

Approaches to managing the night-time economy

Foreword

A vibrant and mixed night-time economy can encourage tourism, boost the local economy and contribute to shaping places where people want to live. Nationally, the night-time economy makes a significant contribution both to the economy and employment.

Whilst there are clear benefits of a thriving, well-managed night-time economy, licensed premises can create challenges for local communities. These can include crime and anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related hospital admissions all of which put additional pressure on police and emergency services.

Councils can and do play a vital role in addressing these challenges, and whilst no one agency can tackle these issues alone, these case studies show how councils have worked with a wide range of partners in innovative and cost-effective ways to tackle the various issues they have faced, from street drinking and poor public perception to identifying child sexual exploitation and managing vulnerability.

We hope these case studies provide a useful tool for councillors and officers who are looking at ways to manage their own night-time economies.



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Background

The term night-time economy is used to describe a wide range of activities from a trip to the theatre or a family meal to a night out at a club. Night-time economies are an important part of our towns and cities and are estimated to bring in over £60 billion to the UK economy every year.

The vast majority of people enjoy a night out safely and sensibly. However, the night-time economy can be associated with issues, predominantly around alcohol fuelled violence and crime and anti-social behaviour which often result in negative perceptions. Whilst there has been a decrease in the number of 'alcohol-related' violent crimes, numbers are still significant with latest statistics from 2016 showing that in over half of all violent incidents, the victim believed the perpetrator to be under the influence of alcohol.

Alcohol was identified as a major driver of crime in the Government's Modern Crime Prevention Strategy (MCPS), published in 2016. As well as including a number of proposals for additional tools for councils to better manage problem areas at the local level, the strategy focused on partnership working. The MCPS committed to investing further in partnerships, something which has been a key objective of a second phase of the Home Office's local alcohol action area (LAAAs) programme, which has recently concluded.

Clearly, addressing the various challenges that present themselves in the night-time economy is not something that councils can do alone but they do play a key role.

As licensing authorities, councils play an important role in regulating the night-time economy. A clear vision for the night-time, underpinned by a statement of licensing policy, can go a long way to setting the right tone, but it is the partnership approaches which have been held up as being most effective.

Partnership working is not new. Local alcohol partnership schemes (LAPs) such as Best Bar None, Pubwatch, Purple Flag and Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs) have all been in existence for a number of years and involve local authorities, police, the licensed trade and voluntary groups working closely to drive down alcohol-related harms. Through this partnership working many areas have succeeded in reducing emergency hospital admissions and crime, and have encouraged local businesses and community groups to offer new evening and night-time activities such as late night shopping and museum entry, street food markets and comedy evenings.

The following case studies bring together examples of initiatives driven by councils and their partners which have sought to address the issues they have faced locally. Whilst these issues may differ, the mechanisms for addressing them are likely to be similar and so we hope this is a useful resource for councils looking at ways to strengthen and improve the management of the night-time economy.

Chester

Reducing levels of alcohol harm through partnership work

Chester city centre has been awarded Purple Flag status for two years in a row. Alongside the Purple Flag steering group, the council set up a Night-time Economy Task Group to work towards improving the night-time economy to ensure that it offers a safe and enjoyable experience for all.

Overview

In 2010 the new Cheshire West and Chester Council was formed and the practises of three district councils needed merging which offered the opportunity to look strategically at how they could improve the night-time economy. The city had high levels of alcohol related harm and councillors wanted to ensure all appropriate legal powers were used to effectively manage the night-time economy and support the council's public health objectives.

The council had a number of ambitions, including securing Purple Flag accreditation and boosting tourism and footfall in the city centre.

Since then a number of new initiatives have been launched in Chester, driven by the establishment of a business improvement district (BID) in the city who worked in partnership with the council to set up the Purple Flag steering committee. The council's Places Overview and Scrutiny Committee also appointed a Night-time Economy Task Group.

Initiatives

Purple Flag – Chester's Purple Flag Steering Committee has a clear work plan where the standards, key achievements and future improvements are reviewed monthly as a strategic partnership. The steering group brings together the council's public health, CH1ChesterBID, the police, Chester Pubwatch, the University of Chester, fire and rescue services, Chester Against Business Crime and Chester Street Pastors.

As a result, Chester has achieved the following pioneering projects:

Drink Less Enjoy More¹ – funded by public health, Cheshire and Merseyside local authorities and police work together on this initiative, which aims to reduce drunkenness through targeted communications and marketing activity aimed at university students and those aged 18 to 30. The project supports bar staff to comply with the law by providing training. Funding is provided for extra police patrols, as well as test purchasing using actors specifically around sales to drunks. Cheshire West and Chester Council communications team also worked closely with key partners (the University of Chester, Chester Racecourse, Chester Pride, the police and community safety team) to raise the profile of the campaign.

Safe Space – funded by Cheshire West and Chester Council's public health, the safe space is a mobile unit launched in Chester city centre in September 2018. Operating on Saturday nights with paramedics, volunteers and security staff, it provides immediate first aid and pastoral support for vulnerable people.

1 www.champspublichealth.com/drink-less-enjoy-more

Night-time Economy Task Group – tasked by the council's Places Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the group was set up to audit the management of the night-time economy from a licensing perspective and ensure that they were doing everything possible to effectively manage it. Membership consisted of councillors, officers and partner organisations.

The group met four times and took two evening tours of Chester city centre and a tour of four other local areas (Ellesmere Port, Winsford, Northwich and Frodsham). They sent out questionnaires to all of the Cheshire and Merseyside authorities, together with York and Bath, to benchmark themselves against similar areas. There were 14 detailed questions covering resources, controls, governance, best practice and safety schemes.

Analysis of these generated eight key recommendations, including the consideration of additional conditions, such as membership of best practice accreditation schemes (eg Best Bar None), public health taking a more active role in the licensing regime, such as making risk-based representations on new premises licence applications and the council directing new applicants to best practice policies and partnerships available through the licensing team.

The outcomes

Chester has secured Purple Flag accreditation for two consecutive years, which has given Chester city centre a coherent strategy and motivation to improve the night-time economy.

Chester has excellent partnership working, strengthened by a united vision. According to a Chester BID survey nearly 70 per cent of people now feel safe in Chester at night, which is a significant improvement. Very few premises licence reviews have been instigated, because of the partnership approach.

The Safe Space has helped one hundred and ninety-six people and has diverted sixty-seven individuals away from emergency services since its launch in October 2018. It has prevented low level crime and provided valuable intelligence on substances being consumed and drink spiking.

Drink Less Enjoy More resulted in 107 bar staff and a further 30 senior staff and supervisors being trained in how to spot signs of drunkenness. Throughout 2018, a training video was shown during bar set up every day. The sale of alcohol to drunks reduced by nine per cent, the purchase of alcohol to drunk people reduced by more than 17 per cent across all venues when compared to control areas.

