

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	Thursday 14 December 2023
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Westminster After Dark – Development and Engagement
<b>Report of:</b>	Frances Martin, Executive Director for Environment, Climate and Public Protection, Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Regeneration, Economy, and Planning, and, Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director for Innovation and Change.
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection, and, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	Fairer Westminster
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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's approach to developing its inaugural evening and night-time plan, outlining both the strategy and the current steps made in its implementation. Our approach to crafting this plan involves consideration of local, national, and global best practice, considering which elements were successful while learning from ineffective ones. Appendix 1 offers a selection of case studies showcasing approaches to evening and night-time strategies adopted by cities, encompassing local, national, and international perspectives.
- 1.2 Within this report we set out the strategy for engaging the public and stakeholders, which has been developed in line with Fairer Westminster principles. This multifaceted approach employs various engagement methods,

seeking input from a broad spectrum of residents, visitors, workers, businesses, and partners. Acknowledging the potential difficulties in engaging certain segments of the community, we're committed to devising innovative solutions to surmount these challenges. Our goal is to ensure inclusivity and representation across diverse groups, even those traditionally harder to reach.

- 1.3 The Council's evening and night-time plan should seek to create an inclusive, vibrant evening and night-time environment. In doing so the plan should also seek to ensure that people are safe, and residents are not adversely impacted by the negative effects which can arise during this period.
- 1.4 The City of Westminster is the UK's largest evening and night-time economy, a pivotal contributor to the UK's economic prosperity and the facilitator of a multitude of diverse employment opportunities. Licensed premises constitute a significant component of our evening and night-time economy, driving up to £3.7 billion in economic activity—an impressive 5% contribution to Westminster's overall economic landscape.
- 1.5 Employing approximately 80,000 individuals, of which over 9,000 are Westminster residents, these venues represent one of the largest sectors for evening and night-time employment. Notably, restaurants and cafes spearhead this economic activity, generating a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £915 million while providing employment to about 31,800 individuals during these hours.
- 1.6 In formulating our plan, our objective is to pioneer an approach that manages this burgeoning growth while nurturing a vibrant, well-regulated, and secure evening and night-time environment. Balancing economic vitality with regulatory oversight and safety measures remains at the forefront of our future evening and night-time plan.
- 1.7 The engagement approach and the development of our plan, titled "Westminster After Dark," extends beyond the usual late-night economy activities (such as licensed drinking and entertainment premises) to encompass various aspects like retail, food choices, lighting, and sports facilities, aiming for a holistic approach. Additionally, Westminster After Dark will consider the transportation options available for navigating Westminster during evening and night hours as well as seek to address the specific requirements of workers within the evening and night-time environment to ensure their needs are adequately met.
- 1.8 The Westminster After Dark project will be delivered through four phases: research, engagement, formulation, and review phases. Engagement efforts involve various tools and forums to gather input from residents, workers, visitors, and businesses and will include a representative Stakeholder Assembly.
- 1.9 A forthcoming report to this Committee will delve deeper into thematic issues and engagement outcomes from the completion of initial engagement and the outcome of the Stakeholder Assembly.

## **2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration**

### **2.1 The Committee is invited to consider:**

2.1.1 the balance between the globally renowned night-time economy and everyone's, particularly resident's, right to quality of life.

2.1.2 the current challenge of the competing pressures on the night-time environment including crime, ASB, light and noise disturbances, the environment and ecology.

2.1.3 the current engagement approach for Westminster After Dark and the overall engagement process, including the Stakeholder Assembly.

2.1.4 the needs of stakeholders including those who work, visit and own businesses and the wide variety of activities and functions across the evening and night-time that enable the wider West End economy.

2.1.5 the opportunities for the night-time environment in terms of employment and skills.

## **3. Background, including policy context.**

3.1 We are seeking to produce an evening and night-time plan that balances the diverse needs, aspirations, and desires of our communities – recognising the important role a vibrant evening and night-time has in shaping our city's identity, vitality, and its role as a place to live, work, and socialise, both presently and in the future.

3.2 The objectives for Westminster After Dark are broad and encompass a range of themes including culture safety, sustainability, inclusivity, and quality of life.

3.3 The Council is focused on listening to the views, issues, and aspirations of a host of stakeholders. The engagement phase is intended to be a significant element of this project. The outcome of this engagement will be the development of a Westminster After Dark plan covering hours between 6 pm and 6 am. This plan is intended to drive initiatives and guide Council policy and strategy for areas such as economic growth, crime and safety, environment, and cultural experiences.

## **4. Developing the City's first Evening and Night-time Plan**

4.1 The impetus in developing the Council's first evening and night-time plan came from "Our Plan for a Fairer Economy" Plan 2023-2026", which was launched in June 2023. This plan set out an objective to: Develop the council's first Evening and Night-time Plan so that Westminster remains a great place to live, work and visit after dark.

4.2 To focus our approach in developing the Westminster After Dark Plan we have established a four staged approach. These are:

Phase 1 – Research and Developing our approach to engagement and development of the plan.

Phase 2 – Public and stakeholder engagement

Phase 3 – Formulation of the plan and associated action plan

Phase 4 – Review and adoption of the Westminster After Dark Plan.

Phase 1 – Research and Developing our approach to engagement and development of the plan.

