



On Location Filming Strategies & Fees

Guidance for Local Authorities
September 2021

Produced for Creative England
by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre

creative
england
**Filming
in England**



**morris
hargreaves
mcintyre**

Foreword

Creative England is the National Screen Agency, funded by the BFI, to maximise and support the production of feature film and high-end television across the English regions, ensuring communities across the nation enjoy the profile, job opportunities and economic benefits that the sector generates.

Creative England's Filming in England Team support Local Authorities across England to provide the tools, advice and best practice required to develop their offer to the film and TV industry. We are proud to have commissioned Morris Hargreaves McIntyre to lead research into On Location Filming Strategies and Fees. The result is the following comprehensive toolkit for local authorities to establish their value as a location and understand their ambitions for filming, to create an appropriate film friendly strategy and approach to fee setting.

This guidance seeks to support those local authorities which require assistance in this complex area, offering a pragmatic solution between standardised and total flexible approach to fee setting. At a time when the film and TV sector is playing a key role in the UK's cultural and economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, we hope this guidance equips local authorities in maximising the far-reaching benefits of on-location film and TV production.

On Location Filming Strategies and Fees is the latest of best practice guidance released by Creative England and our **Local Authority Resource Centre** hosts all preceding resources.

Hayley Armstrong

Head of Production Services
Creative England

www.filminginengland.co.uk
[@filminengland](https://twitter.com/filminengland)

On Location Filming Strategies & Fees

MHM were **commissioned by Creative England** in March 2021 to carry out research into local authority filming fees across England. The aim was to create a guidance document as a **resource for local authorities** looking for support in how to set fees with a film friendly approach.

The information in this document was also presented to local authorities across England at the **Filming in England Summit** which took place on 17 June 2021.

Research Parameters:

Target group for the research: local authorities across England, Location Managers and Line Producers

Data collection method: online survey with local authorities, interviews with local authorities and Location Managers / Line Producers.

Sample size: survey sample size – 80 local authorities. Local authority interviews: 21, Location Managers / Line Producers interviews: 7.

Date of fieldwork: data collection took place throughout April and May 2021.

Reliability of findings: all quantitative data in this report is indicative unless specified otherwise.

Quotes in this guidance document were all taken from the interviews or surveys with local authorities, or from interviews with Location Managers / Line Producers.

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Context

The need for this guidance

Currently, charging decisions around filming can **lack process and consistency**. Understanding how to fairly compensate the local authorities for their inconvenience is not a simple calculation, and as such setting fees is **not considered easy** by most.

There is an opportunity to support some local authorities to work more strategically, so that filming in the area could work more **in their best interests**.

Understanding what to charge is another challenge in a complicated area

There are a number of well understood challenges in the interactions between local authorities and Location Managers. The two sectors work at different speeds, resulting in tensions when decisions by local authorities don't come quickly enough for the likes of the industry. To add to this strain on the decision-making powers in authorities, Location Managers are often asking for things that have never been asked for before. Despite general high support from employees and leadership across local authorities, there are negotiations to be had across departments in permissions, fast-tracks and work-arounds. Understanding how to compensate for local authorities' time through charging, is another complication in an already challenging environment.

Currently, charging decisions often lack process and consistency

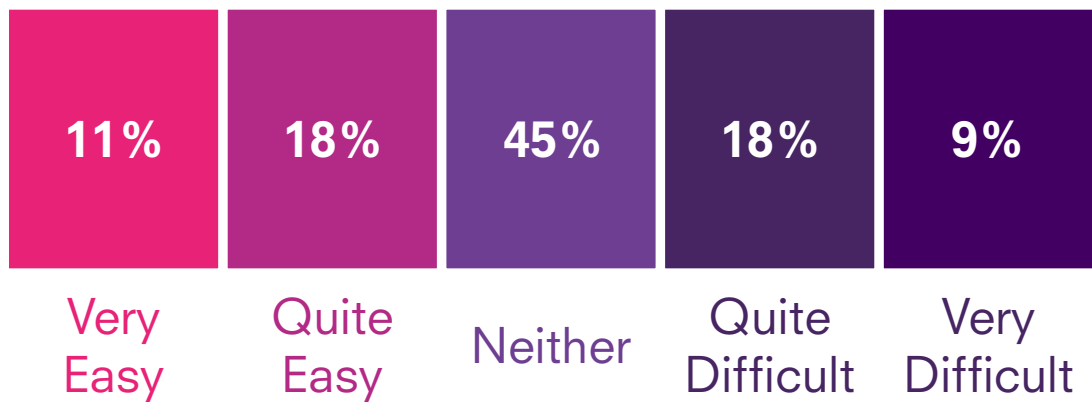
Charging decisions and other filming responsibilities can exist with only one person within the local authority, and without a formalised process. They're very often making the best decisions they can on what to charge with limited information. As such, charging can be ad hoc, and processes unequally applied.

"I don't know if I can talk you through our approach, because it's just something that has evolved over time." — Film Office

Most local authorities don't find setting fees easy

Bearing in mind these challenges, it won't be a surprise that the filming fee setting process is, largely, not easy for local authorities. A small minority find the process either very easy, or very difficult. Most are somewhere in the middle. Those who have an existing fixed price list approach tend to find the process much easier, with 56% saying that it is quite or very easy to set their fees, compared to 16% who always take an ad hoc approach to charging for filming.

Local authorities ease/difficulty in setting fees for filming:



Stretched resources mean that filming opportunities should work hard for local authorities

With the lack of resources available in local authorities, more up-front thinking and strategic decision-making, could support authorities to make more of the potential benefits of filming, at the same time as becoming more film friendly. More clarity of process and structure will only benefit production companies too.

