



City of Westminster

The evening and night time in Westminster (6pm – 6am)
Night Time Commission Consultation Response

February 2018

INTRODUCTION

The Night Time Commission defines 'night' as 'all activities between 6pm and 6am, across the whole of London...' and has the stated objective of seeking 'to understand the experiences of evening and night workers [as well as] our streets, open spaces and public transport at night.'

Westminster City Council welcomes the broad scope adopted by the Commission beyond 'pubs, clubs, venues and restaurants' and this response provides evidence from the full range of our local experience on Westminster between 6pm and 6am. However, despite the broad definition of 'night' we were surprised by the narrow focus of the questions asked in the consultation with their very specific concentration on the 'night time economy'. Therefore, our consultation response is provided in two parts:

- **Part 1** sets out the five principles which we believe are essential to making Westminster operate successfully for half its daily cycle between the hours of 6pm to 6am. While this includes the evening and night time economy, it also goes much further by taking into account residents, workers and visitors who are not participating in the economy but doing other things, such as delivering public services or using public space.
- **Part 2** answers the specific questions asked in the consultation.

For any queries or follow-up information on the council's position, please contact Catherine Ford, Principal Policy Officer, cford@westminster.gov.uk.

PART 1

Westminster is a global city made up of strong neighbourhoods and a thriving community. For half the day – 6pm to 6am – what happens during the evening and night defines the experiences of everybody who uses the city. The evening and night time (ENT) is therefore not just for the estimated 43,925 people employed in the evening and night time economy¹ and the estimated 26 million people who visit Westminster annually. The ENT is also for Westminster's 227,000 residents² and the estimated 164,836³ who work in the city between 6pm and 6am in activities not related to the economy – such as nurses, tube drivers and cleaners – as well as the sizeable proportion of the 26 million visitors who do not spend money but may visit for other purposes, such as enjoying Westminster's public spaces.

We strongly believe that a broad view should be taken of the ENT to make sure that it is accessible and inclusive for all. The ENT should be as much for somebody walking their dog at 6pm, visiting friends for dinner at 8pm, working as a nurse at 2am, or taking part in the charity Moonlight Walk at 3am, as it is for somebody going to the theatre, eating out at restaurant, drinking in a bar or going to a music venue.

The evening and night time economy is a major component of the wider evening and night time. The evening and night time economy in Westminster is concentrated in the West End (i.e. Soho, Leicester Square, Piccadilly, Covent Garden), as well as Bayswater and Edgware Road and is larger than Edinburgh, Manchester, and Birmingham's evening and night economy combined.

To take full account of all the activities that happen between 6pm and 6am we would encourage the Night Time Commission to both broaden and shift its focus. To do this, we would recommend that the commission:

- **Broadens its scope to include the full breadth of the evening and night time offer by recognising that the current focus on 'night time economy' is restrictive** and not reflective of the diversity of activity - from public safety, to inclusivity, transport, public realm, diversification and resident amenity.
- Recognises the ENT offer needs to be **more inclusive and diverse across venues, transport and public realm** so that it is accessible to people of all backgrounds and inviting to those who do not want to participate in alcohol led activities. It must also operate for those who work in the ENT.

¹ Source: Labour Force Survey. Including jobs in licensed restaurants, unlicensed premises, takeaways, licenced clubs, pubs and bars, cinemas and theatres, gambling, arts facilities, sports and fitness facilities

² Based on ONS 2013 mid-year estimates

³ Source: Labour Force Survey.

- **Recognises the evening and the night as requiring different operational and policy approaches.** The evening and night time have flexible time frames depending on the area and day of the week, however, the evening can broadly be defined through its offer of a variety of activity and entertainment for a diverse range of people, families and interests. The relaxed evening environment impacts less on public resources and on the surrounding residents. The night however requires an increased level of public protection and service resources to manage, can impact negatively on resident's comfort and there is an inherent need to provide a wider offer of amenities.
- Acknowledges that the evening and night time differs from place to place and across boroughs, and **each local authority must be supported to develop localised assessments and solutions to adequately balance the needs of businesses, residents and visitors.**

We are firmly committed to protecting, managing and enhancing the evening and night time in a way that maximises benefits for residents, businesses and visitors, keeps negative impacts to a minimum, and embraces growth – all whilst improving management, increasing inclusivity, and supporting responsible economic growth. Below **we outline our five principles which we would encourage the commission to consider adopting as a wider terms of reference for its work.** Further evidence and detail for the development of these principles is currently being scoped, and when finalised will be embedded into our City Plan.