4.3 The formulation of evening and night-time plans or strategies is not a novel concept, as several cities in the UK and internationally have developed such policies. These initiatives, however, often prioritise the evening and night-time economy without encompassing a broader evaluation of nocturnal activities and the overall nighttime environment.

4.4 A critical element observed in successful plans has been the depth of engagement with the public and stakeholders. Inclusive involvement, drawing insights from residents, visitors, and workers, has proven pivotal in crafting plans that effectively achieve their objectives. The City of Sydney's "Open City" initiative stands out as a leading example of this approach. Introduced in 2013 following extensive public and stakeholder engagement, this plan has significantly influenced the city's nocturnal strategy focus and has demonstrated remarkable success in its implementation.

4.5 Employing a variety of engagement methods emerges as the most impactful approach. A diverse range of methods, spanning from online surveys and information dissemination to in-person forums and stakeholder assemblies, offers extensive opportunities to involve the public and essential stakeholder cohorts. Community engagement, leveraging existing groups or events, plays a pivotal role in boosting public participation, particularly among hard-to-reach segments. These avenues facilitate inclusive participation and bridge the gap, ensuring broader representation and involvement across diverse demographics and communities.

4.6 Research into best practice examples has enabled officers to consider approaches that have worked well and where actions or intended initiatives have not worked as well. Some examples of local, national and international evening and night-time plan/strategies are provided in Appendix 1.

Phase 2 – Public and stakeholder engagement

4.7 We recognise the heightened concerns among residents, especially those residing in the core of the West End, regarding the dual pressures they face: the existing impact on their residential quality and the ongoing demand from businesses for expanded late-night operations in the area.

- 4.8 In areas outside the bustling West End, though with a notably smaller evening and night-time presence, residents consistently voice concerns about noise, anti-social behaviour, and occasional instances of crime. Therefore, it's imperative to conscientiously deliberate on the development of evening and night-time environments in these areas.
- 4.9 Certain locations are predominantly residential, warranting a steadfast commitment to preserving tranquillity and minimizing late-night disturbances. Conversely, in some sections of the city where evening and night-time offerings are scarce or non-existent, there might exist a necessity to develop such offerings for the broader benefit of the community. Balancing the needs of residential tranquillity with potential opportunities for community-oriented evening and night-time activities becomes crucial in these circumstances.
- 4.10 A key focus of businesses who operate at night is to provide an opportunity to run a sustainable, thriving business and to be supported in doing so. Often there are references to regulatory burdens and the need to reduce these by removing red tape or relaxing restrictive policies associated with planning and licensing regimes. These two regimes and their respective legislation and policies are key tools in supporting growth as well as providing protections for local amenity and public protection. The Night Time Industry Association (NTIA) have recently released their manifesto for the night-time economy "Darkest before the Dawn". This document sets out a number of recommendations that, in the NTIA's view would provide significant benefits for their members and the wider UK evening and night-time economy. The NTIA "Darkest before the Dawn" manifesto can be viewed via this link: <https://ntia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/10/Darkest-Before-The-Dawn-FINALpdf.pdf>
- 4.11 As an integral component of Westminster After Dark, our objective is to broaden the conversation beyond the economy and late-night licensed premises. We aim to delve into the broader spectrum of needs and aspirations encompassing residents, visitors, workers, and businesses. This expanded dialogue seeks to capture the multifaceted facets of urban life, addressing diverse concerns, aspirations, and desires that contribute to a holistic and thriving nocturnal experience within Westminster.
- 4.12 Our approach to public and stakeholder engagement is intended to enable a dialogue and opportunity for people and organisations to voice their issues and express their aspirations for the future of our evening and night-time environment. Through a focused engagement approach, we want to draw upon these views to support wider discussion and utilise a combination of discussion groups and a stakeholder assembly to achieve this. More detail on our approach to public and stakeholder engagement is set out in part 5 below.

### Phase 3 - Formulation of the plan and associated action plan

- 4.13 Following the initial engagement phase, the gathered insights will be categorised into thematic groups. Subsequently, workshops will convene with stakeholders to delve into these viewpoints and findings. The aim is to discern

what objectives must be attained, establish the primary priorities, and strategize the implementation of changes necessary to realise these aspirations.

- 4.14 These workshops will adopt a thematic structure, bringing together relevant stakeholders and experts invested in these specific areas. While the overarching goal is to forge a consensus among stakeholders for the action plan, it's acknowledged that unanimity might be unattainable, particularly concerning certain thematic issues.
- 4.15 In instances where conflicting views arise, our approach will pivot towards garnering a comprehensive understanding of these varying perspectives. By gathering data and exploring the diverse viewpoints expressed by participants, we'll aim to make informed decisions regarding the Council's stance on these contentious matters. This decision-making process will be grounded in data analysis and a thorough consideration of participant viewpoints.