Whilst significant budget has been spent on these initiatives, the partnership believes the preventative effect of these actions will dramatically reduce costs in other areas.

The Purple Flag group meets on a regular basis to maintain energy for the project and ensure the necessary funding streams are in place, eg for the Safe Space.

Learning

Partnership working and good working relationships with key stakeholders is essential but can be fragile as they rely on individuals. When people leave, it's vital to give successors a comprehensive briefing, introducing them to key stakeholders and explaining the wider partnership to secure buy-in.

A good relationship with public health and planning is important, opening up new funding streams.

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Colchester

Changing perceptions through strategic partnership planning and policies

Colchester is a historic market and garrison town where the council has led a significant amount of partnership work to manage the night-time economy. This includes becoming a local alcohol action area, and taking part in nationally recognised schemes such as Purple Flag and Pubwatch.

Overview

Colchester has a vibrant and well managed night-time economy. However, it also has some challenges such as aggressive begging, street drinking, drug use/selling and over 5000 soldiers based at the nearby Colchester Garrison.

Initiatives

In order to overcome these challenges Colchester has launched a variety of innovative partnership projects:

A multi-agency Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP) – this was implemented to tackle criminal and anti-social behaviour (ASB) and includes a range of measures both operational and strategic aimed at targeting high profile issues. As part of this funding was secured to implement 'Team 10', which is a dedicated resource, made up of the police, Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes (the housing service).

The team meet weekly to discuss cases of criminal activity or anti-social behaviour. Between 50 and 70 hours per week of patrols and activity focused on the town centre are undertaken, focussing on hotspots including car parks and those individuals involved in criminal behaviour and ASB. Extra officers work during busy weekends to ensure people can enjoy a safe night out in Colchester.

Licensing policy – Colchester have enhanced their licensing policy to include more guidance for licensees on how they manage their business and what the local authority would like to see in the town centre. The policy also includes a pavement policy, and sets out how the council works with partners, including around enforcement. Licensing officers are part of the council's noise night duty team which operates every weekend except for Christmas. Where no noise complaints are received, the team carry out spot checks on businesses and investigate any licensed premises that may be on the watch list for further investigation under the Licensing Enforcement Group (LEG).

Colchester also holds regular training for venues, officers and councillors on the Licensing Act. In 2017 Colchester deployed a Public Space Protection Order² (PSPO) covering the whole town centre, the focus of the Colchester PSPO³ is to reduce anti-social behaviour such as urination, defecation and intoxicating substances in the open air, preventing people being intoxicated and causing annoyance and aggressive and intimidating begging. This is supported by a

² <https://www.askthepolice.uk/content/Q837.htm>

³ <https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/PSPO%20Town%20Centre.pdf>

night duty rota running throughout the week until 1.00 am.

Nights of action – Colchester deliver quarterly nights of action, which run on Friday or Saturday nights from 9.00 pm to 3.00 am, involving high visibility patrols in partnership with Essex Police, council licensing, zone wardens, environmental health, the noise team, parking inspectors and the Security Industry Authority⁴ (SIA). They carry out joint enforcement inspections in the town centre ensuring premises have risk assessments and are adhering to licence conditions. Taxi and private hire checks are also carried out. This sends out a clear message to both businesses and users of the night-time economy.

Licensing Enforcement Group (LEG) – the LEG meets on a monthly basis and is a partnership approach to managing premises where issues have arisen. The group discusses each premises and creates an improvement action plan that is agreed with the venue and works with them to achieve it. The LEG has been successful in identifying and resolving issues early, often avoiding the need for enforcement action. Businesses who choose to work with the LEG state that it has improved the perception of their businesses whilst helping them to operate better.

The LEG consists of the licensing food and safety manager, the licensing enforcement officer, police licensing, police, military police, fire and rescue, environmental protection, community safety, planning, building control and zones team. As required, it also includes the premises, Student Union, Street Pastors and the SOS bus⁵.

Outcomes

Colchester has seen improved relationships with the night-time economy businesses and the wider partnership, with each partner having clear processes and responsibilities, and operating with standard procedures.

Team 10 has issued four Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, 25 Community Protection Warnings, seven Community Protection Notices and seven Fixed Penalty Notices.

The nights of action have resulted in:

- a number of taxi and private hire licences being issued points or suspended
- identification of cases of modern-day slavery with investigations launched
- closure of a food shop following a failed inspection
- warnings issued by the SIA, where SIA staff are not complying with the law
- enforcement action taken against professional street beggars resulting in the begging being stopped and drugs confiscated after a drugs dog operation.

Learning

It is crucial to adapt your approach as new issues emerge or existing ones change. Working in partnership is key, as one organisation cannot solve the issues on its own. It is essential to link the day and night together; creating a diverse audience where families and other groups feel welcome is helpful.

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⁴ www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk

⁵ www.openroad.org.uk/sos-buses

Hastings

Addressing alcohol related hospital admissions

Hastings is a town and borough in East Sussex. It had some historical issues with public space alcohol fuelled violence, and one of the highest rates of alcohol-related A&E admissions for young people in the UK. A partnership was formed by the council to tackle these issues with four key projects contributing to a dramatic improvement.

Overview

Historically, Hastings has had the one of the highest rates of alcohol-related A&E admissions for young people in the UK, and a high level of alcohol related deaths, especially amongst men. There have also been several issues in the town centre such as alcohol fuelled violence and vulnerability and problems with street drinkers and begging. The town also had a large number of poorly managed premises and limited knowledge of the Licensing Act by the trade.

Initiatives

Having identified these issues, Hastings Borough Council worked closely with partners to tackle them. The partnership included the council licensing team, community safety, the police, regeneration, planning, trading standards, highways, fire service, housing team, enforcement, CCTV, clinical

commissioning group (CCG), public health, National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC), Police and Crime Commissioner's office, Shared Futures, Street Pastors, door supervisors, taxi marshals, Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP), drug and alcohol outreach services, business improvement district (BID) and Barwatch.

This included four main projects:

In July 2017 an Alcohol Enquiry⁶ was funded by public health to get a better understanding of alcohol issues. The enquiry was set up by Hastings Council supported by facilitators from Shared Futures⁷ who specialise in the field of citizen enquiries and citizen juries. It involved engagement with 20 people from statutory organisations. This resulted in a training programme being developed for members of the public who were trained in how to make effective representations on an alcohol licence application.

Three saturation zones were set up in the town. Encouraging new applicants to think about their offer and present a case for acquiring a licence, the saturation zones had an almost immediate impact and resulted in a more diverse offer in the town as well as encouraging a more diverse audience into the town at night.