Five principles for an inclusive and diverse evening and night time

1) Tailoring an inclusive evening and night time

We recognise the need for policy and operational distinction between the evening (approximately 18:00 – 23:59) and the night (approximately 00:00 – 06:00), and that our ENT does not exist in isolation from the day time.

Many of those taking advantage of the evening offer are employed here, or have visited here during the day, and the opportunities and choice for evening socialising is key to central London's success as a business and entertainment location. These evening activities should be celebrated and supported. This environment does however migrate into predominantly alcohol-led nightlife post 12am, which reduces lifestyle choice for workers and visitors, increases pressure on emergency and local authority resources, and impacts resident comfort. We want to promote a more inclusive atmosphere by encouraging a broader range of late nightlife, for instance encouraging later opening hours into the evening for museums, galleries and cultural institutions, which will help to mitigate against the negative effects of the late night economy on residents and workers.

We also want to make sure that the ENT works for people who are not participating in the evening and night time economy eg those working night shifts.

2) Creating a balanced evening and night time through local assessments and London-wide innovation

Across London there are multiple town centres with distinct ENT offers, with significant differences between and within boroughs in terms of size, intensity, nature and impacts. As a local authority, it is our responsibility to identify and balance the different area based needs, including protecting residential amenity, ensuring our evening and night time is inclusive and accessible to all including activities which are suitable for families and communities, whilst also providing the right environment for responsible businesses to thrive and grow.

We have a number of tools available to promote this balance, such as ensuring a suitable policy framework within licensing and planning, building partnership approaches to improve business compliance/best practice, and ultimately, use of enforcement against unacceptable behaviour and irresponsible business practice. Parallel to our local role we also have a responsibility to support the shaping of London as a global city and be open to creativity and innovation from new markets.

3) Developing integrated street-based services

Our day and night offers are supported by street based services and policing that maintain and protect the needs of the area (e.g. waste and street cleansing, public protection, crime), however there is a need to develop a tailored model of street-based public service provision that works in partnership with the Business Improvement Districts, landowners, businesses, the Security Industry Authority (SIA), and the voluntary and community sector to manage the growing ENT. This means moving beyond the current model, which is often based on adapting or extending day-time patterns of service. This should be a flexible approach that is coordinated locally, evidence-led, developed in conjunction with all the partners involved, and properly resourced through a sustainable financial mechanism.

4) Managing the evening and night time through collaborative leadership

Delivering the services required to support the evening and night time requires close working across the public, private and voluntary sectors. Working together, we are able to identify the needs of individual areas, and design solutions that promote a rich diversified cultural and entertainment offer, without the need for increasing regulation. Our responsibility is to help define these objectives, building and maintaining these alliances, and supporting the industry to self-regulate where appropriate.

5) Promoting growth and diversity within a flexible and changing economy

Our ENT is dynamic and fluctuates with market trends and consumer demand. Local Authority powers are however limited in encouraging (or discouraging) certain activity in the private sector and cannot preserve activities the market no longer supports. The powers and tools available to us must therefore be used in an evidence-led and realistic way that proactively influences the market, which may encourage some premises to diversify their offer. Any policy must work in tandem with the market rather than in place of it.

PART 2

Westminster City Council's Response to the questions asked in the Night Time Commission Consultation

Westminster City Council was surprised by the narrow focus on the 'night time economy' in the consultation. We would encourage the Commission to see the council's response to the specific questions within the context of our wider focus on supporting a diverse and inclusive evening and night time.

Q1. What are the strengths of London's night time economy?