#### Phase 4 – Review and adoption of the Westminster After Dark Plan.

- 4.16 Finally, we will craft the Westminster After Dark Plan, taking into account views expressed during the engagement and participatory phases (phases 2 and 3). This plan will be fortified by essential data, evidence, and best practice that substantiate the outlined viewpoints and pivotal actions within the plan.
- 4.17 At its core, the plan will encompass a comprehensive action plan structured around the identified thematic groups. Each grouping will house delineated objectives and actions crucial to addressing pertinent issues.
- 4.18 The Westminster After Dark Plan holds the purpose of not only fostering future collaboration and engagement but also shaping forthcoming policy and strategy frameworks associated with the evening and night-time environment. Its influence will extend to pivotal documents such as the Licensing Policy and City Plan, directing the trajectory of policies and strategies over the next 5 years.
- 4.19 Progress has been made in delivering this phased approach and this report will set out the current progress in delivering these. Phase 1 was completed in the summer following an extensive period of research and consideration of the best options for public and stakeholder engagement. Phase 2 commenced in September with the public launch of Westminster After Darks engagement platform.

### **5. Westminster After Dark Public and Stakeholder Engagement**

- 5.1 In shaping the Westminster After Dark Plan, it's crucial to understand the perspectives of residents, visitors, workers, businesses, and partners regarding the city's current evening and night-time environment. We aim to identify key issues and priorities that the Council, stakeholders, and partners should prioritise. Our engagement strategy emphasises providing an inclusive

platform for everyone to voice their opinions. Moreover, we seek to inspire active participation by releasing documents and conducting consultations on specific themes or focal areas.

### Engagement Platform

- 5.2 The engagement platform serves as the primary hub for all online interactions within the Westminster After Dark program. Designed for user-friendliness, it offers comprehensive insights into the engagement process across its different phases. Its feature allowing the inclusion of information and new discussion items encourages broader engagement and interaction. Users can register to receive timely updates on the platform's latest news and information, prompting them to revisit, review new content, and contribute their perspectives. The engagement platform can be viewed via this link <https://westminsterafterdark.commonplace.is/>
- 5.3 The engagement platform is intended to produce the following outputs:
- Shape and inform the tone and key elements of the Evening and Night-time Stakeholder Assembly.
  - Identify how the council can better support Westminster's needs more widely within the post 6pm economy to help develop the first evening and night-time Plan for Westminster.
  - Obtain insight on some of the biggest challenges currently faced in specific areas of Westminster by specific groups/individuals.
- 5.4 The engagement platform has seen substantial interaction since its launch, with numerous unique visitors actively engaging through various channels. Responses from the Ideas Map and the online questionnaire are providing valuable insights into Westminster's evening and night-time environment and its future. There's a diverse representation in terms of gender and age among the respondents, with varying levels of engagement from different age brackets. However, at the point when this report was drafted there's a need for increased representation from diverse ethnic backgrounds and communities, emphasising the importance of inclusive outreach strategies. The Expression of Interest for the Stakeholder Assembly also reflects a diverse composition in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and LGBTQ+ representation, highlighting the significance of tailored engagement for inclusivity.

### Data Led Evidence Base - Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA)

- 5.5 A robust foundation of data and compelling evidence will play a pivotal role in shaping the Westminster After Dark Plan. It's imperative that the perspectives voiced by residents, visitors, workers, businesses, and partners are substantiated by evidence when required. This amalgamation of data and stakeholder insights will steer the plan towards addressing pertinent and high-priority issues. Furthermore, this comprehensive approach will furnish us with the necessary metrics to gauge the progress and impact of the plan once it's set into motion.

- 5.6 The CIA was the first product produced as part of Westminster After Dark evidence base. The CIA is an analysis of the impact of Licensed Premises on the four licensing objectives in Westminster. The licensing objectives are:
- Prevention of crime and disorder
  - Prevention of public nuisance
  - Protection of children from harm
  - Public safety.
- 5.7 This was the Council's second CIA. The headline findings of the CIA are:
- Crime has returned to pre-pandemic levels.
  - Theft is the main driver of crime statistics and drowns out most other crime types.
  - Night-time related crime is concentrated in the West End.
  - Nightclubs, restaurants, and cafes are more likely to lead to noise complaints.
  - Pubs, bars, and nightclubs are most common venues for crime, followed by restaurants.
  - Anti-social behaviour and crime is lower outside the West End, but there are still areas of interest.
  - The key times for crimes occurring at locations of interest to licensing are predominantly overnight Friday/Saturday and Saturday/Sunday.
  - 6-8pm is the peaks for crime across the week.
- 5.8 The CIA is subject to a statutory consultation. The consultation on the CIA ran from 9th October to 12th November 2023. Following feedback, the consultation deadline was extended by a week from its original date.
- 5.9 In total the Council received 68 submissions to the consultation. The consultation submissions identified a number of changes that the Licensing Authority could make to the CIA as well as questions about the data used, and the council responded to those comments and made amendments where appropriate. Some suggestions were not possible to action within the statutory timeframe, we will ensure that these are considered for future revisions of the CIA. More detail can be found in the report to the Licensing Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.<sup>1</sup>
- 5.10 A large number of the consultation responses suggested changes to policy or considered wider evening and night-time issues not relevant to the CIA. These will be factored into the Westminster After Dark programme to develop an evening and night-time plan for Westminster.

#### Stakeholder Discussion Groups

- 5.11 Discussion groups would identify and define their key priorities/issues and share their thoughts to help shape the Plan, ensuring it reflects the needs and preferences of their specific group. These sessions are valuable for gathering

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<sup>1</sup> <https://committees.westminster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=129&MId=6403>



insights and making informed decisions for the development of the evening and night-time Stakeholder Assembly and plan.