Above Stats: Base: 74

Challenges in creating standardised fees

The complexity of filming means that this guidance document recommends a number of fee bands for filming, **rather than a blanket market value.**

Fees are part of a delicate balance for location managers

The creative and practical decisions that Location Managers take when deciding where to film make up a large mosaic of factors. Aesthetic considerations are obviously key, but as are practical considerations such as unit base possibilities and the availability of crew. Authority fees are one piece of the puzzle, but the size of this piece will often vary depending on production budget.

Local authorities currently take a wide range of approaches

As things stand, there is a large variety of approaches to setting fees. Cost-recuperation is the chosen strategy for the biggest minority of local authorities. Others see filming fees as an opportunity for income generation for the council, and some charge nothing, as the perceived benefits of filming in the area are paramount. The practical application of fees structures is also very varied.

Similarly, support for standardisation is mixed. Some local authorities are happy with their approach, which is great. Others have

expressed a desire for more support and understanding of how others go about this.

Two factors that influence fee decisions

There are two key factors that impact on the fees that local authorities can, and would want to, charge. Some areas have an inherent value to the industry that others lack. Local factors mean that local authorities have hugely varied ambitions for filming in their area.

24% Have a fixed price list

34% Always use a case by case approach

31% Fix some prices, but flex others

11% Do things differently or don't charge at all

"When you set your charges, you need to consider the size of the production, the disruption, the cost to yourself in terms of time and effort [...] Also, people need to consider where they are competitively within the picture in the UK." — Film Office

This guidance offers a pragmatic solution between standardisation and total flexibility. The next few pages offer support for local authorities in establishing their value as a location, and in understanding their ambition for filming. It then shows how to use these two things to create a workable filming strategy, of which fees are a part.

Input

Assessing your value as a location

While there are no hard and fast rules, there are certain things that impact strongly on an **area's appeal to the film industry**.

We have identified the five most important ones to consider when understanding how **valuable you can consider your locations**.

Before setting fees, you need to understand the value of your offer.

There are some things that will always impact on the value of a location. Most of these factors have inherent value - and are largely outside of the control of a local authority.

Key things impacting on locations' value:

1. Proximity to cities in which filming takes place

The cost of transporting and over-nighting a large crew means that locations' proximity to studios, unit bases, and crews is a key consideration. Many local authorities credit their success with their closeness to the main production hubs in England - London and the South East, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds or Bristol.

"We were trying to find 18th century Russia within a 30 to 40 mile radius of East London." — Location Manager

2. A real USP or high prized assets

Unique empty buildings or a back drop that is hard to come by are hugely valuable to the industry. This is the one thing that can change fast and move locations from low to relatively high value quickly. For an example of this see the case study near the end of this document about Bolton.

"So our location is quite key, I think, to the amount of filming that we attract already. In terms of promoting it, we do next to nothing." — Local Authority

3. The range of other sites in the proximity

Areas or cities with a range of backdrops all within close proximity have an advantage.

"The thing about Manchester, is it's small enough to shoot and not get trapped in gridlock traffic every time you do a unit move. But it's big enough to still film what you want." — Location Manager

4. Established flexibility and strong relationships with location managers

Strong and trusted relationships, which bring in repeat business, can transform the value of an area to the film industry. As can certain known flexibilities, such as short notice road closures. This is the area in which local authorities have the most control, but it can't happen overnight.

Please see [page 17](#) on advice for how to increase your value as a filming location

5. High rurality and low levels of potential disruption

More rural locations tend to be of less concern for local authorities when it comes to disruption for residents. This is also the

case for Location Mangers, who will often go out of their way to reassure those who live near a shoot. This is a time consuming process and another consideration when choosing where to shoot.

"If somebody just does filming on the beach or using the beach, there's no cost to us in that. It's just a permission thing." — Local Authority

See the [next page](#) for more on understanding how valuable you are to the film industry.

Please consider the below questions to think about your value to the industry.

Please note: these questions are intended to be a rough proxy to support you to think about your value. In reality, some of these factors in tandem will become worth far more than the sum of their parts: please consider your own local knowledge and any other factors when considering a final category of low, medium or high.

Q1. Are you within 30 miles of a city in which lots of filming takes place?

- a. Yes
- b. Almost
- c. No

Q2. Do you have existing connections or networks with the industry?

- a. Yes, lots
- b. Yes, some
- c. No

Q3. Do you allow road closures for filming?

- a. Yes, we can close roads quickly and easily for filming
- b. Yes, we could close roads for filming but it's not necessarily quick or easy
- c. No

Q4. Spectacular backdrops* or a variety of interesting locations in close proximity?

- a. Yes, definitely
- b. Yes, some spectacular locations
- c. No

Q5. Can you easily double up as other geographic regions or time periods?

- a. Yes, definitely
- b. Possibly
- c. No

Q6. Do you have large, empty buildings that could appear as working locations?**

- a. Yes, definitely
- b. Possibly
- c. No

What your answers mean:

4 or more 'C's	Your area is probably of relatively LOW value to the filming industry. However, if you scored 'a' on Q1 you may be medium value.
A mixture	Your area is probably of MEDIUM value to the filming industry. However, if you scored 'a' on Q1 you may be high value.
3 or more 'A's	Your area is probably of relatively HIGH value to the filming industry. However, if you scored 'c' on Q1 you may be lower value.

*Spectacular backdrops can be unique, instantly recognisable, visually stunning or all / any of the above.