A Reduce the Strength scheme was set up in the three wards where street drinking was presenting an issue. Twenty-seven of the thirty-two off-licences in these wards signed up to the voluntary scheme agreeing not to sell beer, lager and cider above 6.5 per

6 www.eastsussexjsna.org.uk/JsnaSiteAspx/media/jsna-media/documents/nationalprofiles/profileassests/health/2017%20Profiles/HealthProfile2017Hastings.pdf

7 www.sharedfuturecic.org.uk/service/citizen-inquiries

cent abv. This has resulted in a 40 per cent reduction in problematic street drinking and begging. Hastings Borough Council are rolling the scheme out across the borough and all new licence applicants are asked to voluntarily add it as a condition on the licence.

Hastings was selected as one of the areas for the first phase of local alcohol action areas (LAAAs) and was supported by the Home Office to implement a plan jointly with partners to tackle alcohol related issues. The licensing authority, health bodies, and police worked with businesses developing better working relationships, particularly with public health, and a better understanding of the issues both sides face, as well as opening new funding streams.

One success story from this partnership was the creation of a safe space. The CCG commissioned the NSMC (www.thensmc.com) to undertake two public consultations with young people in the borough who identified the need for a night-time economy safe space. Funded by the CCG the safe space is now open every Saturday night from 10.00 pm to 4.00 am based in a church café in the centre of Hastings and run by the NSMC after a successful tendering process. It offers professional minor first aid, brief interventions and signposting to support organisations, volunteer patrols into the town centre and a safe place to wait for parents and friends. In 2018 770 people used the service, 180 received first aid resulting in 110 saved ambulance call outs. The scheme was a finalist in the 2018 HSJ Awards.

Although these were the four main projects undertaken, Hastings Borough Council have made effective use of their Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) in Ore which has been very successful in reducing underage drinking and 12 students from Hastings Academy have undertaken and passed the 'Understanding Alcohol Misuse' module of the Royal Society of Public Health Champion Award and now act as peer mentors, meeting twice a month for projects and workshops.

Outcomes

Key outcomes from the work delivered through these projects has been the reduction in:

- violence and vulnerability in the night-time economy
- death rates in young men from alcohol related harm
- problematic alcohol consumption
- hospital admissions and police call outs.

The work has also facilitated improved partnership working and a more positive relationship with the trade. Enforcement has also benefited from partnership working, with poor operators driven out. The town now benefits from a more diverse night-time economy.

There have been 27 licence reviews with 21 licences revoked, two withdrawn and two suspended with conditions added. The enforcement actions were instigated by trading standards, the police (supported by environmental protection and/or the fire and rescue service), environmental protection (supported by the police) and the licensing team (supported by the police).

Hastings plans to continue work across these projects. The 'reduce the strength' scheme will be expanded to include all new applications and encourage others to join in a voluntary capacity. The safe space is being evaluated and it will continue indefinitely.

A future focus for joint activity with the council, police, trading standards and the fire and rescue service will be around checking for drug running by the licenced trade.

The council also plans to do some proactive enforcement work with the Gambling Commission to look at gaming machines in licensed premises.

Further work is also planned to develop the public realm and a joint bid to the future high streets fund to has been submitted alongside planning and regeneration.

Learning

Engage with partners and internal departments as early as possible. Do not be afraid to start a dialogue with the trade and festival organisers. Working with partners enables Hastings to share resources and opens new income streams. Partnership with voluntary organisations is essential to success.

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Leicester

Shaping the night-time economy through strategic planning and public realm improvements

Leicester has made strategic investments in the city centre and its public realm to encourage inward investment, animate public spaces and improve the city's ambience at night. This has increased footfall and the diversity of the offer at night.

Overview

Substantial private investment in the retail sector over the past decade has resulted in Leicester establishing itself as the retail destination of the East Midlands. The £350 million Highcross development and a recent further £16 million investment in the reconfiguration of the former House of Fraser store has introduced over 100 new brands to the city.

The city's night-time economy has not benefitted from the same growth, and in recognition of this the city council wanted to support businesses to provide a varied, inviting offer to encourage a broad cross section of residents from the surrounding area to visit the city at night, particularly underrepresented visitors such as families.

The city centre now has one of the largest pedestrianised areas in the UK creating a safe, family friendly environment. Leicester has an impressive annual calendar of festivals and events celebrating the city's diversity. A business improvement district (BID) was established in 2017 and has worked in partnership with the council and other stakeholders to increase the number of events for the night-time economy.

Initiatives

Leicester City Council identified and championed several projects to support inward investment into its night-time economy. These included the award-winning Curve Theatre, Phoenix – an independent cinema, art centre and café bar – and bringing the Haymarket Theatre back into use.

Recognising the importance of strategic planning for the city centre at night, Leicester's Night-time Economy Strategic Delivery Group (NTESDG) was set up, incorporating partners from the police, Leicester City Council's licensing, planning, highways, city centre management and community safety teams, East Midlands Ambulance Service, CCTV, CityWatch, public health and the NHS. Other partners, such as BID Leicester, join the meetings on an 'as required' basis.

To deal with vehicle and pedestrian conflict and to better manage the taxis operating in the night-time economy, the group identified funding for taxi marshals to monitor taxi activity. It also introduced a taxi penalty points scheme, to provide a consistent approach to dealing with unacceptable conduct by drivers or vehicle presentation where revocation, suspension or prosecution would be disproportionate.

To improve perceptions of safety for visitors by car at night, the NTESDG has worked closely with private operator NCP. Access can only be achieved to its city centre car parks by a holder of a ticket for the car park. This has eliminated access by rough sleepers and

individuals with complex needs, improving the feeling and perception of safety for users of the car parks. There are regular foot patrols in all of the NCP car parks and a vehicle patrol to all its parking estates.

The council made a significant investment of £3 million to bring the Haymarket Theatre back into use after it closed a decade ago. This renovation helped to bring vitality to the area near the bus station and Church Gate (a cumulative impact zone). Travelodge is developing a 67-room hotel above the Haymarket Shopping Centre which will open in 2020.

In 2015, the council invested £50 million into the waterside area, using £20 million from the Local Growth Fund and £7.5 million from the European Regional Development Fund, specifically to attract investment into the area. The development includes a managed workspace that will increase office space by 5,550 sq m in the city, increasing the number of workers within the city centre and providing leisure operators with additional early evening clientele.

Residential accommodation will occupy the majority of the development, with over 350 homes providing a larger target audience within walking distance for city centre venues. In addition, 11 hotels have to date secured planning permission within the regenerated zone. The council hopes this will increase tourism through overnight stays in the city, again diversifying the city centre visitor demographic at night.

The only bowling alley in Leicester was removed when Highcross was developed, and the council has been working with the landlord to identify other non-alcohol-led leisure operators to help diversify the offer. This has resulted in private operators gaining consent to open a climbing centre and tree top adventure golf facility within the complex.

Outcomes

Positively encouraged through the planning team, £250 million is being privately invested in the waterside development to build 11 new hotels, providing 250 extra bed spaces within the city, facilitating more overnight stays. This represents a five-fold return on the initial £50 million investment in the area.

