http://filmbristol.co.uk/homepage/filming-permission/charges-payments/>
- 8.7 Film London filming permissions <https://filmlondon.org.uk/resource/permission>

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1: UK Filming: Cost and Impact, 2019/20.

2019/20 Figures	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Belfast	Cardiff	Liverpool	Manchester	Bristol	Bath	London
Dedicated Film/TV Studio	N	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y
Build space		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Workforce	25% of Scotland	Y (65% Scotland)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y (75% UK)
Film office admin fees	£250 (40-100 crew), £500 (100-200), £1000 (>200 crew)	n/a	n/a	n/a	£250 above Road closure fees	10% above council fees	£80 + 50% council fees	£80 (crews of +30) (+ receive highways + 50% parks fees)	£0-£450
Costs 'Filming Permits'	n/a	n/a		£150-£250	Scale from £0 local/news/charities to £1000 large scale filming	£50-£300 (tiered by scale)	£50 - £200	£50-£150	£0 to £300
Costs Roads (TTRN/TTRO)	£475 TTRN, £639 TTRO + advertising costs	£450 TTRN, £2100 TTRO	n/a	£1,450	£720 / £2323.75	£124	£535 (TTRN) / £2748 (TTRO)	£1,300	TTRO £1,000 - £3,100
Costs Parking (per bay)	£22-£49/day	£40/day city centre, £11.60 outside centre. Reduced for long-term suspensions	n/a	n/a	£22/day + £25 admin	£30/day	£22/day, or £15/day for multiple bays	£15/day	£17-£49/day
Costs Parks & Open spaces (off road) (factual/low impact)	£53 up to 5 crew / up to 4 hrs + £100 vehicle. >6 crew: £132/hour	£280/day for exclusive use. Otherwise £0	varies	£45/2 hrs	FOC up to 5 crew.	£88/hr, £264/4 hrs. Major parks £205.55/4 hrs. Tiered by crew size / duration	£90 hr-£700 full day. Tiered by crew size / duration	£55 half day / £105/day	£200 - £5000/day. Tiered by crew size / duration
Costs Parks & Open spaces (off road) (drama/large-scale)	£132/hr (<£1584/day) + £100 vehicles + 10% bond for exclusive use	£920/day for exclusive use	£500-£1000/day	£400/day	£250 -£500 full day. Tiered by crew size / duration	£92/hr, or £417 - £700 full day. Major parks £828-£1859 full day. Tiered by crew size / duration	£120 hr - £900 full day. Tiered by crew size / duration	£205-£305/day. Tiered by crew size / duration	£200 - £5000/day. Tiered by crew size / duration
Costs Drone permits	£100	n/a	n/a	£250	£250	n/a	£150	£150	n/a
Film office staff	1	2		2	5	2	2	2	<100
Volume of large-scale / drama	10/year	14/year	n/a	n/a	n/a		16/year		8/month
Number of productions	340/year		n/a	n/a	324/year				
Value of filming	£5M - £15M/year	£12M-£20M/year	n/a	n/a	£11-17M				£1.3B