**A building that is of value is one that looks like a working location, but is empty and ready to be used. Examples might include a police station, school, courthouse or warehouse. Consider what is inside, e.g. if a brewery has the machinery, or a warehouse with no interior pillars for set builds, all the better. Space is also important inside (for a large crew, espeically while social distancing measures are in place) and out (parking for many vehicles).

Clarifying your ambition as an authority

Filming fees don't just come down to the value of your locations, it is also important to establish your **ambition as a local authority**.

Whether or not you want to attract **more productions** to the area, and what type of benefits you hope you gain is important in knowing how to set your fees.

Are you hoping to increase the benefits of filming for your area?

There are a range of possible benefits that can come from hosting filming in your local authority: before you can decide on your ambition for filming, it is important to understand what you are hoping to gain. At this point it is also salient to consider if the 'juice' is worth the 'squeeze' for you. Productions on site locally may feel like more hassle than they are worth if you have little in the way of hoped for benefits from the scale below.

Do you want/need to grow filming?

The next questions are if and how you need to develop filming in your area to reap the benefits you are hoping for. If you need to substantially grow filming in the area, then this is high ambition. Equally, a desire

to embed the industry more firmly into the region, and develop it as a key industry, is high ambition.

Please note that the current amount of filming you have does not need to be factored in when considering ambition. A local authority could be inundated with requests, and have no capacity for any more, and as such have relatively low ambition to develop filming further. Equally, a local authority could be venturing into the filming industry for the first time, with high hopes for further filming thereon.

Economic impacts from filming and the proportion of local authorities experiencing them:

- 74%** **PR opportunities**
- 58%** **Immediate local spend**
- 49%** **Direct income to the council**
- 43%** **Civic pride**
- 43%** **More domestic tourism**
- 29%** **Community donations**
- 19%** **More international tourism**
- 17%** **Business created/attracted**



Understanding the difference between high priority and high ambition.

High priority: filming is important to the local authority, but there is no desire to increase the number of enquiries.

High ambition: there is a desire to grow the number of enquiries and the numbers of productions filming in the area, or to provide more support to the industry.

What it might mean to have HIGH ambition for filming:

- The authority is actively looking to increase the number of enquiries from production companies
- The authority is engaged in strong promotion of their locations, or plans to be
- Filming is considered a key industry for the region to develop and support

"I will give 150% to help them to make sure they speak to the right people and they get the right locations."

"The money invested from the production outweighs what we would charge."

What it might mean to have MEDIUM ambition for filming:

- The authority would welcome more film enquiries if they came in
- The authority is likely to want to cover any costs associated with filming
- The authority likes to offer support and guidance to productions, where possible and in a way that doesn't impact on other priorities

"We do what we can to help. I'm not quite sure how you prioritise it over anything else. But, you know, as an authority, we try to help."

"We're not looking to earn a lot of money. It's more sort of covering our costs."

What it might mean to have LOW ambition for filming:

- There is no need to grow the number of enquiries, doing so could mean that council can't manage or resource them
- No film support activity is undertaken without an understanding that the council will be financially compensated through fees
- There are no plans to add any additional time or resource to filming support

"It's not a priority - recovery and economic growth are."

"I'm booked up."

"I just say our fees are fixed. So that's what you pay. If you can't afford it, I'm afraid we can't accommodate."

Actions

Setting an appropriate strategy

Using value and ambition find yourself on the matrix

Having considered your value as a location (see page 9), and ambition as a local authority (see page 11), you can now find a suitable strategy on the matrix to the right. Each one suggests tactics and benefits, and has a proposed fee band: 1, 2 or 3.

Fee bands can be found on the following pages:

- Fee band 1:** go to [page 15](#)
- Fee band 2:** go to [page 16](#)
- Fee band 3:** go to [page 17](#)

Filming fee strategies by both value and ambition



Fee Band 1: The Higher Charges

Suggested for use by local authorities who are in the **Sitting Pretty, Making the Most of it, Opportunism, & Unvaluable/Uninterested** boxes.

Understanding how charges were set:

COST ELEMENT: Which costs do we need to recover or formalise?

Here the application fee, admin fee and permit have been rolled into one fee for ease.

RATE: Should the fee be a one-off or charged by the day?

This depends on whether or not the disruption caused is likely to increase as time goes on.

SCALING: Is size or type of production a factor in inconvenience/cost recovery?

Scaling is used when production size is likely to impact on the production cost.

LEVELS: What are the best proxies for inconvenience caused?

The levels are set by crew size, as local authorities told us that this was a large factor in understanding levels of disruption.

FEE BAND 1:

This fee band shows fees for those local authorities with a high market value but lower ambition for filming. Application fees are scaled by crew size, location fees are set by market rates for each location.

Cost Element	Rate	Scaling	Level 1: Students or good PR	Level 2: Small >20	Level 3: Medium 21-75	Level 4: Large 75-150
Application fee and permit	One-off	Scaled	£25	£100	£200	£250 – £500
Outdoor location hire/ exclusive (council owned)	Day rate	Consistent	£500-1000 (or as per local rates)			
Indoor location hire (council owned spaces)	Day rate	Consistent	£500-£2000 (or as per local rates)			
Income loss (eg parking bays or specialist support)	Day rate	Consistent	As per local rates			
Traffic notices	One-off	Consistent	As per local rates			
Extra licences (eg drone or cherry picker)	One-off	Consistent	£50-200 (or as per local rates)			

Other points to note:

Crews of over 150 are case by case

We advise that crew over 150 are dealt with individually, as disruption is likely to be high.

Crew sizes are on location

Fees are scaled by crew size working on location, not on full crew contingent.

A minimum charge applied always

Based on conversations with Location Managers and local authorities, we advise there is always a charge, to create a de facto contract.