Ticketed car park entry has eliminated reported crime and anti-social behaviour in the car parks for which the system is in place.

The NTESDG continues to work closely as a partnership and has developed a formal strategy to maintain the focus on increasing the vibrancy and appeal of Leicester after dark.

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Luton

Diversification of the night-time economy

Luton has broadened its appeal to a wider audience through a combination of the development of a new licensing policy, supporting positive initiatives, creating innovative inward investment strategies and developing a vibrant events programme. A consumer-driven change to the way the town centre is used was also a catalyst for positive development within the town's night-time economy.

Overview

Historically, Luton town centre had experienced some issues with alcohol related anti-social behaviour, and suffered from negative perceptions from local residents. The town had a narrow, alcohol-led offer.

Issues were exacerbated by the closure of two of Luton's major nightclubs, which moved the latest closing time in the town centre from 3.00 am to midnight. This impacted the bars and pubs that traditionally fed into the nightclubs with many experiencing an increased level of alcohol-related ASB.

Luton Borough Council aimed to increase footfall and improve perceptions of Luton town centre after dark. It had an aspiration to better support the businesses within the night-time economy and attract further investment. There was a desire to develop the arts and culture offer to diversify the night-time economy experience and attract a broader audience.

The council led a programme of improvement jointly with local partners and overseen by the Strategic Town Centre Group. The group is made up of representatives from council agencies such as planning, licensing, community safety, neighbourhood regulatory services, property, legal, public health, highways and street services, as well as representatives from The Galaxy entertainment complex, Luton BID and The Mall.

Initiatives

Several measures were explored, such as an Early Morning Restriction Order or a Late Night Levy but it was the council's view that a constructive initiative such as a Business Improvement District (BID) would have a more significant and beneficial effect.

In 2015, a town centre BID that incorporated the night-time economy was set up and, since then has been the catalyst for reducing crime and ASB, and increasing footfall and the diversity of visitors, including after dark.

The BID business plan included an aim to achieve Purple Flag, an accreditation recognising a well-managed night-time economy. This prompted a greater focus on the town at night. This work was driven by a Purple Flag working group consisting of representatives from the BID, council and police, Luton Safe, The Mall, The Galaxy, the University of Bedfordshire and the Luton Investment Programme Delivery Group for Arts and Culture.

Luton Borough Council and other partners also worked alongside the BID to reinvigorate the town's events calendar, ensuring both new and existing events continued past 4.00 pm

to encourage visitors to stay into the evening. The council licensed public spaces and routes throughout the town centre to facilitate additional events and activities, such as a giant puppet parade and an extended Diwali festival.

The partnership identified a new chair for Luton Safe, a group that represents the licensed premises in the borough. BID funding was also secured, which paid for equipment such as security wands and a new digital radio network, which is shared with The Mall shopping centre to ensure wider information sharing between businesses. Luton Safe is now a vibrant, well-attended forum.

A Best Bar None scheme was set up, with the inaugural awards evening taking place in February 2019, at which 11 premises were recognised for providing a safe and welcoming night out.

Luton Borough Council's Town Centre Framework Plan identifies eight areas for development, including a new cultural quarter. The council's licensing policy includes a matrix of 'stress areas' that reflects and supports the development of the desired areas.

Increased public confidence in the town centre through initiatives such as the BID helped to attract inward investment, and the council worked alongside the University of Bedfordshire to offer opportunities for incubator businesses, offering low rents and short term lets in the town's historic hat factories.

The arts and culture offer within the town has flourished through this work and the appointment of a cultural enabler whose role is to drive the implementation of the artistic vision. This involves working with a wide range of Luton organisations, artists and practitioners and with the new Luton Creative Forum.

Outcomes

Data around night-time crime and ASB, footfall and public health data are all regularly monitored and analysed. This data has shown a typical increase of five per cent in footfall after 5.00 pm.

Luton has also seen a diversification of the night-time offer; new operators have come in and existing businesses have invested in their premises. The town has received more positive coverage of the night-time economy offer and events and have been successful in achieving Purple Flag, recently undergoing the first renewal.

Before this work, only one decommissioned Hat Factory was being used as a venue, multimedia hub and business incubator. Now, four former Hat Factories are being let to businesses.

The BID is continuing its vibrant programme of events in the night-time economy and is mandated to run until 2020.

Learning

Luton appointed the Deputy Mayor as the night mayor in October 2018 to support this work, but earlier member engagement would have been beneficial.

A learning outcome of the Purple Flag process was that some work was being duplicated through similar groups. The accreditation facilitated more strategic and coordinated working in the town.

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Manchester

Strategic allocation of resources to manage licensing issues

Manchester City Council has a responsive and proactive seven-day licensing and out of hours team set up to manage the growing number of issues around licensed premises, street trading events, residential and commercial noise.

Overview

Manchester City Council has provided a night-time service since the Licensing Act 2003 came into force. When the initial night-time service was introduced there were six council officers working in teams of two in partnership with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) licensing officers. Officers undertook joint visits to premises to help them comply with the new legislation, offering advice and responding to complaints and providing a visible reassurance to residents following negative media speculation over the introduction of later licensing hours.

The service provided on Friday and Saturday nights was effective at dealing with issues there and then, but as operational teams were not responsible for the follow up action required, issues with consistency arose.

Alongside Manchester's success as a growing and vibrant city there were a number of issues around licensed premises, street trading and events as well as residential and commercial noise that would benefit from having a service operating at relevant times that was both responsive and proactive. It became apparent that a joined-up out of hours service operating throughout the week would be beneficial.

In order to find a solution, the council reviewed the use of the limited resources available and how they could be used to achieve better results. This resulted in a restructuring of the services to form the citywide licensing and out of hours team in 2016 and a dedicated city centre team was created in 2017. The teams operate on a permanent shift basis (split into an early, late and night) based centrally within the city centre policing team covering between the hours of 8.00 am and 4.30 am across seven days. Not all nights are covered every week, but Friday and Saturday nights are always covered, and officers are deployed on a shift basis across seven days.

The service delivery was carefully planned to cover key issues, ie Saturday day times to deal with street trading concerns, Friday and Saturday nights to offer advice and deal with enforcement issues around licensed premises, student parties and other domestic noise complaints. It also aimed to have officers available at times when partners such as GMP and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) were working too so that joint operations and partnership working could be undertaken.

Other issues that would benefit from an extended service were identified and an additional team that focuses on waste related issues, particularly commercial waste, has been introduced. The team also works closely with colleagues from the rough sleepers' team and GMP to assist people who are rough sleeping with signposting to support services.

Outcomes

The team has greatly increased the ability to respond to customers and citizens in a timely manner, particularly those who experience problems outside of normal working hours, this means that those who have an issue such as noise at night do not have to wait until the next morning until the incident is investigated and dealt with.

There is a greater visible presence on the street and the ability to deal with issues as they arise has enabled improved working practises within licensed premises.