5.12 The discussion groups are scheduled to convene either in person or virtually, catering to specific stakeholder groups such as residents' associations, BID, and their memberships, as well as representatives from TFL. These sessions aim to facilitate the gathering of perspectives and insights from each group regarding the evening and night-time environment as well as identify what their focuses are on this space. The session will seek to draw out the current issues and challenges that they face, alongside identifying potential future priorities and actions that could mitigate or address those issues and challenges.

5.13 To enable positive and constructive engagement the discussion group sessions will be based on four thematic areas:

Safe and Secure:

How can we improve safety and feelings of safety?

Community and Culture:

How can we further empower and celebrate our diverse communities and culture?

Economic development/balance/growth and opportunities:

How do we support the successful economic growth of Westminster's evening and night-time whilst ensuring the needs and desires of the whole community are considered?

Accessible and positive places:

How can we ensure Westminster's evening and night-time is accessible to all and provides a positive impression as a place?

5.14 The output from all of the discussion groups will be collated and brought together into one document. For each of the four questions posed the document will set out the views and comments made by each stakeholder from their perspective. This document will be provided to the Stakeholder Assembly as preassembly information which they will have an opportunity to consider. We will also make this document available to the public by publishing it on the Westminster After Dark engagement platform. It is intended that the output from the discussion groups will help:

- Shape and inform the tone and key elements of the Evening and Night-time Stakeholder Assembly.
- Identify how the council can better support Westminster's the needs of their specific group within the post 6pm environment to help develop the first evening and night-time plan for Westminster.
- Obtain insight on some of the biggest challenges currently faced.

5.15 We have commenced the Stakeholder Discussion Group meetings with businesses, resident associations, partners, and internal council departments.

The output of these discussion groups will be pulled together into a concise report that will be presented to the Stakeholder Assembly members and published on the Council's engagement platform in late January 2023.

### Community Engagement

- 5.16 Community engagement allows for the inclusion of diverse perspectives, ensuring that decisions are informed by a wide range of voices and experiences. We are engaging in a variety of ways through visiting community groups, and institutions, liaising with community leads, using newsletters, digital and physical posters, and WhatsApp messages as mediums of communication with community groups, and residents. For example, we have been attending Family Hubs, school events, libraries, community centres, and coffee mornings to connect with residents.
- 5.17 The intended output from these sessions will be:
- Encouraging sign-up to the Evening and Night-time Stakeholder Assembly.
  - Promoting the completion of the public survey.
  - Informing more widely how the council can better enable and support Westminster's communities to engage within the post 6pm environment to help develop the first evening and night-time plan for Westminster.

### Stakeholder Assembly

- 5.18 A Stakeholder Assembly will be held across three consecutive Saturdays (27th January, 3rd February and 10th February 2024) between 10 – 4pm at Westminster City Hall. It will bring together 50 selected broadly representative participants who live, work, visit or run a business in Westminster help develop our evening and night-time plan. Members of the stakeholder assembly will be offered a compensation payment of £250 for their involvement which they can accept or decline. The Council is working with the UK's leading evening and night-time consultancy SixtillSix to deliver an independent and impartially facilitated Assembly.
- 5.19 Before the assembly meetings, members will receive crucial information about Westminster, including updates from the Engagement Platform's questions and ideas map, alongside insights gathered from stakeholder discussion groups. Moreover, videos from various stakeholder groups, organisations, or partners unable to attend in person will be shared, offering essential perspectives that significantly influence the assembly's deliberations.
- 5.20 The assembly members will be given the following question to consider and answer:

*“How can we support and enhance Westminster's world class evening and night-time, whilst meeting the needs and aspirations of our residents, visitors and night working community?”*

5.21 The session, run on Saturdays over three consecutive weekends will be based on the following:

- Evidence
- Deliberations
- Conclusions

5.22 The initial day will feature presentations of information and evidence from crucial stakeholders and organisations, including the Council, shedding light on their perspectives and strategies regarding the evening and night-time environment. Subsequent sessions will concentrate on deliberation and consensus-building to formulate conclusions. This innovative process aims to provide a balanced view from diverse stakeholders, fostering consensus-based decision-making. The Assembly will:

- Inform how the council can better enable and support Westminster's communities to engage within the post 6pm environment to help develop the first evening and night-time plan for Westminster.
- Obtain community insight on some of the biggest challenges currently faced by our communities.
- Allow a complex mix of opportunities and challenges to be considered by a broadly representative group.
- Engage with Westminster residents and stakeholders to help shape a community-informed vision for Westminster's evening and night-time, providing an opportunity to influence future iterations of the Council's evening and night-time plan and guide the Council's decision-making process.
- Set an overall tone and ambition for Westminster's evening and night-time plan
- Provide thinking and feedback on what a framework of principles could contain using a participatory method.
- Help set out what a vision and framework of principles means in practice/reality and shape a set of pillars that we can build clear activity and work streams around.
- Review and feedback on calls to action (shared responsibility) for all stakeholders for short- and long-term challenges and opportunities.
- Provide an exemplar model of innovative public engagement that may inform Council-wide engagement approaches going forward.

#### Stakeholder Workshops

5.23 The stakeholder workshops are designed to deliberate on distinct outputs stemming from the Stakeholder Assembly and other engagement initiatives. Each workshop will centre around thematic outcomes and include representatives from stakeholder groups impacted by, interested in, or wielding direct influence over the thematic area's key elements. While certain workshops might gather multiple representatives from various stakeholder groups, others, especially those focused on specific or limited impact thematic areas, may involve fewer stakeholder representatives.