Local rates

We recognise that local rates, set by other departments, will already exist. We do not aim to override these where they are already in place.

Half day and hourly rates

Day rates, can of course, be scaled to reflect half day or hourly rates.

It's likely a crew will make a request not covered by your fee structures. Don't be afraid to negotiate unexpected costs.

Fee Band 2: Medium Charges

Suggested for use by local authorities who are in the **Pushing Boundaries**, & **Happy to Accept** boxes.

Understanding how charges were set:

COST ELEMENT: Which costs do we need to recover or formalise?

Here the application fee, admin fee and permit have been rolled into one fee for ease.

RATE: Should the fee be a one-off or charged by the day?

This depends on whether or not the disruption caused is likely to increase as time goes on.

SCALING: Is size or type of production a factor in inconvenience/cost recovery?

Scaling is used when production size is likely to impact on the production cost.

LEVELS: What are the best proxies for inconvenience caused?

The levels are set by crew size, as local authorities told us that this was a large factor in understanding levels of disruption.

FEE BAND 2:

This fee band shows fees for those local authorities with a medium or high market value and medium or high levels of ambition. Application fees are scaled by crew size working on location, location fees are set by market rates for each location.

Cost Element	Rate	Scaling	Level 1: Students or good PR	Level 2: Small > 20	Level 3: Medium 21 – 75	Level 4: Large 76 – 150
Application fee and permit	One-off	Scaled	£25	£50	£100	£200–300
Outdoor location hire/ exclusive (council owned)	Day rate	Consistent	£300-900 (or as per local rates)			
Indoor location hire (council owned spaces)	Day rate	Consistent	£400-£1400 (or as per local rates)			
Income loss (eg parking bays or specialist support)	Day rate	Consistent	As per local rates			
Traffic notices	One-off	Consistent	As per local rates			
Extra licences (eg drone or cherry picker)	One-off	Consistent	£50-200 (or as per local rates)			

Other points to note:

Crews of over 150 are case by case

We advise that crew over 150 are dealt with individually, as disruption is likely to be high.

Crew sizes are on location

Fees are scaled by crew size working on location, not on full crew contingent.

A minimum charge applied always

Based on conversations with Location Managers and local authorities, we advise there is always a charge, to create a de facto contract.

Local rates

We recognise that local rates, set by other departments, will already exist. We do not aim to override these where they are already in place.

Half day and hourly rates

Day rates, can of course, be scaled to reflect half day or hourly rates.

It's likely a crew will make a request not covered by your fee structures. Don't be afraid to negotiate unexpected costs.

Fee Band 3: The Lower Charges

Suggested for use by local authorities who are in the **Making Headway, A Balancing Act, & High Hopes** boxes.

Understanding how charges were set:

COST ELEMENT: Which costs do we need to recover or formalise?

Here the application fee, admin fee and permit have been rolled into one fee for ease.

RATE: Should the fee be a one-off or charged by the day?

This depends on whether or not the disruption caused is likely to increase as time goes on.

SCALING: Is size or type of production a factor in inconvenience/cost recovery?

Scaling is used when production size is likely to impact on the production cost.

LEVELS: What are the best proxies for inconvenience caused?

The levels are set by crew size, as local authorities told us that this was a large factor in understanding levels of disruption.

FEE BAND 3:

This fee band shows fees for those local authorities with a higher ambition for filming, but with a lower market value. Here, location fees start at zero to allow flexibility for competition where wanted. Application fees are scaled by crew size working on location, location fees are set by market rates for each location.

Cost Element	Rate	Scaling	Level 1: Students or good PR	Level 2: Small > 20	Level 3: Medium 21 – 75	Level 4: Large 76 – 150
Application fee and permit	One-off	Part-Scaled	£25			£25–100
Outdoor location hire/ exclusive (council owned)	Day rate	Consistent	£0-800 (or as per local rates)			
Indoor location hire (council owned spaces)	Day rate	Consistent	£0-£900 (or as per local rates)			
Income loss (eg parking bays or specialist support)	Day rate	Consistent	As per local rates			
Traffic notices	One-off	Consistent	As per local rates			
Extra licences (eg drone or cherry picker)	One-off	Consistent	£50-200 (or as per local rates)			

Other points to note:

Crews of over 150 are case by case

We advise that crew over 150 are dealt with individually, as disruption is likely to be high.

Crew sizes are on location

Fees are scaled by crew size working on location, not on full crew contingent.

A minimum charge applied always

Based on conversations with Location Managers and local authorities, we advise there is always a charge, to create a de facto contract.

Local rates

We recognise that local rates, set by other departments, will already exist. We do not aim to override these where they are already in place.

