

London's night time economy

November 2005



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**Greater London Authority
November 2005**

Published by

Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

www.london.gov.uk

enquiries **020 7983 4100**

minicom **020 7983 4458**

ISBN 1 85261 720 9

This publication is printed on recycled paper

Chair's Foreword



Recent years have seen an expansion of the night-time economy across London, to the extent that London has now become a 24-hour city.

This growth of the night-time economy is good for London in many ways; it brings money into the capital, it provides jobs for Londoners and attracts visitors.

At the same time, because of the chronic shortage of housing in London, there are pressures to increase the number of people who live in urban areas. People already living in those areas that are home to London's night life are being joined by new people attracted by city living and by new homes in desirable locations such as London's riverside.

Conflicts between these two policies are inevitable, but not insoluble. This scrutiny investigation has provided a great deal of information on the main areas of conflict and, importantly, has uncovered a great deal of good practice from across London and from other cities that point the way to how conflicts can be resolved or avoided. (Note that this scrutiny did not include issues regarding pubs, clubs, and drinking because the Safer London Committee was scrutinising this area).

The answers mostly lie in good design and good management of London's town centres. They involve making sure that residents of these areas are fully consulted on the issues that affect their quality of life.

If the ideas and recommendations contained in this report are acted on, they will help to take London a step nearer to being a city that is more at ease with itself, where all Londoners have the opportunities to enjoy the best the capital has to offer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dee Doocey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dee Doocey AM
Chair of the Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee

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Executive Summary

London is a great place to live. It has a 'wow' factor. People like being at the centre of things. One of the great things about London is that there is always something going on: bars, clubs, pubs, theatres, cinemas, festivals and much more.

Londoners love London and all it has to offer. Yet, much as they enjoy being part of a lively exciting city, Londoners who live in the capital's town centres want and deserve a better quality of life.

There are conflicts between support for London's night-time economy, which is worth millions of pounds a year to London, and the desire to encourage more people to live in the city and town centres. People who live in those areas say the main problems are:

- the job culture
- drunkenness and anti-social behaviour
- fears about safety
- noise
- mess
- lack of public transport late at night
- overcrowding
- high prices

The London Assembly's Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee has carried out a scrutiny investigation into these issues to find out what ideas and good practice exist to support the night-time economy and improve things for people who live side-by-side with London's night life.

Among the ideas that we found were these.

- The planning system makes it difficult for councils to have enough control over what goes on in London's night-time areas, and there are fears that the new licensing laws will make this more difficult.
- Londoners and business want the tube to run later, especially at weekends.
- More needs to be done to attract a wider range of people into London's town centres at night – this should include ideas such as later opening of museums and galleries and more non-alcohol related activities.
- There are good examples of how town-centre managers can help co-ordinate services and work with residents and businesses in London's night-time areas;
- Good design is needed to make sure that new developments and refurbished properties in these areas include effective sound insulation;
- Design can also help by 'designing-out' crime through improving lighting and creating open spaces where people feel safe;
- Londoners and London's businesses want the media to paint a more accurate picture of night-time London by not always concentrating on the problems.

A summary of our recommendations is included at page 22 of the report.

London's night-time economy

Introduction

London at night. Something for everyone. For Londoners the best things about living in London are linked to the city's night-time economy: the 'wow factor'; the choices London offers; the activities on their doorstep; the culture; the entertainment.

"This is a great international city – we have so much to be proud of."

Focus group participant

But there is another side to London at night: the side that shows the worst of the city in the eyes of its residents and businesses. Anti-social behaviour and disorder, problems with transport and a dirty and noisy environment don't relate only to the night-time economy, but they are linked closely to it.

"Action is needed now – immediately – on anti-social behaviour. Some parts of London are becoming no-go-booze-zones. We must reclaim our streets for all Londoners."

Focus group participant

We've been here before: Peter Ackroyd wrote in *London - the Biography* 'In the thirteenth century London was already notorious for "the immoderate drinking of the foolish'...Verlaine...considered Londoners to be 'noisy as ducks, eternally drunk", while Dostoevsky...noted that "everyone is in a hurry to drink himself into insensibility"'. Those descriptions could apply to parts of London at night today, but now they would refer to the minority of visitors to London's night spots, not the majority of Londoners who actually live there.

