



# FILMING POLICY OF THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

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## **Filming in RBK**

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK) is a 'film-friendly' borough. We welcome enquiries from the producers of non-news film, television and stills photography wishing to locate their project in the borough and aim to facilitate this process wherever possible.

Whilst recognising the important role that filming plays in the UK economy both at a national and local level, the Council is committed to ensuring that the benefits of filming in the borough are balanced at all times with the need to minimise any potential disruption to residents and local business.

In order to maximise the benefit derived from filming in the borough for its community and deliver a professional service to film-makers, the Council has adopted a filming policy for RBK.

## **Definition of 'Filming'**

Throughout this policy, the term 'filming' applies to individuals or companies wishing to use areas within the Council's jurisdiction for the purpose of creating a non-news film, television or stills photography production.

## **Objectives of the Filming Policy**

The key objectives of RBK's Filming Policy are to:

- set out how the Council will manage its filming service (and how it will make incremental improvements to this service over the coming years);
- attract high-calibre film, TV and stills photography productions to the borough;
- raise the profile of the borough (locally, nationally and internationally);
- balance the needs of the community with the needs of the film, TV or stills photography company;
- secure maximum benefit for the borough whilst minimising the impact on its community;
- maximise the income potential from filming;
- provide clear guidance and information to film-makers and the public;
- send a message that the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is 'film-friendly' and a good place to do business.

## **Scope of the Filming Policy**

The Council's aim is to make incremental improvements to its filming service over the coming years. This approach will ensure that the Council's aspirations in terms of raising the Borough's profile through filming activity can be met by having sufficient capacity, both at the corporate centre and in departments, to service requests from film-makers.

Therefore, the Council's initial focus for developing its filming service will be on the following areas within the borough's boundaries:

*In or around Council-owned properties, parks, open spaces and Kingston Town Centre (including the Historic Market Place and Clarence Street but excluding Eden Walk and the Bentall Centre).*

As the filming service develops over time, the Council may wish to consider expanding the range of assets it promotes to film-makers. For example, the Council may decide to act as a 'broker' for privately-owned property and land. This could involve setting up a locations library, co-ordinating enquiries on behalf of private landowners and charging a 'commission' for passing on filming requests.

The decision to expand the scope of the Council's filming policy to cover privately-owned property and land would be subject to Executive approval at a later date. In the meantime, the Council's Communications Unit will respond to enquiries about land and property beyond its jurisdiction by advising film-makers to contact the owner direct (or Film London).

## **The Filming Policy**

RBK's Filming Policy commits the Council to:

### **1. Providing a 'one-stop service' to film-makers**

Known externally as RBK's 'Film Office', this service will be provided by the Council's Communications Unit and will involve:

- i) dealing with all filming enquiries at the initial point of contact;
- ii) liaising with Council departments on behalf of the film-maker to deliver a co-ordinated response.

*Wherever possible, the Communications Unit will aim to deal with all filming enquiries through its office. However, it is acknowledged that there will be occasions when complex technical or legal issues surrounding a particular request will require direct contact between the film-maker and relevant other departments. Officers with specialist knowledge (notably Parking and Highways) would be required to continue attending site 'recces' (or location visits), where appropriate;*

- iii) administering the film applications process and issuing licences to film in the borough;
- iv) establishing, monitoring and reviewing codes of conduct for dealing with filming in the borough;
- v) establishing a standard tariff of charges for filming activity and ensuring that this is applied consistently;
- vi) administering any income generated from filming and arranging for its disbursement in accordance with the wishes of the Council's Executive.

### **2. Delivering an open and fair application process**

The Council will publish a *Guide to Filming in RBK* (also known as the *Guide for Location Managers and Producers*) and make this available both in hard copy and on the Council's website. This Guide will set out:

- i) the application process that film-makers are required to follow (including minimum lead times required by the Council to make any necessary arrangements e.g suspending Pay & Display parking bays);
- ii) a tariff of charges for filming in the borough;
- iii) an *Application to Film in RBK* form for film-makers to complete and return (along with evidence of Public Liability insurance of at least £5 million). This application form asks for specific details of the filming, including dates and

times, the exact location, number of crew and vehicles, parking requirements and notification of whether the shoot will involve camera cranes, tracking, child actors, animals etc.;

- iv) the Council's Terms & Conditions for filming in the borough.

### **3. Creating transparency in the charges levied for filming**

Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 permits all Local Authorities to charge for the provision of 'discretionary services'. Supporting film-makers and film productions, including arranging filming on the public highway, is considered to be a discretionary service.

Local Authorities are empowered to set charges as they see fit. The level of film service charges must be on a cost recovery basis.

RBK's standard tariff of charges for film-makers has been drawn up following consultation with Council departments, other London boroughs and Film London, and will be reviewed on a regular basis. Charges for filming will be applied consistently although the Council reserves the right to reduce or waive these charges for student film-makers and charitable organisations.

Full details of the Council's standard tariff of charges for filming in the borough will be published in the *Guide to Filming in RBK* (referred to in point 3, above).

### **4. Issuing filming licences to confirm approved applications**

Upon receipt of a completed *Application to Film in RBK* (and evidence of Public Liability Insurance), the Communications Unit will consult with departmental colleagues and other public bodies (e.g Police, Health) as required to establish whether permission to film should be granted. The Communications Unit aims to review all applications within 24 hours of receipt, although this may not always be possible in the case of more complex filming requests.

If an application to film is approved, the Communications Unit will send the film-maker a *Licence to Film in Kingston upon Thames*\*. This licence will cover filming in or around Council-owned properties, parks, open spaces and Kingston Town Centre (including the Historic Market Place and Clarence Street but excluding Eden Walk and the Bentall Centre).

This licence will include the Terms & Conditions of its issue and outline the film-maker's obligations in this respect. Film-makers who have been granted a licence to film in RBK will be asked to ensure that the licence is present on location as proof of permission to film.

\* It is important to note that the Council currently does not have any legislative authority to licence filming on the Public Highway. Where applications to film include a request for use

of the Public Highway, the Council will confirm whether or not it has any objections to the request. This does not in any way constitute a licence or permission to film.

The Council reserves the right to oppose any application to film in the borough, for example if insufficient time has been given to consider the application.

## **5. Centralising arrangements for the invoicing and payment of filming charges**

The Communications Unit will be responsible for invoicing film-makers for any charges incurred as result of filming in the borough. Payment of these invoices will be collected by the Communications Unit in a central filming fund for disbursement in accordance with the wishes of the Council's Executive.

Local or departmental invoicing and payment arrangements will no longer be permissible under the Council's new filming policy.

## **6. Offering an on-line presence for borough filming information**

In order to facilitate a professional and efficient filming service in RBK, the Council will create an on-line presence for borough filming information ([www.kingston.gov.uk/filming](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/filming)). This will comprise dedicated pages on the Council's website that deal specifically with both the needs of the film-maker and the needs of RBK residents, businesses and other non film-makers.

## **7. Providing regular filming updates for Members of the Council**

As part of the new filming policy, Members of the Council may elect to receive regular email bulletins giving latest details of any filming that has been approved.

### **The Film-maker's Obligation**

In return for delivering a professional service to film-makers as set out in its filming policy, the Council will expect film-makers to:

- Co-operate with the Council by using the prescribed application process when requesting permission to film in the borough;
- Inform the Council's Communications Unit of a planned shoot in the borough within a time frame that is adequate and proportionate;
- Ensure that the filming crew conduct themselves in accordance with the *Location Filming in London Code of Practice*, as developed by Film London.