- **Internationally recognised:** Our ENT is a highly visible with a number of internationally recognised venues and premises. Linking this with our day time offer brings in approximately 5 million visitors each week.
- **Economic growth:** Across Westminster, the ENT employs approximately 220,000 people and generates approximately £24.5 billion in revenue each year. This accounts for approximately 18% of our total annual economy.⁴ A report conducted by London First indicates that across London the ENT generates c.£40 billion in annual revenue which could increase by £1.6 billion annually by 2026.⁵
- **Synergy with the daytime offer:** Those that work or visit our city during the day can easily move to different venues and activities in the evening and into the night.
- **Proximity and choice of venues:** Our ENT offers an abundance of choice and experience for all ages and interests within close proximity including (but not limited to): restaurants, pubs, clubs, theatres, cinemas, bars, exhibitions, ad hoc pop up experiences and markets, gyms, night time tours, accommodation and retail offers.
- **Transport:** London has some of the best connected and affordable night time transport links for getting between venues and home, including taxis, minicabs, bicycle, and night buses. The Night tube has also significantly improved transport connectivity.

Q2. What are the weaknesses of London's night time economy?

- **Concentrated areas of late night anti-social behaviour, crime and waste:** Whilst the abundance of ENT premises in localised areas has a positive impact for the economy and consumer convenience, issues such as crime, ASB, excessive noise and waste from high footfall areas late into the night become concentrated. This impacts surrounding residents and places considerable pressure on emergency and public service resources. For example in 2016/17, 26% of all crime and disorder incidents in Westminster were reported between 00:00-06:00.⁶

⁴ TBR (2015) Westminster ENTE: A cost Benefit Study, page 25

⁵ London First in association with EY (2016) London's 24 Hour Economy: The economic value of London's 24-hour economy.

⁶ Data from: MET Police, the British Transport Police, London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service

- **Lack of late night diversification:** Whilst our evening offer has a significant choice of venues that cater for all, this choice becomes increasingly narrowed to predominantly alcohol-led later into the night. This restricts the inclusivity of all ages and interests, and there is a need to provide a more diverse offer of late night activity such as late night coffee bars, restaurants, retail offers, arts, creativity and sports, for a wider range of consumers. However, we are encouraged by recent examples of diversification such as multi-use function venues and/or experiential offers such as immersive social experiences.
- **Protection for vulnerable people:** There can sometimes be a lack of basic social care provided by ENT premises for vulnerable persons including intoxicated people, night workers, people with physical or mental health disabilities etc. We are aware that some venues will remove vulnerable persons from in or around their premises without concern for their health or safety and rely on members of the public to assist people home or to contact emergency and local authority services.

Q3. What are the threats to London's night time economy?

- **Fluidity of market trends:** The ENT is market led, and any policy influencing the ENT must have flexible parameters to support growth and change within this consumer environment. For example, national data has suggested that alcohol consumption amongst young people is declining.⁷ Whilst we are unclear whether this national trend is representative within a Westminster or London context, this may suggest that consumer tastes are tending towards undefined alternatives and reinforces the need for a more diverse late night offer. Similarly, the increasing closure of night clubs and other venues are in part thought to be attributable to the increased ease and use of electronic dating means, reducing the need for places to organically meet new people.
- **Creating a suitable residential environment:** London is a residential city as well as a prime evening and night-time destination, and there are several areas where residential areas and clusters of evening and night-time zones overlap. There can be friction between business and residents and local authorities run the risk of being labelled as pro-business or vice-versa. Any approach to the management of the ENT needs to delineate between how we will respond to the legitimate concerns of residents while not alienating businesses with the threat of unnecessary levels of regulation.
- **Rising rent costs, business rates and redevelopment impacting on historic culture:** The loss of certain venues resulting from economic and local changes has to be reviewed within the context of how this might affect certain groups. For example, over the past decade London has lost 58% of LGBT+ spaces according to a report by the UCL Urban Laboratory. This loss may demonstrate the increasing success of LGBT+ needs integrating into mainstream venues, as well as an increase in the use of electronic dating means (as noted above), however we are working closely with the LGBT+ community and partners to do all we can to support venues that are valued to the community.