5.24 The intended output will be:

- Provide an opportunity to consider detailed views and issues from different stakeholder perspectives looking at developing consensus of option where possible.
- The development of options or initiatives to enable the development of key proposals and approaches as part of the final Westminster Adger Dark Plan.

## **6. Engagement Challenges and Opportunities**

6.1 Based on our initial findings following the launch of Westminster After Dark, we've identified some challenges in engagement. Most of these challenges were anticipated and the lack of engagement from some groups or areas is something that is a challenge in all Council engagement exercises.

6.2 Engaging visitors in Westminster remains an ongoing challenge, as we foresaw. To address this, we persist in leveraging social media and various engagement strategies to stimulate visitor involvement. Furthermore, on-street engagement initiatives are scheduled for the New Year, led by the Council's Night Stars volunteers, and bolstered by support from the project team. This direct engagement approach aims to enhance interaction with visitors and foster their active participation in shaping the evening and night-time experience in Westminster.

6.3 Engagement among young people is always something that the Council can improve on when carrying our consultation or engagement exercises such as this. This low response rate is something we are experiencing through our current engagement. To address this, we're exploring innovative approaches like social media and attending schools, universities, and youth clubs to resonate with younger audiences.

6.4 Engagement from global majority backgrounds is low, which we had anticipated and are implementing more inclusive outreach strategies such as translation and close collaboration with community leads. Our commitment to diversity drives us to refine engagement methods to represent all perspectives. Specific areas like Pimlico and North Paddington pose unique engagement challenges.

6.5 However, low engagement rates from businesses in the early stages has been disappointing. This is likely due to the time of year leading up to the festive period. Discussions with BIDs has also highlighted that businesses are busy at the moment and are more likely to engage in the process in the New Year. Therefore, we are going to continue to engage with businesses, but we will also conduct further engagement in the New Year. Additionally, efforts to bridge any engagement/communication gaps and strengthen connections with the local business community will be explored through our consultant SixtillSix, BIDs, and business newsletters.

- 6.6 Addressing these challenges involves understanding wider community issues to create a more equitable and inclusive engagement process. We adapt strategies, explore alternatives like WhatsApp, and actively seek input to ensure all community voices are heard.
- 6.7 Engaging specific groups remains a focus for Westminster After Dark. Targeted strategies include leveraging social media and working closely with communities.
- 6.8 Successful initiatives include targeted social media campaigns that resonate with diverse community members, particularly young people. Advertisements on platforms used by various demographics, including young people, visitors, and businesses, have resulted in increased engagement.
- 6.9 Engaging certain groups requires innovative approaches. We are exploring alternative methods such as attending Family Hubs, school events, libraries, community centres, and coffee mornings to connect with residents.
- 6.10 Our posters and adverts are visible in Westminster libraries, leisure centres, schools, and university bulletins, as well as business and community newsletters. Recognising WhatsApp's popularity, we circulate messages through this platform.
- 6.11 We collaborate with existing consultations like Westminster Cycleways and North Paddington to streamline engagement efforts, maximising outreach and integrating community engagement with broader plans.
- 6.12 Engagement remains dynamic, and we're committed to exploring new avenues and adapting strategies for a more inclusive environment.

## **7. Future Engagement Plans**

- 7.1 As part of our approach to Westminster After Dark we want to drive engagement and views on the wider evening and night-time environment across the city but also relating to specific issues or emerging engagement response themes.
- 7.2 After conducting a recent consultation on the Cumulative Impact Assessment linked to licensed premises within our city, we are now poised to engage in seeking opinions and insights on the "Economic Benefits of Licensed Premises in Westminster." The Council is committed to releasing a comprehensive document outlining these economic advantages and actively welcomes feedback on these findings. Furthermore, we aim to gather diverse perspectives on the broader implications associated with the economic benefits derived from licensed premises within the city. Acknowledging that this marks the initiation of a dialogue concerning these benefits in contrast to wider impacts and potential drawbacks, we are keenly interested in exploring the intricate balance between benefits and impacts. This exploration may be further delved into through the upcoming Stakeholder Assembly and Stakeholder Workshops, aiming to grasp the nuances of these considerations.

7.3 Other areas of potential engagement associated with the evening and night-time could include:

- Inclusion, accessibility, and diversity
- Womens night safety
- Supporting ecology at night
- Environment and climate change action
- Retail diversity
- Live Music and entertainment venues

## 8. Governance

8.1 The governance structure of Westminster After Dark is designed to establish clear lines of responsibility for the successful delivery of this ambitious project. Given the project's broad impact across multiple Council portfolios, ensuring the involvement and awareness of all Cabinet Members is paramount. However, rather than convening the Full Cabinet as the Westminster After Dark board, joint chairs have been appointed from the Cabinet: the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.