Half day and hourly rates

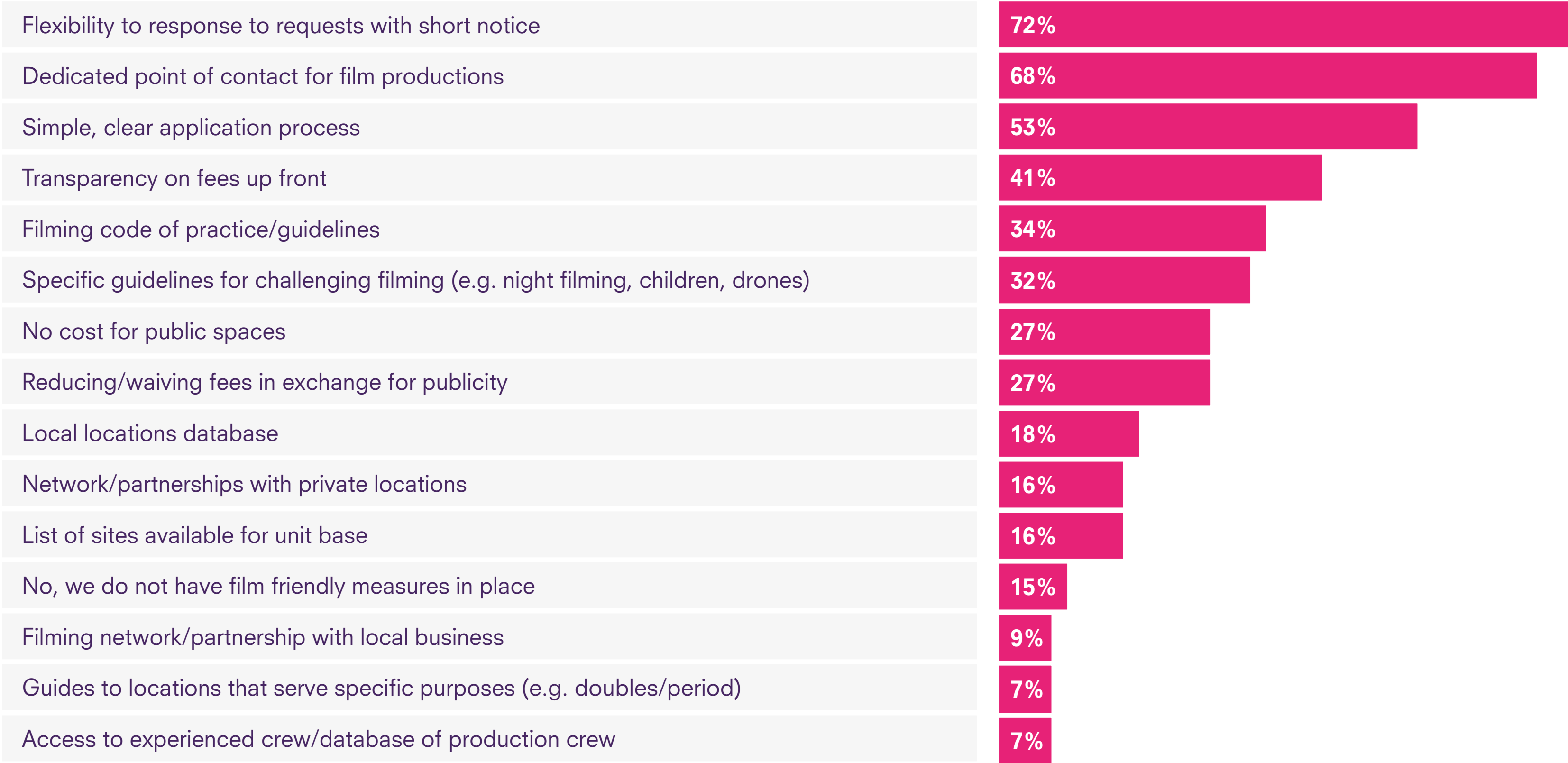
Day rates, can of course, be scaled to reflect half day or hourly rates.

It’s likely a crew will make a request not covered by your fee structures. Don’t be afraid to negotiate unexpected costs.

Making yourself attractive to the industry

Much of the value of local authorities is down to factors **outside of their control**. Most other aspects of film friendliness come down to experience and networks, which **can't be built overnight**. However, if your authority is keen to increase its value to the industry, there are **clear steps that can be taken** to move you in the right direction:

Measures Currently in Place:



Film friendly measures don't need to be complex or formal. **Flexibility, clarity and transparency** are the measures most frequently employed by local authorities, and they can make a huge difference.

2/3
The proportion of local authorities who carry out some kind of active promotion of filming in their area.

Short term actions:

- Establish a **clear process/form** for production companies to apply to film in your area. Creative England have templates for these and can support in making this as automated and easy for you, and the production company, as possible. A simple website landing page with basic information can be helpful as an early action.
- Establish a **single, named, point of contact** and make this clear on the website.
- Get in contact with **Creative England**, they support local authorities to provide the tools, advice and best practice required to develop their offer to the film and TV industry

41%

The percentage of local authorities who strongly agreed that filming had generated wider economic benefits for their area (those who scored it eight or more on a scale of one to ten).

3%

The percentage of local authorities that had completed any economic impact assessments on filming that took place in their area.

Medium term actions:

- Consider which locations might be attractive to the filming industry, take photographs of these locations and add them to add them to **Creative England's National Locations Database**. Consider creating a showreel..
- Find out **how much flex** there is in terms of processes within your local authority. Is there any possibility of speeding up permissions within the highways department for example? Do this in advance of receiving enquiries, not once they come in.

"I've managed to just get get the right people on board they all know me [...] I think it's part of the success that we've had."
— Local Authority

- Think about **evidencing the immediate economic benefits** of filming for internal buy in. Creative England can support you to **understand how film crews are likely to spend** on food and accommodation in the area while filming.
- If you do have filming in the area, ask for **testimonies and feedback** to add to the website.

Long term actions:

- **Build relationships** with Location Managers. Keep in touch, email out new locations as you discover them. Keep yourself top of mind.
- Build **your knowledge about the area**. Carry out site visits and think about where productions would be able to have a unit base, car parking, and other potential locations in the vicinity.

"You need to have awareness of the uniqueness that surrounds the location. It sounds odd, but it's a good selling point to have that information."

- Buddy up with other nearby local authorities, consider whether you have a **complementary offer** that might attract filming offered as a package.
- Contact **local businesses and private properties** that you think might be good for filming. Find out if they would be willing to be promoted as part of your overall offer.