London's thriving night-time economy is good for London, but does it deliver what Londoners want? Does the upside of living in a vibrant world city offset the downside of living with noise, mess and disruption? How can the needs of Londoners and visitors to London who want to enjoy the city at night be balanced with the need for all Londoners to enjoy a good quality of life?

The London Assembly's Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee's investigation into London's night-time economy was set up to look at whether there are conflicts between the needs of residents and the night-time economy and, if there are, what can be done to make things better.

About the review

The committee heard evidence from a range of individuals and organisations. Four witnesses gave evidence personally and 35 written submissions were received. Focus groups were held with residents and businesses in Westminster and Croydon and members of the committee visited Croydon, Islington and Westminster.

We had clear ideas of the issues we wanted to investigate, particularly around how planning and design could help to resolve conflicts between policies to support the night-time economy. We also wanted to encourage more people to live in the city and town centres. This report reflects those issues and also looks at a range of related problems and solutions that emerged from the investigation. In this way, the study has looked at what matters most to London's people.

What is London's night-time economy?

London's night-time economy involves a vast range of activities for Londoners and visitors to the capital. It is the pubs and clubs, cinemas and theatres, cafés and restaurants and so on. It is supported by public transport, taxis and many public services such as the police, council services such as cleaning, refuse collection, planning and licensing, and it has an impact on the health service.

The night-time economy employs Londoners and brings money into the city from visitors from around the world. It is one of the things that attracts people to live in and visit London.

Is there a problem?

"The night-time economy needs management and co-ordination."

Westminster resident

If you live in one of London's entertainment centres you may have to put up with noise from the clubs and from the people having what they see as a good time. You may be scared of the 'yob culture' that seems to go hand in hand with the all-too-familiar drunkenness. There may be mess in the streets from litter and worse, from people being sick or urinating in the street. And then you may be woken in the early hours as the local authority gets the city clean and ready to go to work.

And for those who want to enjoy night-time London there are also problems. How will you get home at 2am? Do you feel safe on London's streets and transport?

Once theatres and cinemas have closed for the day, most of London's entertainment centres become young-people-only zones; there are few over-30s around in the small hours. The impression is that after midnight London is for young people who want to drink and get drunk.

Many people believe that advertisers and the media are responsible for the 'down it' drink culture.

Focus group report

London after midnight is not a 'shared' London, not a place where all Londoners can enjoy what the city has to offer. In fact, after midnight the city withdraws much of what was on offer earlier. Along with the theatres and cinemas, most of the restaurants have closed, public transport is winding down for the day and all but the young are heading for home.

So, yes, there is a problem. Quite a few problems in fact. But the people who helped with this investigation also had some ideas about how problems could be solved and how London's night-time economy could be more in tune with Londoners as a whole...

Where things happen

Issues

One of the problems of the night-time economy is that certain areas have become home to certain types of activity, such as drinking, to the exclusion of other activities that might have a wider appeal. What may at first have seemed like a good idea to keep activities in the same area has led to hotspots that are becoming increasingly difficult to police and cleanse.

At the same time, some areas are starved of any night-time activity, leaving bleak and deserted town centres.

Ideas

A range of different activities should be encouraged outside central London and planning policy should avoid creating ghettos by clustering all late-night venues in one area. A wider spread of venues targeted at different age groups would reduce the pressure on central locations.

People and the night-time economy

Issues

London's night-time economy is not something that many Londoners feel is for them. Its image – and reality in many places – is of young people drinking and getting drunk. There is something of a vicious circle where, because young people dominate the night-time economy, businesses do more to attract them. More clubs and bars, cheap booze and so on. Families and older people often don't feel safe in this drink-fuelled environment, and in any case there is very little for them to do.

"Croydon's night-time economy is essentially a drink industry economy...there is no non-drink environment to be found in town".

Focus group report

Ideas

In European cities families can be seen enjoying town centres after shops have closed and cafes and bars are more welcoming. In London, more people could be attracted to staying in town centres in the evening and into the night if there was a greater range of things to do – things that don't involve alcohol. For example, late shopping or later opening for museums and galleries. Restaurants could stay open later and cater for families.

"The way that the night-time economy in town centres can continue to thrive is by diversifying to include a wider range of older age groups and interests."

