



Licensing Committee Report

Date	20 March 2019
Classification	For General Release
Title or report	Soho Angels and Night Hub Update
Report of	Director of Policy, Performance and Communication
Decision maker	Licensing Committee
Wards involved	All
Financial summary	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.
Report author and telephone	Mr Kerry Simpkin, Interim Licensing Policy and Strategy Manager. Tel: 020 7641 1840

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides and update on the Soho Angels and Night Hub initiative and its results to date.
- 1.2 The Soho Angels and Night Hub are now operating every Friday night in Soho. The report also provides and update on the potential to work with partners and businesses to deliver similar services in other areas of the City.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The council has developed a safe space (Night Hub) and volunteer network (Soho Angels) as part of its Nightsafe project. The Nightsafe project aims to develop initiatives that will:
 - 2.1.1 Improve the safety and amenity of the public domain;
 - 2.1.2 Provide a harm reduction service where vulnerable people can access support and a safe space;
 - 2.1.3 Reduce the risk of crime, specifically to prevent intoxicated people from becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime;
 - 2.1.4 Collaborate with key stakeholders to establish a governance model that is sustainable and enhances the evening and night time economy;

- 2.1.5 Support organisations that operate in the City at night (e.g. venue security staff, Police and Ambulance)
- 2.2 The council became aware that the LGBT Foundation were looking to expand their Village Angels service to other areas of the country with a thriving LGBT+ community. This expansion would be funded by their long-time supporter, Smirnoff.
- 2.3 The Village Angels operate in Manchester's Gay Village and provide an on street volunteer network to assist those in need. They also provide a safe space within the Village for people to recover, receive support and generally discuss their issues with someone who will listen and not judge. This support is provided to all visitors of the Village no matter their gender or sexual orientation.
- 2.4 One of the priority areas being considered by LGBT Foundation was Soho. Due to the similarities in the proposed services the council and LGBT Foundation developed a partnership to deliver the Soho Angels and Night Hub. The council would provide the formal structure and partnership management to support service delivery. LGBT Foundation would support the operational running of the scheme. A member of LGBT Foundation staff is located within our offices to support the partnership and delivery of this scheme. The funding provided by both partners (match funding) would enable this service to run for up to two years. The area covered by the Soho Angels is shown in the Map attached to this report as Appendix 1.
- 2.5 LGBT Foundations experience in running a similar scheme has enabled the service to be developed from a tried and tested model. The council also looked at similar schemes from around the country and internationally. When developing the service for officers engaged with the Take Kare organisation in Sydney, Australia. Take Kare provide safe spaces and a network of Take Kare Ambassadors in Sydney's primary evening and night-time economy area. Take Kare provided a large amount of information and support to assist with the development and running of this scheme in a Capital City.
- 2.6 To deliver the objectives of the Soho Angels and Night Hub initiatives the council has engaged with a number of key partners who are now actively supporting this project. The partners are:
 - 2.6.1 St John Ambulance, who provide volunteers to work in the Hub and as a response team providing medical support to those who need it.
 - 2.6.2 Drinkaware, who provide initial days training for the volunteers based on their successful Drinkaware Crew, promote the service and collaborate on behavioural change initiatives.
 - 2.6.3 Metropolitan Police Service, who provide support during the operation of the scheme as well as provide statistical information and publicity.

- 2.6.4 London Ambulance Service, who provide statistical information, promote the service and support St John Ambulance with the clinical management of the scheme.
- 2.6.5 Safer West End Partnership, who provide the radio communication devices for the Angels, support the partnership with business engagement and promote the service.

3. Soho Angels and Night Hub Pilot

- 3.1 To test the Soho Angels and Night Hub service before full implementation of the service a pilot was undertaken on the run up to Christmas 2018. The pilot ran on each Friday night from the 30th November to the 21st December 2018. The Night Hub was operated from St Anne's Church Hall in Dean Street between 10pm to 5am.
- 3.2 A volunteer recruitment campaign was run between September and December 2018. Volunteers have been recruited from all over London and the South East to work as Soho Angels. These volunteers work in a wide variety of professions, which includes paramedics, police officers, lawyers, barristers, students, city bankers and retail workers. A number of the volunteers are also residents of Westminster and Soho.
- 3.3 The Night Hub provided a recovery centre for those who required it as well as a safe space for people to reunite with their friends or family, charge their phones, have a chat or get further support information. St John Ambulance volunteers worked out of the Night Hub providing advanced first aid support to those in need including monitoring people as they recover from the effects of alcohol or drugs. St John Ambulance also provided a response team that supported the Soho Angels with any on street medical intervention and transporting intoxicated people from where they were found back to the Hub.
- 3.4 The Soho Angels work in teams of three or more and are easily identifiable by their bright pink reflective tabards. Each Soho Angel carried a pack to assist them support those in need. The packs contain water, foil blankets, ponchos, vomit bags, lolly pops, flip flops and gloves. They also carried a radio which linked them to each other, the Hub, Police and licensed premises in the area. A selection of photos of the Soho Angels from the pilot are provided at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.5 During the pilot an average of 14 Soho Angels worked each Friday night. A core group of volunteers from the first cohort of recruits worked every night of the pilot. The Soho Angel volunteers were also supported by a number of council staff who volunteered during the pilot.
- 3.6 St John Ambulance received a very high level of interest in volunteering for this project. This enabled them to provide an average of 10 volunteers, with a wide range of clinical

expertise per night. St John Ambulance were able to provide a minimum of a paramedic, Emergency Department Nurse Practitioner or Doctor during the pilot operation. This enabled a higher level of medical treatment available in the Hub than originally anticipated.