"You only have so much prep time [...] so you want to use all the shortcuts that you've got. You've got, for example, council contacts, and you know can shut a road there, you know what it's going to cost you and can already feed that into the budget."
Location Manager

The local authority resource centre on the Filming in England website has a range of toolkits to support film friendliness: filminginengland.co.uk/planning-your-shoot/local-authority-resource-centre/

Case Studies

Bolton

Bolton is a large metropolitan district council that sees filming as an **opportunity for direct income**. Bolton’s proximity to **Liverpool and Manchester**, as well as a few very sought after locations has made the town **valuable to the filming industry**. The amount of direct income seen in recent years has made filming a high priority and created **high ‘buy in’ across the council**.

High appeal has built experience

Bolton’s high appeal to the industry means that the main filming contact now works predominantly on filming, and as a result has a strong relationship with Location Managers.

By far exceeding financial targets, and splitting the profit 80/20 with Asset Management, the officer at Bolton has managed to persuade that department and others to reduce their turnaround times, and as a result offers much-sought flexibility to location managers for short notice requests.

“There’s a working courtroom, cells underneath, custody area: stuff that’s just so sought after in TV. It gives them everything they need: three floors of an empty listed building, stunning from the outside, fantastic from the inside. And I’m booked up.”

“I’ve worked at the Council a long time. It’s people I’ve known for a long, long time.”

Productions with scenes filmed in Bolton include:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| • Peaky Blinders | • Years and Years |
| • Wolfe | • It’s a Sin |
| • The Ipcress File | • Brassic |
| • Ridley Road | • Top Gear |
| • Cobra | • Alma’s Not Normal |
| • The Stranger | • Coronation Street |
| • Traces | • Bancroft |
| • Cold Feet | • Last Tango in Halifax |

Film friendly measures include:
Flexibility to respond to requests with short notice, a dedicated point of contact for film productions and a list of sites available for unit base



Image: It’s a Sin, filmed on Le Mans Crescent in Bolton



Core benefits are income and ‘buzz’.

The key benefits of filming to Bolton are mainly short term and economic, with income to the council and to local businesses high on the agenda. However, the civic pride and ‘buzz’ created by filming, as well as the PR opportunities, are important sought benefits.

“It was nice to hear people talking about something nice.”

Economic impacts observed include:

- Direct income from hosting filming
- Repeat business from productions
- Spend on catering, retail, services by film production
- Business created/attracted to the area
- Increased civic pride
- Positive PR opportunities
- Donation to local community causes

“I understand when someone comes to me and says we’re not high-end drama, we’re low budget. But if you need this particular work doing or if there are additional location requests, then the fee will go up. We’re happy to be flexible on it.”

Fixed and up front fees

Permit fees are fixed and provided up-front to any prospective productions. They are scaled by crew size bands of small (0-10), medium (10-24), large (25+) and very large (75+). Location fees will vary within set parameters by location, but also by the type of production budget. Fees for charities or student productions are waived. The number of council departments required to input may also factor into fee decisions. After a free initial site visit, officer time for site visits and additional support is charged on an hourly rate, which doubles out of hours.

Other costs include:

- Unit base hire
- Parking suspensions (per bay)
- Parking dispensation (per vehicle)

Kent

Kent is an **experienced film office** working on behalf of the local authorities of Kent to attract and support filming in the county.

Kent offers self-assured guidance to production companies

While Kent benefits from its proximity to London, and a range of sites of interest to filming, one of the main draws of filming to the area is the guidance offered by the experienced film office staff. The staff prides itself on its knowledge of the area, the understanding of the relative value of the sites on offer, and the general support offered on location. Experience has also ensured the office is well-networked, with agreements in place with all district councils and with the police and highways.

Kent also has the power to close highways and public footpaths/bridleways for filming with the KCC (Filming on Highways) Act 2010.to location managers for short notice requests.

Placemaking is main benefit to Kent

Kent film office works hard to ensure that the county remains an attractive option to the industry. The benefits are considered to be wide-ranging: from economic benefits to local businesses to the livelihoods of the crew who live there. Placemaking is the most cited benefit.

Film friendly measures include:

Filming code of practice/guidelines; reducing/waiving fees in exchange for publicity; transparency on fees up front; a simple, clear application process; filming networks/partnership with local business; local locations database; specific guidelines for challenging filming (eg. night filming, children); guides to locations that serve specific purposes (eg. doubles/period), networks/partnerships with private locations; flexibility to respond to requests with short notice; a dedicated point of contact for film productions; a list of sites available for unit base; access to experienced crew/database of production crew.

Productions with scenes filmed in Kent include:

- Jagame Thandhiram
- After Love
- Back to Life
- Whitstable Pearl
- Brave New World
- Ammonite, Pistol

“You need to have awareness of the uniqueness that surrounds locations. It’s a good selling point to have that information.”



Image: © Kent Film Office

Economic impacts observed include:

- Direct income from hosting filming
- Spend on catering, retail, accommodation and other services by film production
- Increased domestic tourism to the area after the production
- Increased international tourism to the area
- Increased tourism spend in the area
- Increased civic pride
- Positive PR opportunities
- Repeat business from productions
- Donation to local community causes

“Out of everybody that contacts me directly, I would say that 75-80% do so because of the level of service they’ll get from us.”

“I think part of being film friendly is to have a flexible, negotiable charging structure.”



Flexibility of charging structure is considered a film friendly measure.