⁷ ONS (2017) Adult drinking habits in Great Britain: 2005 -2016, Page 3

- **Inequality:** With reference to the above point, the closure of certain premises such as LGBT+ venues impact on the equality of the offer and reduces diversification. Similarly access to affordable space for small businesses becomes increasingly out of reach. There is also a risk that without increased diversification away from alcohol-led activities after midnight, the available offer for night workers and the diverse range of visitors seeking alternative venues is restricted.

Q4. What are the opportunities for London's night time economy?

- **Improving the public realm:** Whilst the ENT has traditionally been thought about as what happens inside premises, people's experience of the ENT is also affected by their perception and experience of the infrastructure and streetscape on their way to and from venues. The public realm should be reviewed from an ENT perspective as this can impact personal safety, way finding (which may be impaired if intoxicated), as well as opportunities for late night crime and ASB.
- **Improving partnership working with the industry:** There are opportunities to build new partnerships with the industry from a public protection angle and to explore potential areas of development, particularly on the issue of night time safety. These partnerships will deliver better social value outcomes for businesses, residents and visitors alike by improving overall management of venues and ensuring local environments are well managed and safe, including providing protection to those made vulnerable through intoxication. We already have demonstrated this with our Licensing Charter and initiatives set within that framework, including the Best Bar None scheme, and proposal for our Nightsafe hub. Venues are included in the governance structure and management of the ENT, and benefit from the value of shared best practice and approach. Any such partnerships however need to be properly resourced through a sustainable financial mechanism.

Q5. What innovations, or ideas from other cities, would make London better at night?

- **Recognising the differences between the evening and night time:** During the evening activities like dining, cinema, light-drinking, socialising, and West End Theatre are predominant. Fewer residents are trying to sleep and the provision of street based services are not as significant as the night time. The night time offer tends to be more centred on alcohol consumption, where individual behaviour can become more disruptive and amenity issues for residents and other people using the area become increasingly significant. The evening and night time (timings to be defined locally) therefore need tailored policy and operational approaches.
- **Merit based licensing:** A key short-term tool used by local authorities is licensing policy, which can be proactive in delivering desired social and economic outcomes in the ENT. We have a well-designed licensing policy developed in consultation with stakeholders, that delivers the preferred social outcomes in particular areas i.e. each licensing application is individually considered on the basis of the impacts in the area it intends to open.

- **Local area-based policies:** Policy which is area focused and designed to optimise the balance of venues can enable local authorities to ensure that spatial and economic development is balanced.
- **Inviting private-sector championship and self-regulation:** There is a key role for private-sector championship and self-regulation, and the local authority has an important role to play in encouraging this approach. For example, if we want to steer the industry to self-regulate more by tackling excessive drinking and alcohol related violence, it would be more impactful if we had a champion in the industry, who can articulate the council position to the industry in a way which is meaningful to businesses but which can also deliver added value outcomes for the local area and its residents. We are developing these approaches, and have already demonstrated this in the Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus areas through our Licencing Charter and Best Bar None scheme to encourage better management of venues (i.e. responsible sales of alcohol and discourage the conditions which allow for disruptive behaviour).

Q6. In July, the Mayor published his Vision for London as a 24-Hour City which contains ten principles for the development of London at night. What do you like or not like about the vision? Are the ten principles right? What would you add or exclude, and why?

- We would like to invite the NTC to review our recommendations and five principles set out in the beginning of this document.
- The Mayor's vision should acknowledge that the management of the ENT is subject to the changes and demands of market and consumer trends, and any policy must be malleable enough to adequately support this.
- The commitments should also account for what can realistically be achieved. For example, as a local authority our main short-term tools are campaigning for change and the use of licensing policy to discourage undesirable behaviours and embed new behavioural standards. Longer-term outcomes can be achieved through planning policy, which would embrace developments that support diversification in the market, and public realm design which would encourage responsible behaviour, cohesion, and natural guardianship.