Westminster City Council

Case study – Marylebone High Street

Marylebone High Street was held up as an example of what can be achieved when a landlord has a vision for an area and makes this a reality by finding the 'right' tenants for that area. It is a street that has been revived with a mixture of shops, restaurants, cafes and residential properties. Planning by the landlord made sure that businesses were in keeping with the vision for the area, where 'vertical' drinking establishments for example would not have been suitable.¹

Museums and galleries told us about obstacles that prevent some of them from operating later opening hours at the weekend. These include additional security costs, and other funding constraints. Some museums and galleries do open late despite these difficulties. For example, the Tate Modern opens until 10pm on Fridays and Saturdays, the British Museum is open until 8.30pm on Thursdays and Fridays, and the National Gallery opens until 9pm on Wednesdays. The Natural History Museum is staying open until 9pm on Fridays until February 2006 to encourage young adults to visit the Diamonds and Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibitions. The Royal Academy of Arts has held one-off late and all-night openings for popular exhibitions.

¹ Vertical drinking is a term used to describe groups of mainly young people who are encouraged to stand up and drink alcohol because of the lack of chairs that have been provided in the bars.

Recommendation 1

London's principal museums and galleries should stay open later in the evenings. We recommend that the LDA develop, promote and support an initiative to keep museums and galleries in areas that have a significant night-time economy open until 10pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Transport

Issues

If people are to be encouraged to stay out later in the city, then they need to know that they can get home. While evidence showed that there are now more night buses than ever before, people still felt that public transport needed to improve at night. The lack of late night public transport can lead to long queues, fights and noise. Queuing for transport was said to be a big problem in Camden and a cause of anti-social behaviour.

Tubes and trams stop running too early, especially at weekends. In town centres in outer boroughs there are too few black cabs to cater for the late night homeward-bound and in all parts of London the shortage of 'official' transport leads to opportunities for unlicensed taxis to pick up fares. Taxis and mini cabs can also cause disturbance, waiting outside venues with engines running or sounding horns to alert passengers.

"...you can have 15 black cabs – the total number you will have available in that town centre – to deal with, to take it to the extreme, 10,000 people."

Graham McNally, Town Centre Manager, Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames

Ideas

An obvious solution is for the tube and trams to run later and to continue to add more night buses and routes. We welcome Transport for London's consultation on late running of the Underground. The Mayor has recently launched the 'Home' text initiative, which puts people in touch with their nearest licensed minicab operator. Transport for London should also carry on with its work with licensed taxis, for example the marshalled rank initiative that has been piloted in Bromley, Cranbourne Street.

There are also examples of good practice with licensed private hire vehicles. Islington told us about a scheme where a card giving details of legal mini cab firms would be left in bars and a kiosk would be set up where people could ring for cabs or the police. There were conditions on alcohol licences requiring a dedicated line to taxi firms and to prove to the council that there was a contract with a cab company. We were also impressed by an initiative run by a club in Islington, whereby people leaving the club are provided with access to an indoor safe waiting area whilst they wait for a minicab to take them home.

Recommendation 2

Transport for London should bring forward proposals for further night-time marshalled licensed taxi ranks in the busiest night-time areas of central London.

Recommendation 3

Transport for London should develop proposals for creating safe waiting areas for licensed private hire vehicles at busy night-time locations in outer London.

Safety

Issues

Some people said they did not feel safe on public transport late at night and concerns about safety generally play a big part in why people don't like to be in town centres late at night. Partly it is the fear of the behaviour of drunk people, but it is also because many areas of London are deserted at night. Although entertainment centres may be busy, even a couple of streets away from the activity could be quiet and poorly lit.

According to some, there are not enough police on the streets and sometimes the police are not well organised.

"No one seems willing or able to do much, if anything, about anti-social behaviour."

"The perception is that it is the 'wild west' and anyone can do what they want. You need a proactive approach. Police need to tackle small things – focus on disorder."

Westminster focus group participants

There is a view that the police concentrate on meeting government targets, which are not always the same as local needs. The response to this concern is the roll-out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams in London, which are intended to provide visible local policing that responds to local needs. The Metropolitan Police Authority is hoping, subject to government grant, to include provision for accelerated roll-out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams to all London Boroughs in its budget for 2006/07.