Kent film office keeps fees as low as possible and has a clear formal fee structure in place for smaller productions, up to crew sizes of 25. For any crew sizes above that, prices are negotiated specifically on disruption. To understand this level of production the film office will consider:

- Size of production crew on location
- Type of production
- Number of days filming
- Complexity of request/time needed to manage
- Level of inconvenience caused to the public
- Opportunities for publicity for the area
- Origin of producers/company (Local vs elsewhere)
- Required exclusivity

There is a reduced cost for local independent filmmakers in public spaces and it’s free for students. The film office also doesn’t charge for anything that is a factual programme that promotes Kent, or is about a Kent person.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Access to council land	●		
Parking for support vehicles	●		
Special services (eg. coastguard)	●		
Car parking loss of income	●		
Road closures	●		
Exclusive use of public spaces	●		
Loss of income from for-hire attractions	●		
Use of council equipment	●		
Traffic management	●		
Services (eg. water/electricity)	●		
Physical changes to locations	●		
Support whilst on location		●	
Filming on public land		●	
Late application fee		●	
Equipment on highways		●	
Film license/permit/notice of no objection			●
Application fee			●
Advice on locations			●

Maldon

Maldon is a very small rural coastal district council, located in a picturesque part of Essex. Filming is **considered a very high priority**, and the film officer has the **strong support of the local authority**. However, like for many councils, the team with responsibility for managing filming requests are **balancing a number of roles**.

Attractive to the industry

Maldon District is an attractive area an hour and a half out of London, and has a reputation for film friendliness among Location Managers. The area has seen a growth in the size of productions coming in to film in the last two years.

“Production companies can come into the south of Maldon, and pretty much film without disturbing anybody. We are really film friendly. Residents in the district are just simply amazing. They’re very tolerant.”

A range of sought benefits

Maldon as a local authority sees a number of benefits to filming in the area, from very short term income to the council, to increased film tourism, which in cases has been credited with the survival of businesses.

“We don’t put barriers in the way of film companies. In fact, we proactively break those down.”

Film friendly measures include:

Flexibility to respond to requests with short notice and a dedicated point of contact for film productions

Productions with scenes filmed in Maldon include:

- The Essex Serpent
- The Mercy
- The Woman in Black
- Lawless Heart
- A Pattern of Roses
- Britain at Low Tide
- The Third Day
- Tales from the Coast with Robson Green
- Liar
- Great Expectations
- Lovejoy
- The Murder Game
- Britain Afloat

“Liar was filmed in Tollesbury. It was really interesting to see, after Liar’s first series, the impact it had on shops, one tea shop was on the verge of folding, and they did so well. And that’s something that we really need to explore.”

Image: Apple TV’s ‘The Essex Serpent’ filming in Maldon.
Image credit: Donna Frost Photography. Taken from maldonandburnhamstandard.co.uk



Economic impacts observed include:

- Direct income from hosting filming
- Spend on catering, retail, accommodation and other services by film production
- Increased jobs in the area
- Increased domestic tourism to the area after the production
- Increased tourism spend in the area
- Increased civic pride
- Positive PR opportunities
- Repeat business from productions
- Donation to local community causes

“Would we always charge something for our help? No. If it’s a big crew, then we would say, we’re happy to help you and we know you have the budgets to do this. But if its Location, Location, Location, or Dogs Behaving Badly, then, no. Everything is proportionate”



Fees are charged ad hoc

Apart from hire charges for council land, Maldon always use an ad hoc approach for fee decisions, which hinge on a number of interplaying factors. These include the size of production crew on location, the type of production, whether it’s TV/film/commercial/documentary, as well as whether it’s professional or students/charity. The inconvenience is calculated based on the complexity of the request, the numbers of council departments that are required to input, and the disruption to the public (including whether somewhere will be exclusively used). An hourly rate is calculated with these things in mind. Fees may be reduced/waived if Maldon consider the production to be providing good PR for the area.

“We will never take advantage [...] we wouldn’t be going to them to say we need some money out of you please because our payback is the fact that it’s on primetime television.”

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Access to council land	●		
Parking for support vehicles	●		
Advice on locations	●		
Support whilst on location	●		
Special services (eg. coastguard)	●		
Car parking loss of income	●		
Road closures	●		
Exclusive use of public spaces	●		
Loss of income from for-hire attractions	●		
Film license/permit/notice of no objection	●		
Use of council equipment		●	
Services (eg. water/electricity)		●	
Filming on public land			●
Late application fee			●
Traffic management			●
Equipment on highways			●
Physical changes to locations			●
Noise or general disruption			●

Sedgemoor

Sedgemoor is a medium sized non-metropolitan district council based in Somerset. **Filming is a high priority**, but with limited resource there is little in the way of specific film-friendly measures.

Charges are in place to ensure that any associated **costs with having filming in the area are recouped**.

Unspoilt and close to Bristol

Sedgemoor is relatively close to Bristol and Bath and has a number of beautiful beaches, making it an appealing prospect for Location Managers. There is general support across the authority for filming and officers will help where they can when productions are on location. With quiet coastline being the main attraction, filming can be undistruptive to the residents. The good relationships within the council, due to the longevity of key staff members, are also valuable to the film industry.



"I've been with Sedgemoor for long time. I know the right people to speak to, and, on the whole, everyone seems keen because they can see the benefits of it."

While the local authority doesn't have specific film friendly measures they do what they can to support productions in the area.

Productions with scenes filmed in Sedgemoor include:

- Wolf Hall
- Casualty
- Top Gear
- Normandy
- Landing Re-enactment
- BBC 3's Young Mum's Mansion
- Alexander the Great's Desert Campaign
- The Crimson Field
- Another Mother's Son

"I'm not quite sure how you prioritise it over anything else. But as an authority, we try to help."