- 3.7 As part of the overall objective to reduce the demand on the ambulance service and A&E departments it was important to get the support of the London Ambulance Service (LAS). As a key partner in this project LAS were able to drop off patients at the Night Hub who were deemed to be vulnerable due to their level of intoxication but were not in need of emergency medical attention. The willingness and ability for LAS to drop off patients indicated the potential longer term benefits of this service in enabling LAS crews to attend other emergency calls and reduce the demand on the NHS.
- 3.8 The Soho Police Dedicated Ward Officers worked with the Soho Angels during the pilot. They supported the Soho Angels and St John Ambulance volunteers on the street and responded to incidents that were identified by the Angels.
- 3.9 Officers engaged with NHS England as part of the evaluation proposals for this project. These discussions were based on whether the evidence that the project produced could support research that was being undertaken at the time by NHS England on these initiatives. NHS England were looking to identify whether there was sufficient evidence that such services could be funded by them as alternative pathways to A&E. NHS England agreed to provide funding to support the pilot project during the festive period.

4. Results from the Pilot

- 4.1 The pilot was seen to be a great success by local businesses, partners and other key stakeholders. A full breakdown of the statistics recorded as part of the pilot are provided at Appendix 3. The main results from the pilot were:
 - 4.1.1 22 Soho Angels volunteers worked during the pilot.
 - 4.1.2 A total of 408 volunteering hours were committed
 - 4.1.3 Recruited more than 70 volunteers during the recruitment campaign
 - 4.1.4 Helped over 160 people to enable them to get home safely.
 - 4.1.5 Over 60 people visited/were brought to the Night Hub for support, of which 31 received medical support to recover.
 - 4.1.6 Prevented at least 16 ambulance call outs

5. Full operation of the service

- 5.1 Following the successful pilot it has been possible to start the operation of the service, initially on Friday nights only from the 22nd February. The full operation of the service

has continued the great work from the pilot. It is aimed to move to operating the service on both Friday and Saturday nights from April for up to 2 years.

- 5.2 The recruitment of volunteers will continue throughout the year with regular training for new recruits. In addition to the initial training a full monthly training package has been developed to equip and develop our volunteers with the skills necessary to do their role. Additional training will include mental health awareness, safeguarding, making every contact count, counter terrorism, drugs and alcohol.
- 5.3 The council has developed a campaign around educating and supporting people to get home safely. This has been developed into the “End the night right” messaging that is a key element of the Soho Angels initiative. A communications campaign based this messaging will run throughout the operation of the service and include the wider nudge campaign associated with safe alcohol consumption.

6. Next steps and future expansions

- 6.1 As part of the planning phase for the pilot officers met with representatives from TFL who were interested in placing volunteers within Piccadilly Underground Station entrance hall to work alongside their staff. To test this approach a team of Soho Angels were placed at the Station on the 14th December working from 11pm to 3am. TFL found this initial pilot to be extremely successful and the feedback from TFL staff was very positive.
- 6.2 Officers are now in discussions with TFL on the possibility of placing volunteers within Piccadilly Station on Friday and Saturday nights later this year. The volunteers would come from our existing pool of trained volunteers and work with TFL staff to identify and support those who are vulnerable and unable to travel.
- 6.3 Following the initial success of the pilot there has also been significant interest in expanding the scheme to include other areas, such as Piccadilly and Leicester Square and the Strand, Charing Cross and Villiers Street. At present the council is focusing on delivering the Soho Angels and Night Hub service within Soho. Work will be undertaken on developing a scheme within key TFL Tube Stations in the next phase of the Nightsafe project. However, officers will discuss the possibility of expanding this service beyond Soho with partners and local businesses later this year.
- 6.4 One of the main aims of the service will be to reduce the demand on NHS services such as the ambulance service and local A&E Departments. Officers have agreed a protocol with LAS for patient transfer to the Night Hub if they are intoxicated but do not require emergency medical intervention. This has now been widely circulated within LAS so that crews are aware of this as an option for those who meet the relevant criteria for patient transfer.

7. Staffing Implications

7.1 There are no staffing implications as a result of this decision.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map of the area covered by the Soho Angels

Appendix 2 – Soho Angels Photos

Appendix 3 – Breakdown of statistics from pilot

If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect any of the background papers, please contact:

Mr Kerry Simpkin, Interim Licensing Policy and Strategy Manager - Policy, Performance and Communications

Background Papers

None