Focus group participants felt that people are well-managed inside night-time establishments, but not outside. Door security staff shift responsibility onto the police – if there are problems at a venue security simply throw them out and then the club or bar is not responsible for what happens outside in the street.

Ideas

Crime at night tends to happen away from the busy areas. Expanding and developing the night-time economy so that there is more going on in more parts of London may make areas safer by putting more people on the street and having more businesses open.

One of the most effective ways of making London's town centres safer at night is to 'open up' the streets, for example with more activities, restaurants and so on, especially in areas where shops are shuttered at night and shed no light on the pavements. New developments or regeneration schemes should be designed with safety in mind – designing out dark corners, improving lighting and so on.

More uniformed people such as police and wardens should be on the streets and on public transport. CCTV which is in good working order and monitored with good links to police who can respond quickly to problems improves safety. Graham McNally, Kingston Town Centre Manager, told us about the successful use of CCTV at the St George's development in Kingston. He said, 'We put in place a night time radio system, straight through to the CCTV. The CCTV systems are linked so we had a 24 hour system with operators all day and all night, and we have had that for quite some time. It is not a late or recent thing. All of these things link then through to the police. Our radio system, the police are connected to. It is trying to link up so that when there is an issue, it is dealt with effectively. I keep talking about the management, that the planning is one thing, a town centre or city centre evolves and what you plan for five years ago may not be the same in five years' time. Your systems have to evolve and the only thing you can change is management.'

Some councils work closely with the police to make sure that safety issues are thought through when new developments are being planned or where businesses have put in planning applications. For example, Camden holds a 'surgery' on planning applications once a month where matters of concern can be discussed.

Pub and venue managers and staff should be trained in how to deal with anti-social behaviour. Islington described a number of measures, including drug awareness training for licensees, that had contributed to cutting crime and made night spots safer places to be.

Pubwatch schemes such as one that is in place in Hillingdon help landlords keep in touch with each other and swap notes about likely troublemakers.

The Mayor has made a commitment to rolling out CCTV on all London buses by the end of 2005. It will be important to ensure that these are kept in working order.

The media and the fear factor:

Residents and business who took part in the focus groups were unhappy with the way the media concentrates on bad news – on the binge drinking and anti-social behaviour that is part of night-time London. They felt that the positive things about London were ignored and that the effect of this negative reporting is to cause people to be more alarmed and worried.

Planning

The issues

Councils have very little control over what older premises can be used for, or over changes in use. For example, they are unable to intervene to protect residents where a business wants to change use from being a restaurant to a bar. Planning law includes the Use Classes Order, which says that all food, drink and entertainment uses are in one use class. They can move within that class, so what is a restaurant one day can become a bar the next, and there is nothing the council can do about it unless it had imposed a condition on the original planning permission.

And while someone can't turn a restaurant into a night club because they are in different use classes, a night club is in the same use class as a cinema, so a property can go from something that has very little impact on its neighbours, for example a cinema, to something that has a big impact, such as a night club.

Businesses commented that they did not always understand the planning laws or how some councils applied them.

Ideas

Councils have more control over new uses – for example if there is an application for a new restaurant the council can put a condition on the permission that it must stay as a restaurant. It can even say how many tables there should be.

Councils can step in to change the nature of the area, for example through a saturation policy, which effectively says 'we have enough bars here now, let's have a few restaurants as well'. But everyone has to be in tune for this: one authority pointed out that if the business whose application had been turned down on these grounds appealed, a planning inspector was likely to say 'you've got a lot of bars here anyway, what difference will one more make?'

The London Plan says that how councils approach evening and night-time entertainment activities should be covered by their local development plans (which identify particular areas as suitable for housing, industry, retail or other uses, and set out the policies which the authority proposes to apply in deciding whether or not development will be permitted). The Mayor is expected to publish draft supplementary planning guidance on the night-time economy in February 2006. We look forward to examining and responding to the draft.

However evidence to the committee suggested that because unitary development plans are drawn up to be in place for several years and are difficult to change, they may not be the best way to decide what can go where in an area. Camden makes good use of supplementary planning guidance, which allows more flexibility and can focus on particular areas. This may be a more effective mechanism for setting out planning policy for areas which are the focus of the night-time economy

Camden said it had made sure it had strong policies in its Industry Development Plan (which looks at the impact of changing or increasing the numbers of uses – restaurants, bars and so on). This influences planning policy and local people and businesses are consulted about it.