8.2 These appointed Chairs will lead the Westminster After Dark Programme Board, responsible for providing steer and strategic guidance to project officers. The Board convenes every 6-8 weeks to evaluate progress and address items requiring a steer as necessary. Its composition includes:

- Councillor A Less, Deput Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection
- Councillor Barraclough, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.
- Councillor Lilley, West End Ward Councillor
- Councillor I Less, Night-time Champion

On an ad-hoc basis dependent on the updates, items presented and required decisions:

- The Leader of the Council and/or relevant Cabinet Members
- Councillor Fisher, Lead member for Cumulative Impact Issues

8.3 The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Westminster After Dark is Debbie Jackson, Executive Director for Regeneration, Economy, and Planning. The SRO chairs the Senior Officer Steering Group comprising of Executive Directors and Directors from the three leading Departments overseeing Westminster After Dark: Environment, Climate, and Public Protection; Regeneration, Economy, and Planning; and Innovation and Change. This assembly convenes biweekly to guide program delivery, set the agenda for the Westminster After Dark Programme Board, and offer counsel and direction to Project Group Members.

8.4 The Project Group consists of Officers from Innovation and Change, Environment, Climate and Public Protection and Economic Development. Tasked with project engagement and execution, these Officers provide regular updates and reports to the Senior Officer Steering Group and Westminster After Dark Programme Board. This group convenes weekly, focusing on achieving key project objectives within established timelines.

## 9. Westminster After Dark Timeline

9.1 The timeline list below is provided as a high-level overview associated with the delivery of Westminster After Dark.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>November</b>	Stakeholder Discussion Groups: Residents Associations, Businesses (BID's), Partners (e.g. Police, TFL, etc) and Council Departments.
<b>December</b>	<p>Stakeholder Discussion Groups: Residents Associations, Businesses (BID's), Partners (e.g. Police, TFL, etc) and Council Departments.</p> <p>Publish "Benefits of Licensed Premises for Westminster economy" report on the engagement platform and begin consultation on the economic benefits and impacts associated with licensed venues and the evening and night-time economy.</p> <p>Publish "Womens Night Safety Audits Findings report" on the engagement platform and begin consultation on the wider views on women's safety in the evening and night-time environment.</p>
<b>January</b>	<p>Stakeholder Discussion Groups: Residents Associations, Businesses (BID's), Partners (e.g. Police, TFL, etc) and Council Departments.</p> <p>Publish Discussion Group findings report on engagement platform.</p> <p>Stakeholder Assembly information bundle (pre reading) will be sent to each member of the assembly.</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Stakeholder Assembly Session (27<sup>th</sup> January)</p>
<b>February</b>	<p>2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Stakeholder Assembly meetings conducted (3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> February).</p> <p>Stakeholder Assembly Findings Report published via the engagement platform.</p>

<b>March</b>	Stakeholder Workshops begin based on thematic outputs from the engagement and in line with the Stakeholder Assembly findings.  Westminster After Dark update on Stakeholder Assembly and emerging thematic areas for consideration are discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (13 <sup>th</sup> March)
<b>April</b>	Stakeholder Workshops continue based on thematic outputs from the engagement and in line with the Stakeholder Assembly findings.
<b>May</b>	Stakeholder Workshops begin based on thematic outputs from the engagement and in line with the Stakeholder Assembly findings.  Initial draft of the Westminster After Dark Plan is produced for internal review and agreement.
<b>June</b>	Final draft of the Westminster After Dark Plan is agreed.
<b>July</b>	Public launch of Westminster After Dark Plan

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1 Funding for Westminster After Dark primarily draws from the existing budgets and resources allocated within the Council's Innovation and Change, Regeneration, Economy and Planning, and Environment, Climate and Public Protection Directorates. In cases where additional financial support is required for specific activities related to public engagement, the Council has actively pursued external grants.
- 10.2 As part of our commitment to enhancing business-friendly licensing and regulatory practices within the night-time economy, the Council successfully secured £20,000 through the Greater London Authority's (GLA) London Recovery Programme. To amplify this initiative, the Council further matched this grant with £40,000 sourced from the 'Thriving Economy' budget under the purview of the Economy and Skills department. The GLA's focus on supporting projects dedicated to nightlife, hospitality, culture, and licensed high street businesses operating beyond 6 pm aligns with our aim to foster innovation while ensuring these efforts complement existing projects and prevent duplicative endeavours.

## **11. Legal and Governance Implications**

- 11.1 There are no legal or governance implications because of this report.

## **12. Environmental, Ecological and Carbon Impact**



- 12.1 The Council is committed to becoming a zero-carbon city by 2040 whilst also meeting the World Health Organisation levels of pollution and achieving the ecological emergency ambitions. The evening and night-time environment can significantly impact the ecological landscape, pollution, and carbon footprint. As the development of the Westminster After Dark Plan is in its preliminary stages, a specific assessment of its environmental, ecological and carbon impact is currently unfeasible due to the absence of defined measures or approaches.
- 12.2 However, acknowledging the potential surge in the utilisation of the evening and night-time environment by residents, visitors, workers, and businesses, it's crucial to anticipate these associated risks. The following highlights areas where extended usage of the evening and night-time environment, as integral parts of any future Westminster After Dark Plan, could pose potential carbon-related risks:
- 12.2.1 **Transportation Emissions:** Extended operating hours often lead to increased transportation activities during late hours. This can result in higher emissions from vehicles, particularly if public transport options are limited, leading to a rise in carbon emissions due to increased traffic. However, if extended operating hours evens out demand for non-public transport related vehicle movements then congestion could potentially be eased. Consideration should be given to freight, servicing and delivery movements that could change depending on the outcome of evening activity changes.
- 12.2.2 **Energy Consumption:** Extended hours of operation for businesses, entertainment venues, and nightlife establishments can lead to increased energy consumption. Cooking, lighting, heating, cooling, and other operational requirements contribute to higher energy usage, potentially increasing carbon emissions and air pollutants if not managed sustainably/offset though improving efficiency of operating systems e.g., changing from gas to electric cooking methods; servicing A/C units regularly, putting lighting and heating onto specific timers.
- 12.2.3 **Waste Generation:** An increase in evening economic activity will result in increased waste generation, including disposable packaging, food waste, and single-use items. Lack of participation in food and dry recycling schemes has a negative environmental impact and lack of storage in central areas can result in more waste being placed out on the streets for longer periods of time and risks unsightly streets as well as increased littering/dumping issues.
- 12.2.4 **Habitat Disturbance:** Extended operating hours, can disrupt natural habitats and ecosystems. Noise, light pollution, and increased human activities during late hours can disturb wildlife, affecting their behaviour, nesting patterns, and feeding habits.