It has strengthened partnership working to achieve shared goals and has been well received by elected members and residents.

The work will be maintained through the permanent positions created in the council.

Other council support services such as ICT, HR and training need to be engaged early to ensure that they understand the different needs of staff working outside standard working hours.

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Learning

Covering an area as large as the city boundary can impact on response times.

There is naturally a higher demand in the city centre around street trading, events and licensed premises it was often the case that resources were naturally focused on the city centre even though the team has a city-wide remit.

The above issues have been addressed by creating both a city-wide and a city centre licensing and out of hours team. Both have the same resource and work identical shift patterns. This addressed the conflicting demands of the city centre and the neighbourhoods and enabled greater cover across the two teams ensuring shifts didn't need to be cancelled due to sickness or leave.

Managing people on shifts incorporating night work requires greater planning than managing more standard working patterns. Most council services do not work these extended hours and therefore working from a police station provides support and makes most effective use of resources

Nottinghamshire

A countywide approach to managing the night-time economy

Nottinghamshire is made up of seven district and borough councils: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, and Rushcliffe and Nottingham City Council. They work together to manage their night-time economies under the Nottinghamshire Authorities Licensing Group (NALG), which has overseen the roll-out of successful projects such as a countywide Best Bar None scheme, local alcohol action area (LAAA) and councillor training.

Overview

Nightlife across the seven Nottinghamshire councils is diverse, consisting of small market towns, villages, high streets and rural areas. Some are highly affluent while others are lower income areas, such as previous mining communities. It has a high number of independent operators and mixture of local pubs, small owner-managed restaurants, nightclubs, working men's clubs, restaurants, high-end cocktail bars and rural food-led gastropubs. The diversity of geography and offer generated a management challenge in terms of the consistency of standards and enforcement.

By bringing NALG together and discussing issues that each council faces, it helped to identify mutual ground and where there was potential to work in partnership to design solutions. Each council faced similar issues such as inconsistent operator management of licensed premises for example around their policies, adherence to licensing conditions and management of vulnerability.

Other areas of concern included county lines, illegal workers, modern day slavery, children working in the night-time economy for family businesses and vulnerability.

Building on the history of partnership working in the region the NALG were well placed to implement a Best Bar None scheme and bid successfully to be a LAAA. These schemes create a clear framework for working together and sharing best practice to drive positive change.

Initiatives

With the advent of the Licensing Act 2003 (the Act) the Nottinghamshire borough councils set up the NALG in 2003, harmonising approaches to implementing the Act and managing the night-time economy. In recognition of the value of partnership working membership of the NALG was designed to be as inclusive as possible. All of the Nottinghamshire local authorities and Nottingham City Council are represented with officers from both licensing and legal teams regularly attending. There is also attendance from the police, trading standards, the Gambling Commission, fire and rescue services, the Security Industry Authority (SIA), Public Health England, the Nottinghamshire Health Board and the safeguarding boards. They meet on a quarterly basis to review current licensing issues, safeguarding, accessibility, unified policies, contentious conditions and more recently tax licensing. The NALG has also liaised and cooperated with licensing solicitors and trade operators.

The NALG was the key driver for creating the UK's first countywide Best Bar None scheme in the UK. Most Nottinghamshire councils have too few licensed premises to develop a standalone scheme, yet each had a desire to improve operating standards, drive compliance and improve the experience for customers. A countywide scheme addressed these issues.

Each year the team reviews and expands the criteria for the scheme, with safeguarding, calories on menus, family facilities, age verification, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and drink driving added as a result. Securing initial funding was problematic as it was hard to coordinate budgets between seven councils, however a successful application for funding at a county level was made to the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner. In the most successful year, over ninety premises applied for the scheme.

The NALG oversaw Nottinghamshire's joint application with Nottingham City Council to become a LAAA in both the first and second rounds of the Home Office-led scheme. Vulnerability training for licensed premises and taxis, together with the launch of Drinkaware Crew formed part of this work.

The NALG runs training on a bi-annual basis for the chairs of the Licensing Committee, and annual training for any councillors that sit on a licensing committee. The training covers licensing law, the role of a councillor and how to manage hearings and consultations.

The training encourages councillors to consider all of the relevant factors relating to the grant of a licence including factors such as access, safeguarding, emerging issues, vulnerability and noise, and ensures that the application is properly examined and given a fair process at any hearings. It also helps council officers to feel well supported and includes the use of role-play to prepare councillors for licensing hearings.

Outcomes

Each year, around 10 per cent of Best Bar None applicants fail on initial assessment, but are subsequently coached by the scheme coordinators to reach the required standard.

The strong partnership ethos instilled by the NALG has enabled the different local authorities in Nottinghamshire to instigate cross-county projects, resolve issues and share information.

Joint working on key policies has also resulted in a more coordinated approach to licensing across the county.

The NALG introduced councillor training in 2006, putting them ahead of the recommendations coming out of the House of Lords Select Committee report in 2017 which made some suggestions around the need for councillor training.

This work is being sustained by the Nottinghamshire borough councils' commitment to partnership working such as their continued investment in Best Bar None and LAAAs.

Learning

Partnership working between so many local authorities covering such a large area seemed daunting at first, but through good communication and working together the area has seen excellent results.

Key players from each local authority are also well connected to bodies such as the Local Government Association, Institute of Licensing and the National Association of Licensing Enforcement Officers. These specialist networks give the individuals and the group as a whole access to highly experienced professionals who can provide support when required.

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South Tyneside

Safeguarding training for all partners in the night-time economy

South Tyneside Council has developed an extensive programme of vulnerability training and awareness raising within the business community. It helps stakeholders within the wider night-time economy to identify and deal effectively with signs of vulnerability.

It also created robust links and facilitated joint prevention work between the South Tyneside Safeguarding Board and the council's Development Services team, which incorporates frontline services such as licensing, environmental health, trading standards and planning.

Overview

In response to the findings of the Casey Review⁸, which identified a failure to prevent child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham, South Tyneside Council considered how to prevent similar safeguarding issues within its area. The aim was to raise awareness of CSE and ensure that individuals working within the borough's night-time economy were trained to spot and act on signs of CSE.

The licensing team in conjunction with the local safeguarding children's board developed a training programme on CSE; the initial focus was delivering training for licenced taxi and private hire (PHV) drivers with the programme later extended to other

night-time economy stakeholders. Awareness raising sessions continue to be delivered with at least three events held per year.

Whilst the initial focus was on CSE, Northumbria Police later worked with the council's licensing team to broaden the remit to cover all types of vulnerability.

Initiatives

Early in 2016, South Tyneside Council's Licensing and Regulatory Committee approved the addition of a mandatory condition for all taxi and PHV drivers licences, requiring every driver to undertake training as deemed necessary by the local authority. The condition was deliberately broad to allow additional topics to be added to cover emerging issues. Taxi and PHV drivers were identified as playing a key role in the night-time economy, having the opportunity to identify potential victims and patterns of suspicious activity, as well as being in a position to challenge situations.