The Government says that local authorities should follow national planning guidance (*Planning Policy Statement 6: Town Centres (PPS6)*). This is about how they should make sure they support the night-time economy of their town centres in ways that do not conflict with the needs of residents.

Councils can make use of Section 106 agreements (an agreement with someone who wants planning permission that they will do something that benefits the community in return for getting planning permission) to provide community benefits within the area such as improved policing, street cleaning, lighting, CCTV and the like. Hackney's evidence noted that the use of S106 agreements should be included in the criteria for the council's Local Development Framework.

The Corporation of London's evidence noted that pre-application discussions help to make sure those looking to run businesses in night-time areas understand the overall nature of the area and the people who live there and take steps to make sure their business causes the minimum possible disturbance.

Recommendation 4

The London Plan should be revised to promote the effective use of planning powers to secure community benefits in new developments relevant to the night-time economy, such as lighting or CCTV.

Licensing

Issues

As this review was being carried out local authorities were getting to grips with the Licensing Act 2003, which is often misunderstood as only being about allowing pubs and bars to stay open for 24 hours a day, when the main aim is to allow more flexibility of opening hours – local authorities will still have the ability to impose conditions or object to opening hours if residents object. It is difficult to predict what impact the implementation of the Licensing Act will have on night-time activity.

However, councils fear that the Act could cause problems for local communities in terms of late-night disorder, nuisance and anti-social behaviour. While the Act gives councils more responsibilities such as taking over licensing from magistrates, some councils are concerned that they will have less control over matters that may affect the quality of life of residents. They are also worried that running the new system will add to their costs.

“When new licensing comes into effect, we will take responsibility for approximately 1400 premises selling alcohol and providing entertainment. This will present challenges in continuing the [successful project to cut crime associated with licensed premises]... The likelihood of extended hours will bring greater demands on council and our partner's services.

Evidence from Islington Council

Ideas

Local government agencies must work together and share information to monitor the impact of the Act and take action if it does prove to be bad for local communities.

Councils might want to set up Licensing Forums as a way of bringing businesses and local people together. The London Chamber of Commerce & Industry supported this idea.

Some business witnesses thought that the licensing changes could be a good thing. At the moment it is typical for people to go from a bar that shuts at 11 o'clock to one that shuts at 1 am bar and then on to a club that closes at 3 am. As a result, 30,000 people are all getting kicked out onto the street at the same time causing problems. Changes to licensing may smooth the coming and going and spread the number of people around at any one time. On the other hand, they may just encourage more people to drink later in more places, increasing the number of drunk people on the streets.

Living in night-time London

Issues

A healthy city needs people to be living in it. London does not want to repeat the mistake of creating a 'doughnut effect' made by some cities in the USA. This was where people moved out of city centres because they became increasingly unattractive places to live. As more people leave, others follow because a city with few people becomes an increasingly less attractive place for residents. The city centre at night then becomes a void where nothing happens, leaving just those who can't afford to move to live in high-crime areas with no night-time economy.

"If you look at town centres that have failed, you will often find that the core of the issue is that people have been zoned out."

Charmaine Young, Regeneration Director, St George plc

The residents who have been most affected by the growth of the night-time economy in London are long established residents in older property close to entertainment venues or living on streets which link entertainment areas to main roads and public transport.

As the night-time economy expands, there are conflicts for councils in supporting it and looking out for the best interests of residents. In some cases, a successful night-time economy has driven the regeneration of an area; new residential accommodation is developed and the new residents then complain about the 'problems' caused by the businesses that were already there.

New developments in attractive locations, such as by the river or in town centres, do not always result in stable communities as flats are often bought by investors or by businesses.

Where new housing does attract families, there will be pressure on other services, for example in making sure there are enough school places.

There can be tensions between bars and residents in newer, more expensive developments. Recently, in Rivington Street in Shoreditch, a sign has been put up by bar owners warning potential residential developers of the area's vibrant bar scene.