12.2.5 Biodiversity Loss: Further development associated with a bustling evening and night-time environment might lead to habitat loss or fragmentation. This can result in reduced biodiversity as areas are repurposed for commercial or recreational use, impacting local flora and fauna. This should be mitigated wherever possible through improving quieter habitats elsewhere in the vicinity.

12.2.6 Pollution: Increased human activities during the evening and night-time can contribute to various types of pollution. For instance, light pollution can affect nocturnal animals and disrupt their natural rhythms. Moreover, if waste management practices are inadequate, it can lead to littering and pollution in surrounding areas, affecting ecosystems and water bodies. Increases in indoor and outdoor pollution are a likely outcome of increased economic output and this should be offset wherever possible.

12.3 Though a comprehensive evaluation of carbon impact is pending, it's imperative to pre-emptively address these areas to mitigate potential environmental repercussions associated with an increased utilisation of the evening and night-time environment in the Westminster After Dark Plan's future phases. Early consideration of these issues through consultation and scrutiny gives maximum opportunity for mitigating and minimising the impacts.

12.4 We are committed to evaluating the environmental and ecological impacts associated with any actions within that plan as it is being developed. Removal or mitigation of increased carbon will be a priority to support our aims to become a zero-carbon city by 2040 and to meet World Health Organisation levels of pollution, as well as meeting our ecological emergency ambitions. For example, the following are areas that will be considered as part of the potential options for mitigation or removal for those impacts:

12.4.1 Sustainable Practices: Encouraging businesses to adopt energy-efficient technologies, promoting sustainable transportation options, considering freight, and servicing delivery efficiencies, and implementing waste reduction and recycling programs can minimise environmental impacts. The Council supports a Westminster Sustainable City Charter which can help and support businesses participation in this agenda.

12.4.2 Legislative Powers and Council Policies: Utilising existing legislative powers and utilising Council policies around noise levels, waste management, and emissions control can help mitigate the negative effects of the evening and late-night environment.

12.4.3 Community Engagement: Involving local communities in decision-making processes and ensuring their concerns are addressed can help balance the economic benefits of an evening and night-time environment with social and environmental considerations.

12.4.4 Innovation and Technology: Exploring innovative solutions such as smart lighting, efficient waste management systems, and alternative transportation options including low carbon servicing and delivery can help reduce the carbon impact of late-night activities.

12.4.5 Green Infrastructure: Implementing and investing in additional or alternative green spaces, such as parks and gardens or on rooftops, within urban areas can offset habitat loss and provide refuges for wildlife and support wildlife corridors to help nature adapt to changing human environments.

12.4.6 Lighting and Design: Employing responsible lighting designs and technologies to minimise light pollution and its impact on nocturnal animals. This can be as simple as avoiding upwards lighting focusses.

12.5 Balancing the economic benefits of a vibrant evening and late-night environment with the need to mitigate its environmental, ecological and carbon impacts is crucial for sustainable urban development. Collaborative efforts involving the Council, businesses, residents, other stakeholders, and partners are essential to achieving a more sustainable and responsible evening and night-time environment.

### **13. Equalities Impact**

13.1 The reach of the Westminster After Darks engagement and final plan is city-wide. It will have impacts for all residents, businesses, workers, and visitors in the city. If Westminster has a strong, sustainable, and resilient evening and night-time economy, all those who live, work, run a business or visit in the city stand to benefit. However, impacts will be differently felt by individuals and groups within Westminster's communities, depending on their needs and circumstances.

13.2 We know that Westminster has significant wealth disparities across different geographic areas and sections of the community. Indeed, Westminster is unique in that it contains LSOA's that are rated among both the most deprived and least deprived in the country. These considerable disparities in affluence relate to inequalities in opportunity, wellbeing, and quality-of-life outcomes for residents. We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment, and our understanding of these existing disparities shapes the Westminster After Dark Plan and will be the driving force behind it.