Three large training sessions of between 120 and 200 taxi and private hire drivers were organised. The scale of the training days was challenging due to the number of people in attendance, but was well supported by the wider local authority including councillors and the Licensing and Regulatory Committee and the police.

Attendees received materials including a certificate of training and a credit-card sized directory of key contact details relating to safeguarding support, together with a window

8 www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration

sticker. The sticker's strapline 'I'm CSE aware – are you?' deliberately used the acronym in order to generate discussion with passengers to broaden knowledge of CSE. Despite some initial resistance the majority of drivers display the CSE window sticker.

The council mandated the same training for all staff within Development Services.

Following an incident in the wider Northumbria region, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria commissioned a vulnerability management training programme to be delivered to door staff across the force area. Northumbria police offered to incorporate this within the CSE training to strengthen wider vulnerability management in the borough.

The licensing team worked with the local Pubwatch to offer training to managers and staff of licensed premises, together with hotels, guesthouses, off-licences and landlords.

While it has not been possible to mandate training attendance for the alcohol licensed trade, the council has included a CSE section within its statement of licensing policy setting out its expectation that licence holders and applicants have an understanding of what constitutes CSE, the indicators of risk and how to report any concerns. It also encourages licensees to attend the awareness-raising sessions it holds.

To further strengthen the identification and management of any CSE and vulnerability issues relating to children, the senior development services manager, who oversees the Development Service directorate, attends the quarterly safeguarding board meeting, and has established reporting links with the monthly 'missing, sexually exploited and trafficked' meetings. These meetings examine specific cases about vulnerable children in the borough who may be at risk, and what the collective team can do to protect them.

These meetings have produced evidence around specific premises, for example where children may be accessing alcohol. This has

led to intelligence-led enforcement targeted at these venues.

Outcomes

To date, over 1,000 people have attended the awareness sessions. This includes 669 taxi and PHV drivers, six taxi operators, 44 taxi booking staff, 320 licensed premises staff and 51 others.

Following the initial delivery of the sessions Northumbria Police reported a 52 per cent increase in reports relating to vulnerability compared with the same period in the previous year. It also reported instances of taxi drivers bringing passengers they were concerned about directly to the police station instead of their stated destination.

Training is delivered three times a year. All new drivers must attend the training within three months of obtaining a licence and attend refresher training every three years. The borough has developed an online resource to facilitate this, with drivers submitting a declaration that they have completed the refresher training upon renewal of their licence.

Learning

The local authority acted quickly to put these arrangements in place, and initially faced resistance from the taxi trade, who felt singled out as potential perpetrators. Given more time, a more consultative approach would have been taken, gathering all stakeholders together to explain the issue and its proposed solution, answering questions and ensuring buy-in.

With more time to develop the project, the opportunity to incorporate wider vulnerability management training may also have been identified from the outset.

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Southwark

An intelligence-led approach to managing problems at night

Southwark Council worked with partners to develop an intelligence-led approach to managing the night-time economy, ensuring limited resources were deployed where they were most needed.

Southwark Council has also developed a very robust approach to considering new licence applications. Its statement of licensing policy is very clear regarding the types of premises it welcomes together with recommended opening hours, making it clear to applicants what is expected.

Overview

Southwark Council aimed to develop an effective approach to dealing with complaints and resolving problems that were emerging in the night-time economy. The council wanted to support businesses to help them remain compliant with the Licensing Act and other legislation. The work carried out sought to reduce the impact of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour (ASB) on residents living in the core nightlife areas of the borough.

The statement of licensing policy provides clear guidance to potential applicants around what is expected of operators in the borough. This enables them to make an informed judgement about applications and develop them to suit the requirements of the policy. This also ensures that they have the best chance of success, before committing to any significant financial outlay. The policy also sought to manage the development of the borough's night-time economy in a controlled manner, ensuring a diverse offer that did not solely rely on the sale of alcohol.

Initiatives

Joint enforcement – Southwark Council's licensing team developed a programme of regular compliance visits on Friday and Saturday nights within the borough. Licensing led, they included licensing officers, one officer from the wider regulatory services team and between two and four police officers. In addition, representatives from UK Border Force, the London Fire Brigade and the Security Industry Authority (SIA) have joined them on various nights.

The council's licensing team meets with the night-time economy police every Thursday to discuss any previously allocated tasks, the outcomes, current issues and the strategy for dealing with these. Concerns are looked at in detail with solutions considered as a partnership, informing compliance activity for the coming weekend. The Night-time Economy Team (NET) includes representatives from the council's Licensing and Regulatory Services teams (which could be from the Southwark ASB unit, environmental protection, trading standards, health and safety or the food health and safety team) and several officers from the night-time economy policing team.

The task team uses a risk based approach, concentrating on complaints and problem premises, one-off events and crime and disorder flashpoints and times, such as dispersal.

Statement of licensing policy – Southwark Council's statement of licensing policy supports this work providing a framework through which the council can manage the expansion of the borough's night-time economy in a controlled way.

The borough has several key centres of nightlife such as Borough, Bankside, Elephant and Castle, Camberwell and Peckham. The policy provides very clear guidance for applicants, broken down by venue type and area type. The categories of area are listed as major town centre and strategic cultural area, district town centre, local centres and small shopping parades, and residential.

The policy contains a matrix referring to venue types such as restaurants, bars, nightclubs or off-licences, and provides the recommended opening and closing hours, together with an indication of whether the licensing authority considers that type of premises appropriate for the area at all. For example, the policy states that it does not consider a nightclub to be appropriate for a local centre, small shopping parade or residential area.

Southwark Council is committed to supporting the growth of its culture and nightlife. While the policy provides initial clarity on the licensing authority's view in a number of areas such as the opening and closing times, officers are available to discuss new applications, and subject to the nature of the proposed premises, exceptions to the recommendations stated may be made.

In addition, the statement of licensing policy makes reference to the borough's three cumulative impact areas (CIAs), yet also provides examples of the factors it may consider as demonstrating there will be no impact, therefore providing additional guidance to applicants.

Within Southwark's licensing team, one licensing officer is nominated to act as the lead for every application that is made, to ensure that there is a separation of functions within the department to provide a fair process. This individual organises a meeting between all responsible authorities to consider each application, to ensure a coordinated approach and response.

Outcomes

The regular, targeted compliance visits have had a positive impact on alcohol related and public nuisance complaints due to there being a regular presence of the NET, enabling the council to work smarter with reduced resources. This creates pro-active engagement with business operators working in the night-time economy.

This has brought about a more cohesive approach to solving problems related to licensed premises, which in turn supports licensees regarding compliance and helps reduce any negative impact that licensed premises have upon local residents.