Evidence from the Town and Country Planning Association

Ideas

Most witnesses agreed that it was a good thing to have people living in town centres because having residents in an area tends to improve the general behaviour of people, not least because there are more people around to see and discourage bad behaviour.

But living in the heart of an area of bars and restaurants will not suit everyone and for many, particularly in newly developed areas, the choice will be a personal one. However, in those areas where there are already residents such a choice may not exist. Therefore, the implications of developing housing alongside other activities needs to be carefully thought through if existing residents are not to suffer. As pointed out in the evidence from the Town & Country Planning Association, the kind of things that need to be considered are:

- The quality of construction – is soundproofing good enough?
- The layout of the development – are people overlooked or likely to be disturbed by delivery vehicles for example?
- The location of particular activities within an area of night-time activity and the suitability of housing as a neighbour.

Witnesses supported the idea of mixed use developments which provide residents with shops and leisure facilities on their doorstep so they do not need to use their cars; local jobs are created; where affordable housing is included in developments there are major economic benefits for these households; having people around improves everyone's safety; and mixed use enables new and existing communities to integrate leading to wider social and economic benefits.

Developers have to include a proportion of affordable housing in their schemes (the London Plan says 50 per cent). This gives local authorities the opportunity to get affordable family homes in new developments, increasing the mix of residents. Because of the choice-based lettings schemes that operate in all local authorities, families are able to choose if they live in night-time economy areas, although in practice families may accept a home in a noisy area because they do not want to wait longer for one in a quieter area to become available.

Where pubs and clubs are close to residential areas it is even more important to make sure that those places have good levels of door supervisors, that there is CCTV and that public transport and sufficient numbers of licensed taxis are available to get people out of the area when they leave the venues.

There should be a clear vision for an area – what kind of place it should be, what type of shops and restaurants, bars and clubs are wanted. These issues should be developed by local partnerships.

Case study – St George plc

St George explained how it used leases in its mixed developments to help get the balance right between the needs of the evening and night-time economy and the needs of residents. For example, leases may set out how a pub or restaurant deals with bottles to make sure this does not cause noise that disturbs residents. Leases have been used to try and create a more 'European' feel, with opportunities for people to eat outside, but where eating outside is allowed, the lease may control how and when to move tables. The lease may also cover waste collections and general noise levels. The developer stressed how important it is to use the lease to control what happens in a development.

"One of the things that we have done at Putney, where we were adjacent to a residential area on one side, was that we worked with the residents on balcony projections to protect them being overlooked and to put [offices] on the ground floor where it was adjacent to the existing residential neighbourhood rather than the cafes and bars which we kept to the middle of the piazza."

Charmaine Young, St George plc

Managing the town centres

Issues

Managing a modern town centre involves many different organisations including councils and the police, business and voluntary organisations, transport providers and so on.

People said that they thought the night-time economy needs management: licensing, transport and police and all the other services need to be co-ordinated. In most places agencies are all doing their own thing, much of which is uncoordinated, random and often incompatible.

"Someone needs to be in overall charge...but local councils are not always seen as the answer".

Focus group report

Residents feel they can't take on pubs and the big brewers without support. The managers in much of London are transient, often trainees, or temporary staff and not always very good. They feel that if a bar manager shows any concern or sympathy for local people they are moved on and a more hard-nosed replacement is found.

"We have more work to do...to make our town centres as well managed and as well operated at night as they are during the day."

Graham McNally, Town Centre Manager, Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames

Ideas

There are a number of good examples of how town centre areas can be managed well. Town centre managers, employed by local authorities, are thought to be a good way of co-ordinating services and organisations. One of the witnesses who gave evidence was Graham McNally, town centre manager for Kingston-upon-Thames. He described how the role meant that problems could be dealt with quickly, particularly because the manager could bring together residents, business and councillors.

A town centre manager is able to keep the channels of communications open between late night venues, residents, the police and councils to ensure that all parties are aware of any new establishments being planned for the area, changes to opening hours, incidents that occur in the area and levels of crime.

Charmaine Young, regeneration manager for developer St George plc, commented that town centre management was 'critical' from the developer's perspective. However, there is an issue about who pays for the town centre manager. One suggestion is that funds for town centre management could be raised through Section 106 agreements which were explained in the 'planning' section of this report. However, these only apply to new developments, so cannot be used to bring about improvements in existing nightspots where there is no new development.