### **14. Consultation and Engagement**

14.1 The Council's consultation and engagement approach associated with Westminster After Dark is detailed within the body of this report.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Kerry Simpkin, Head of Licensing, Place and Infrastructure Policy via email: [ksimpkin@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ksimpkin@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1 – Local, National and International Examples of Evening and Night-time Plan/Strategy Research.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Westminster City Council's Fairer Economy Plan 2023

Westminster City Council's Cumulative Impact Assessment 2023

Westminster City Council's draft Economic Benefits of Licensed Premises in Westminster 2023

Open Sydney, Strategy, and action plan 2013-2030

Leeds City Council, City Centre Evening and Night-time Economy Strategy 2010

Darkest Before the Dawn, NTIA Manifesto for the Night-time Economy 2024

Greater Manchester Combined Authority Night-time Economy Strategy 2022

Mayor of London, Developing a night-time strategy, Part 1: Guidance on process, December 2020

Mayor of London, Developing a night-time strategy, Part 2: Guidance, precedents and case studies, December 2020.

## Local, National, and International Examples of Evening and Night-Time Plans

In shaping Westminster's inaugural evening and night-time plan, our officers extensively researched various local, national, and international models. Alongside examining recently launched or ongoing local strategies, we delved into numerous evening and night-time plans both across the UK and internationally. These diverse plans and strategies, implemented in several UK and international cities, serve as examples of successful approaches that have notably enhanced and propelled their respective nocturnal landscapes. The examples outlined below represent a subset of the comprehensive array of evening and night-time plans and strategies reviewed by our officers in the formulation of the Council's own approach toward developing our evening and night-time plan.

### Local Example:

- The Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA) has produced their first evening and night-time strategy for their Business Improvement District Area. This is a hyper local strategy that has been developed to support the ambitions for HOLBA to reaching its full potential to become a more inclusive, safe, accessible attractive and dynamic place for those who work, visit, live, invest and run a business in their area. HOLBA's Evening and Night-time Strategy can be viewed via the following link: [https://holba.london/what\\_we\\_do/evening-and-night-time-economy/#:~:text=The%20strategy%20proposes%20a%20vision,to%20meet%20its%20full%20potential](https://holba.london/what_we_do/evening-and-night-time-economy/#:~:text=The%20strategy%20proposes%20a%20vision,to%20meet%20its%20full%20potential).

### National Examples:

- London: London's Mayor's Office has initiated the "London at night" initiative, focusing on extending transport services, promoting safety, and fostering a diverse cultural scene. This involves extended tube services during weekends, support for late-night cultural events, and measures to ensure safety for revellers. The Mayor of London's 24 Hour London webpage can be accessed via this link: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/arts-and-culture/24-hour-london>
- Manchester: Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has developed a comprehensive evening and night-time plan as part of the emphasising collaboration between stakeholders. The city's strategy involves safety measures, cultural offerings, support for businesses, improved transportation options, and a focus on sustainability and environmental considerations to create a vibrant and balanced nocturnal environment. The GMCA website on their Night Time Economy Strategy can be viewed via this link: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/night-time-economy/night-time-economy-strategy/>
- Belfast: Belfast City Council has a thriving nightlife and has taken a different approach to supporting and enhancing its evening and night-time economy. The City Council has implemented its "Evening and Night-time Economy

Supplementary Planning Guidance” (SPG) in May 2023. The SPG provides additional advice and guidance to support the city’s evening and night-time economy. It is provided to support developers, the public and planning officers in assessing planning applications and their support for the evening and night-time economy. The city emphasises planning applications that strengthen and enhance the evening and night-time economy. Their approach also seeks to protect cultural venues and will apply the “agent of change” principle to new developments near existing evening and late-night cultural venues. Belfast Evening and Night-time Economy supplementary planning guidance can be viewed via this link: [https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/cdba6d4c-de6d-4708-addd-35d429144da5/SPG011\\_ENTE.pdf](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/cdba6d4c-de6d-4708-addd-35d429144da5/SPG011_ENTE.pdf)

#### International Examples:

- Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam has a comprehensive night mayor system, appointing a Night Mayor who advocates for the city's nightlife. This role involves liaising between authorities, businesses, and residents to balance the needs of various stakeholders, ensuring a thriving and safe nighttime environment.
- Berlin, Germany: Berlin has a unique approach to its nightlife, with designated areas and policies supporting a diverse range of clubs and cultural spaces. The city offers financial support and resources for creative initiatives, aiming to maintain its reputation as a global nightlife destination while balancing the needs of residents.
- Sydney, Australia: Sydney's "Open Sydney" strategy involves extending trading hours for certain establishments, supporting cultural events, and investing in infrastructure like improved lighting and transportation. The goal is to create a vibrant and safe nighttime environment that fosters cultural exchange and economic growth. The “Open Sydney Strategy and Action Plan webpage can be viewed via this link: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/open-sydney>

These cities have implemented a range of strategies including regulatory frameworks, support for cultural initiatives, safety measures, extended transport services, and collaboration between stakeholders to ensure a thriving and balanced evening and night-time economy.

The Mayor of London has produced guidance aimed at fostering the development of night-time strategies throughout the city. This guidance outlines the approach and potential advantages that communities and businesses within Council areas may derive from crafting such strategies. It presents a systematic, step-by-step framework that Councils, businesses, and key stakeholders could follow when formulating their local night-time strategies. While our Officers thoroughly reviewed this document, it's important to note that we have not adopted the entire spectrum of proposals and methodologies delineated in this guidance. The variance in the scope of our project and our distinct governance approach accounts for this deviation. Nonetheless, where feasible, we have sought to replicate successful approaches or leverage best practice advice outlined in the guidance.