The fair and robust process in relation to licensing applications has resulted in most cases being dealt with before going to committee, establishing a resolution that is acceptable to both parties. Avoiding the costs of a hearing saves both the local authority and the applicants significant amounts of time and money, and establishes good relationships between licensees and the local authority from the outset.

In the context of decreasing resources the council is currently consulting on introducing a late night levy that will fund the NTET and other initiatives to support a safer night-time environment.

Learning

Southwark Borough Council has been positively encouraged by the engagement by the trade with the work of the NTET, and would recommend engaging licensees early on in any night-time initiative.

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Wrexham

Development of the most innovative Best Bar None scheme of 2018

Wrexham's pioneering use of the Best Bar None scheme resulted in winning the most innovative scheme of 2018. Run with a small budget and relying on partnership working, Wrexham embedded a variety of schemes into its Best Bar None to enhance it and make it more effective.

Overview

A number of issues were identified in Wrexham's night-time economy including alcohol related violence and drunkenness in the town centre and pre-loading. There was a desire to strengthen relationships with licensees, to address these issues as well as to improve knowledge of licensing legislation and raise awareness about vulnerability.

In 2001 Wrexham's Nightsafe (Pubwatch) started and meets monthly, the Chair and Vice Chair are licensees, and there is representation from the council's licensing, trading standards and community safety teams as well as from North Wales Police. This has resulted in a strong partnership approach.

Alongside Nightsafe, Wrexham Best Bar None was introduced in 2014 and shortly later became a finalist for the most innovative scheme. Whilst there were issues securing resources to support the scheme, key partners and stakeholders wanted to

relaunch it in 2016 after a short break given the positive role the scheme had in driving improved safety and rewarding best practice. The scheme also provided an excellent framework through which to deliver initiatives such as the EU-funded STAD in Europe⁹ (SiE) project Drink Less Enjoy More (www.drinklessenjoy.com), aimed at reducing binge drinking and a number of other initiatives.

Initiatives

Best Bar None and STAD in Europe programme

Delivered and compliance checked through the existing Best Bar None scheme and a relationship with Liverpool John Moore's University, the 2018 SiE project aimed at reducing pre-loading amongst young people. This involves changing the acceptability of drunkenness, increasing awareness of relevant legislation and alcohol-related harms including associated vulnerability, and preventing the sale of alcohol to drunks in licensed premises.

Wrexham undertook community engagement with licensees, door staff and young people, raising awareness around the legislation on sale of alcohol to drunks and the vulnerability associated with preloading and intoxication.

A multi media campaign raising awareness of these issues was sent out by email (to Wrexham Borough Council's mailing list), and through social media (Facebook, Twitter and blogs) reaching over 139,000 users. Posters

⁹ www.stad.org/en/research/stad-europe

were displayed in venues, and the campaign was picked up in local and national press.

Responsible bar staff training (vulnerability training) was delivered by expert professionals on subjects such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), county lines and sexual assault with the on and off-licensed premises licensees receiving training. Training was also delivered for heads of door security on associated legislation, vulnerability associated with drunkenness and intervention along with two intoxication vulnerability training sessions with the captains of clubs and societies at the local university.

The council and police engaged with all licensed venues to cultivate self-policing practices and distributed posters to remind the public and warn staff around the sale of alcohol to drunks and increase awareness of vulnerability associated with drunkenness. This was reinforced by council staff and police officers, stressing to nightlife users that drunkenness is not acceptable. The council and police working in partnership also run training with any new venue, security companies or designated premises supervisors.

For the STAD project there was a core steering group driven by Wrexham Council with representation from licensing, trading standards, community safety, youth services, North Wales Police, North Wales Fire and Rescue, Public Health Wales and Liverpool John Moore's University. The wider partnership includes town centre licensees, Glyndwr University, Coleg Cambria and North Wales Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

Wrexham further enhanced its Best Bar None Silver and Gold categories by adding in:

A vulnerability code for all door staff, distributed as a handy pocket guide, that included a three-step approach of 'see' (looking for specific vulnerabilities such as alone females, predatory males, people under the influence of alcohol and drugs), 'intervene' (what to do if someone is

vulnerable) and 'act' (where to seek help, ie Street Pastors, police, welfare centre).

Counter terrorism training – run through Nightsafe, the comprehensive training scheme was delivered by counter terrorism officers from North Wales Police and covers firearms and weapons, suspicious items, hostile reconnaissance, bomb threat, and mass evacuation plans.

The training included sample policies, guidance for staff, training videos, evacuation and invacuation procedures. The intention is to introduce online 'ACT'¹⁰ training as part of Best Bar None.

Outcomes

Nightsafe and Best Bar None have approximately 20 members out of 26 licensed premises. Best Bar None has given an excellent framework for launching and coordinating other initiatives and identifying premises that are not engaged. It is a tool for building a trusted relationship with the trade and improving standards. Participation is increasing through partnership working, and it is felt by partners that the time invested with premises preparing and assisting them with the Best Bar None process reduces the need for enforcement in the future. Best Bar None assessors are selected from a variety of partner organisations.

Evaluation has shown that the Drink Less Enjoy More campaign has been a success with:

- a third of nightlife users being aware of the campaign
- over 40 per cent agreeing Drink Less Enjoy More demonstrated that drunks would not be served more alcohol
- nearly a quarter claiming they would drink less alcohol before a night out and 30 per cent that they would drink less alcohol in bars

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/news/act-awareness-elearning

- the frequency of sales of alcohol to a pseudo-drunk actor pre- Drink Less Enjoy More reducing from 56 per cent before the campaign to 42 per cent afterwards.

Alcohol related anti-social and alcohol related behaviour is down in the town centre, but exact police statistics are not available at this time.

Learning

Wrexham achieved a successful sustainable outcome by maximising its partnerships, working with a limited budget and approximately one day a week of a council officer's time to drive the process for five months leading up to the awards.

Best practice from other areas can be tweaked to meet specific needs.

Best Bar None is a preventative tool, working with the trade, empowering them to improve their working practices before things go wrong and ensuring that they receive credit for the positive things they do, it ensures compliance, encourages healthy competition and has made Wrexham safer.

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For more information on Wrexham's STAD in Europe project http://allcatsrgrey.org.uk/wp/download/public_health/alcohol/Wrexham-Drink-Less-Enjoy-More-pilot-intervention-report-2018.pdf

Weston-super-Mare

Creating a night-time economy partnership action plan and Safe Space (MAVIS bus)

As part of the North Somerset Council regeneration of the seaside town Weston-super-Mare they wanted to ensure a safe, welcoming, diverse and vibrant offer after dark that appealed to everyone. To achieve this, they developed a night-time economy action plan and launched a 'Safe Space' called the MAVIS bus (multi-agency vehicle in service).