Another route to managing town centre areas is through Business Improvement Districts. The idea came from the USA and has been taken up in this country and involves a partnership between local authorities and local businesses to provide additional services or improvements to an area.

"You need to know your patch, which is why I think Business Improvement Districts are such an important thing in central London."

Patricia Brown, Chief Executive, Central London Partnership

Business Improvement Districts can help to bring shared aims to an area, as if it were owned by a single landlord as in the example of Marylebone High Street above.

Sometimes there isn't an answer to a conflict that pleases anybody. In these circumstances someone has to make a judgement about what is for the greater good of the local economy and the wider of interests of local people; the local authority should take on this role.

The Central London Partnership² is responsible for five pilot Business Improvement Districts in Piccadilly, Holborn, Bankside, Paddington and Waterloo. The Business Improvement Districts provide additional resources, through a levy on business occupiers, for managing an area focusing on cleaning, greening, safety improvements and marketing of the areas they represent. Such services provide a useful way of managing the effects of the night-time economy, and as such are also a way of targeting effective measures funded by the businesses which stand to gain, such as the hospitality industry.

Recommendation 4

London local authorities should consider appointing town centre managers, or similar, in London's main town centre areas to co-ordinate issues relating to the night-time economy and particularly to be a point of contact for residents of those areas.

Recommendation 5

Building on the success of the Business Improvement District (BID) pilots, the LDA should allocate further funds to pump prime more Business Improvement Districts in areas of importance to the night-time economy, with the aim of new BIDs being set up.

Consultation

Issues

The night-time economy is bound to cause tensions between combinations of those affected by it: residents, night-time businesses, developers, councils, the police, transport operators, voluntary organisations and others.

However, councils report that it is very difficult to reach and involve people from all parts of the community, including business. There is the familiar danger that the people who respond to consultations are not representative.

Consultation is also important before schemes go ahead, and once proposals have been put forward by business.

Ideas

Camden outlined a range of successful methods it had used to consult people. These included:

- focus groups;

² The Central London Partnership brings together public and private sector interests in eight local authorities: Corporation of London, London Boroughs of Camden, Islington, Lambeth and Southwark, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth Borough Council and Westminster City Council.

- public meetings;
- discussion groups;
- residents' group meetings;
- meetings for ethnic minority communities;
- 'vox pop' style videos where people were asked their views in the street at night and during the day;
- adverts in *Time Out* to get responses from people using facilities.

Having a town centre manager or people running a Business Improvement District is also seen as a good way of keeping in touch with local views – “it is just being out, pounding the streets” according to Patricia Brown, chief executive of the Central London Partnership.

Public consultation should be part of the planning process at all possible levels. So, this should mean the public is involved when long term plans such as unitary development plans and local development frameworks are being drawn up as well as over individual applications.

Licensing Forums, mentioned above, are another way of bringing people together to discuss issues.

“The town centre management group that meets is our sounding board... There is a whole raft of different people involved... from the local vicar through to local civic organisations and also the local residents... that is over and above the other forms of consultation that exist.”

Graham McNally, Town Centre Manager, Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames

Noise and disruption

Issues

As with anti-social behaviour, there is a view that noise is getting worse although some evidence suggests that many town centre residents in London are tolerant of late night noise, and indeed many live in the area because they enjoy access to a vibrant night-time economy. However, residents who took part in a focus group for this investigation thought noise was a serious problem that does not receive the attention it deserves.

Many different types of noise affect people – from loud music to noise from air conditioning units to the noise made by people going to or coming from entertainment venues. The night-time economy leads to traffic, which also creates noise. Car alarms, police sirens and 'general rowdiness' all add to the problem. In the early hours residents have to cope with the noise made by the clean-up work, street cleaning and refuse collection.

Ideas

The noisiest of venues could be separated from quieter areas. In its evidence Young's Brewery suggested 'sandwiching' offices or shops between venues and residential areas, or between bars and restaurants.

Residents who took part in the focus groups liked the idea of 24-hour noise information lines which can provide rapid response units to tackle the problem.

Noise should also be considered in designs of new and refurbished buildings, which need to incorporate the latest noise reduction measures.