Sought benefits are varied:

Sought benefits from filming are wide-ranging, but tend to focus on the area, rather than the council. They include short term spend, and long term economic stability from tourism.

"The point is really the economic benefits of the film crew, which is not necessarily easy to estimate, but also the benefits of getting the district out there on national TV or film."

Economic impacts observed include:

- Direct income from hosting filming
- Spend on catering, retail, accommodation and other services by film production
- Positive PR opportunities



Fixed are set to recoup council costs

Fees are set on a daily rate, however there is some flexibility on a case by case basis. This may include the opportunity for publicity for the area but can also include more practical considerations such as the time of day.

The local authority are mainly keen to ensure that any outgoing costs are recouped. The council are open to a standardised approach to fees to ensure fairness across locations.

Set Fees are:

£500

Day charge

£250

Half day charge

£15

The admin fee charged for students.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Access to council land	●		
Parking for support vehicles	●		
Special services (eg. coastguard)	●		
Loss of income from for-hire attractions	●		
Film license/permit/notice of no objection	●		
Use of council equipment	●		
Services (eg. water/electricity)		●	
Filming on public land		●	
Support whilst on location		●	
Car parking loss of income		●	
Exclusive use of public spaces		●	
Traffic management		●	
Physical changes to locations		●	
Advice on locations			●
Road closures			●
Late application fee			●
Application fee			●
Equipment on highways			●
Noise or general disruption			●

“We’re not looking to earn a lot of money. It’s more covering our costs. And the more work that is involved, the more potential cost there would be to us.”

Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton has seen an increase in filming enquiries recently and it is hoped that this will continue to have a **positive impact** for the City. Location fees are charged on a case by case basis, following a valuation based on the **production company's needs**.

Council-wide support and burgeoning enquiries

Wolverhampton benefits from its closeness to Birmingham and the wider West Midlands, and has excellent network and transport links. There has been an increase in filming enquiries in recent years, despite minimal proactive promotion. Wolverhampton are currently participating in a pilot scheme with Film Birmingham, who are supporting the authority with filming requests. The Head of Assets, who is the main point of contact for filming enquiries, receives strong support right across the Council particularly as the logistics of filming can impact on a number of different Council services.

“We are very receptive to receiving enquiries from across the film industry and it is very much done as a team effort. We recognise the benefits that this can bring to our city and look forward to how we can continue to encourage and support filming in Wolverhampton in the future.”

Benefits are mainly reputational

The benefits of filming for Wolverhampton relate mainly to the reputation of the city, which it is hoped will attract new business into the region. There is also hope that the

shorter term economic impact of having large crews on site will be felt by local businesses. Fees are balanced to ensure that they are attractive to production companies.

Economic impacts observed include:

- Direct income from hosting filming
- Spend on catering, retail, services by film production
- Spend on accommodation by film production
- Increased civic pride
- Positive PR opportunities
- Repeat business from productions

“The wider economic benefits are attracting new business into the city, spend in the city and raising the profile of Wolverhampton across the film industry.”

Film friendly measures include: Transparency on fees up front, a simple, clear application process, flexibility to respond to requests with short notice and a dedicated point of contact for film productions.

“We are confident that our fees are transparent and are at an attractive rate for interested film production companies. We also fully appreciate the additional benefits this industry can bring to our city.”

“It’s about helping to put Wolverhampton city on the map.”



Top Image: Small Axe, filmed in Wolverhampton © BBC/ McQueen Ltd. Second Image: Wolverhampton Art Gallery, from the Creative England database

Fees

Fees are charged by the local authority in Wolverhampton on a case by case basis. There is currently no standard approach, however fee calculations are determined following a valuation and are discussed with the production company at the earliest opportunity.

“There isn’t a set policy, but, it is done with some methodology behind it. And that’s based on understanding what the commercial rental value would be.”

Deciding factors on the fees include, whether its for exclusive use, the size of crew, number of days filming, the complexity of the request and number of council departments required to input, the time of day, and the level of inconvenience caused to the public. Other factors which are taken into consideration are the benefits that filming would bring to the city eg PR – putting Wolverhampton on the map within the film industry.

The authority provides estimated fees as soon as possible following the approach, informing production companies early in the process of what they will be and providing clarity on what they will include. Despite filming being a relatively new endeavour for the authority, fee decisions are considered straightforward and early engagement on the proposed fee is key to success.

“We share estimated costs with the interested party before proceeding too far down the line. We have a responsibility to be open and transparent, providing the information at an early stage to enable informed decisions and to check that the pricing structure is within their budget.

“This is still quite a new area for us and we look forward to exploring further opportunities for Wolverhampton to be a city of choice for the film industry.”

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Access to council buildings/indoor spaces	●		
Film license/permit/notice of no objection	●		
Services (eg. water/electricity)	●		
Road closures	●		
Traffic management	●		
Physical changes to locations	●		
Loss of income from for-hire attractions	●		
Access to council land		●	
Filming on public land		●	
Parking for support vehicles		●	
Support whilst on location		●	
Application fee		●	
Use of council equipment		●	
Car parking loss of income		●	
Special services (eg. coastguard)		●	
Equipment on highways		●	
Exclusive use of public spaces		●	
Noise or general disruption		●	
Late application fee			●
Advice on locations			●

“On the whole, people are interested if they see a film crew. It livens life up a bit doesn’t it?”

“I think it is just a bit of a feel good factor.”

– Local authorities on filming in their area

Contact Us

filminginengland.co.uk
production@creativeengland.co.uk
+44 (0)20 8324 2311
@filminengland

creative
england
**Filming
in England**