Overview

A sizeable piece of work profiling the evening and night-time economy was commissioned in 2014 using data from across a wide range of partner agencies. A number of issues were identified in the town with Weston-super-Mare, similar to other UK seaside towns, experiencing a decline as holidaymakers increasingly chose to go overseas and those that did come, primarily attracted by the daytime attractions.

Furthermore, some night-time venues were operating below the required standard and there was little diversification on offer. Surrounding residential communities had high levels of deprivation and Weston-super-Mare had become a place where significant numbers of visitors and locals would consume a lot of alcohol and then become vulnerable. This was putting significant pressure on the emergency services and Street Pastors, as well as affecting perceptions of the town.

Initiatives

The 2014 problem profile¹¹ identified that a quarter of crimes including public order and violent crime were happening at night. These crimes were largely alcohol-related, and a disproportionate number of issues related to a small number of premises.

In the same year the Home Office launched the local alcohol action areas (LAAAs) scheme and Weston-super-Mare successfully applied to participate. As part of this work a night-time economy action plan was developed, aimed at attracting new visitors at night, redeveloping the town centre's physical environment and improving its reputation.

A partnership group formed and met bi-monthly, with representation from North Somerset Council, the police, Pubwatch, Street Pastors, council and police licensing officers, the local neighbourhood team, community safety, Southwestern Ambulance Service, Weston Area Health NHS Trust, St John's Ambulance, public health, alcohol and drugs commissioning, fire and rescue, Weston College, the Chamber of Commerce, CCTV control room, Weston BID, regeneration and events team.

The partnership ran a consultation on the night-time economy with users and businesses with responses suggesting that introduction of a 'Safe Space' should be a priority to reduce vulnerability and promote partnership working. Following a trial on Saturday nights, the partnership secured multi-agency funding to purchase a second-hand bus and redesign its interior at a cost of £55,000. It contains a private medical area

¹¹ www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/crime-and-anti-social-behaviour-chapter.pdf

and a reception area with a place to sit, chat, wait for friends or family, have refreshments and charge phones.

Parked in the town centre, it operates as a multi-agency hub on Saturday nights between 9.00 pm and 3.00 am and at major events. It is connected to the wider night-time economy partnership via a radio link. It has been crewed by a variety of agencies since it started but currently by St John's Ambulance, South West Ambulance Service and Avon and Somerset Police community support officers. It costs approximately £400 per night to run which is jointly funded by a number of local partner agencies. It treats between five and 10 people per night, three quarters of which are for significant medical reasons linked to alcohol consumption.

With the move of the police station to outside of the town centre two years ago, the police now interview victims and witnesses of crime and carry out stop and search in the bus. In order to make it financially sustainable, the bus is available for hire outside its operating hours. Multiple partner organisations have made use of it as a mobile police station, for youth work in hard to reach communities, health screening and as a first aid centre at events.

The service has become particularly important over the last 18 months as Weston-super-Mare hospital has closed its A&E department between 10.00 pm and 8.00 am meaning people must travel to Taunton or Bristol which are both over 20 miles away.

Outcomes

There has been a reduction in total crime and ASB by five per cent between 2014 and 2018, bucking national upward trends.

The number of people feeling unsafe in the town after dark fell by eight per cent to 39 per cent from 2016 to 2018, according to the local perception survey.

The night-time economy action plan has resulted in Weston-super-Mare retaining Purple Flag accreditation since 2015.

Improved perceptions have also meant inward investment into the town from chains such as Pizza Express, Nando's and Cineworld. Dolphin Square, Princess Royal Square and residential seaside apartments have been redeveloped, increasing diversity.

In 2018 a new street food market and an 'Alive After 5' campaign were successfully launched and will repeat in 2019.

The MAVIS bus is a positive addition creating the right atmosphere as well as reducing incidents and creating space for agencies to work together.

Learning

It is essential that one key person in the partnership is identified as responsible for driving change. Engaging a strong steering group with a clear vision, as to why their skill set and agency are needed is vital for lasting change.

There are limitations to running schemes such as the MAVIS bus with volunteers, such as availability issues preventing the service being offered some nights. It is also hard to mandate job functions such as recording accurate data. A paid crew is now in operation to ensure consistency and sustainability of the service. The option of training local college students as volunteers is also being considered.

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Further information

Partnership initiatives

Pubwatch is an effective network of licensees working together to combat crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour in towns, cities and local communities. There are about 1000 pubwatches in the UK.

www.nationalpubwatch.org.uk

Best Bar None is a national award scheme, supported by the Home Office that aims to improve standards in local night time economies by sharing and promoting best practice.

www.bbnuke.com

Purple Flag is the accreditation programme that recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres in the early evening and night time economy. It provides an endorsement of the vibrancy of the local night time economy.

www.purpleflag.org.uk

Community Alcohol Partnerships is a retailer-led partnership to tackle issues of underage drinking and promote greater awareness and understanding of alcohol among young people.

www.communityalcoholpartnerships.co.uk

Street Pastors are volunteers from the local church community who give up their time to help people out for the evening.

www.streetpastors.org

Drinkaware crew scheme is an initiative set up by the charity Drinkaware which involves trained staff working in clubs and venues to help support the welfare and wellbeing of young people on a night out.

www.drinkaware.co.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/drinkaware-crew

Business improvement districts (BIDs) are business led schemes which enable local businesses to fund projects to meet the needs of the locality in which they operate and are funded by a levy on the business within the defined BID area. BIDs have been operating across the UK for over a decade and there are over 250 established around the country.

www.gov.uk/guidance/business-improvement-districts

Local alcohol action areas (LAAA) is a Home Office programme, which has recently completed its second phase.

www.gov.uk/government/news/local-alcohol-action-areas-will-tackle-alcohol-related-harms

Safe Spaces are partnership schemes that operate, usually on a temporary basis to make the night-time economy safer often providing a base for medical support.

www.portmangroup.co.uk/docs/default-source/alcohol-and-local-areas/safe-spaces-summary-report.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Reduce the strength initiatives are designed to tackle the problems associated with street drinking by removing from sale low price high-strength alcohol products through voluntary agreements with local retailers.

www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/reducing-strength-guidanc-795.pdf

Regulatory tools

Cumulative impact (or saturation) zone

refers to an evidence-based tool that can be used by licensing authorities to limit the growth of licensed premises in a problem area.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/explanatory-memorandum-revised-guidance-issued-under-s-182-of-licensing-act-2003

(See page 109.)

Late Night Levy is a tool that can be used by licensing authorities to recoup some of the cost of policing the night-time economy. The levy is payable by licensed premises within the designated area, which sell or supply alcohol between midnight and 6.00 am.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98126/late-night-levy.pdf

Early Morning Restriction Order may be applied where an area experiences a significant amount of late-night alcohol-related crime and disorder. There are currently no local authorities who have introduced one.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705588/Revised_guidance_issued_under_section_182_of_the_Licensing_Act_2003__April_2018_.pdf

(See page 141.)



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