Keeping the city clean

Issues

With no extra budget local authorities were finding it increasingly difficult to pay for the cleanup. Westminster City Council spends nearly £2 million a year on managing its evening economy. In a recent interview with Brighton Council, it was claimed that it is often still cleaning up the city when the first commuters start out for London. Similarly, Bath City Council says it cannot afford to run a night service so residents and visitors have to arrive in the city faced with the rubbish from the night before.

Residents in town centre areas may have to put up with mess on their doorstep and the extra disruption and disturbance of the cleaning up operation each day.

Cleaning up presents problems for councils, which may get worse if more places stay open later. If the night-time economy is only winding down around 3 am or 4 am, councils have very little time to clear up before the city's day time activity begins.

Ideas

Camden and Westminster were reported to be trying to work out the best times to clean the streets in the early hours of the morning, balancing the need to keep the streets clean and ready for the new day with the disturbance that can be caused by cleansing work.

One suggestion from a resident was that pubs should be responsible for managing the street area outside their building, including keeping it clean.

Recommendation 6

Local authorities should consider using planning agreements on street cleaning for new applications for planning permission. These agreements would place the onus on businesses to be responsible for managing street areas outside their premises to keep them clean and integrate with local authority services such as rubbish collection. They should ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of such agreements.

Money matters

Issues

Many authorities are finding it increasingly costly to manage the evening economy. A 2003 survey of all local authorities in England found 71% of those surveyed, including London boroughs, were very concerned that they did not have the resources needed to administer the new licensing system and manage the evening economy.

Camden estimates the cost for two gangs of three sweepers from 9.30pm to 3.00am in Camden Town is £300,000 a year and for the part of Covent Garden and Tottenham Court Road in Camden £85,000 a year. The broad estimate of annual sales for restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs in 2003 for Camden Town was £84 million.

Business people who took part in one of the focus groups said that because rents in central London were so expensive, the buildings would only be affordable to tenants who run businesses that were highly profitable - which is why there are so many late-night drinking places.

Ideas

Where there are Business Improvement Districts, businesses sometimes contribute to the costs of the late night economy. For an area such as the Heart of London this will be significant, with the business effectively paying "to police themselves". But for less developed areas the income may be less impressive. Kingston reckons that the night-time economy businesses only pay around £29,000 towards the management of the Business Improvement District - not enough to pay for the town centre manager.

Some people who took part in the focus groups thought that pubs and late night establishments that benefit from the late night economy should pay for the additional cleaning, transport and police needed to manage it.

Businesses suggested that incentives might be needed to get landlords to select a broader range of tenants.

Providing open spaces

Issues

The quality of life of the people who live in areas where there is a lively night-time economy will be improved if there is good quality open space for them to enjoy.

New developments and redevelopments should be sensitively planned so as to create liveable environments, with sufficient open space, that people will want to live, work and spend leisure time in.

Where there is open space thought needs to be given to its day-to-day management so that it is appealing to local people and does not become a focus for anti-social behaviour such as drug taking.

Ideas

Planning controls can be used to promote open spaces in new developments, but most planning applications are for individual properties, usually for change of use.

Camden has brought in funding to improve the public open spaces in Camden Town and is employing a community worker to work on the issue.

“Places that welcome people and make them feel comfortable about being in central London are fundamental to the future of the city.”

Patricia Brown, Central London Partnership

Business Improvement Districts can help with managing open spaces, for example by funding street wardens or Police Community Support Officers.

Good quality urban and architectural design can play a big part in adding to the look and feel, safety and uses of a particular night-time area. However, particularly in central areas, schemes will need to be imaginative and backed up by effective partnerships to create and manage them.

Recommendations

1. London's principle museums and galleries should stay open later in the evenings. We recommend that the LDA develop, promote and support an initiative to keep museums and galleries in areas that have a significant night-time economy open until 10pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.
2. Transport for London should bring forward proposals for further night-time marshalled licensed taxi ranks in the busiest night-time areas of central London.
3. Transport for London should develop proposals for creating safe waiting areas for licensed private hire vehicles at busy night-time locations in outer London.
4. The London Plan should be revised to promote the effective use of planning powers to secure community benefits in new developments relevant to the night-time economy, such as lighting or CCTV.
5. London local authorities should consider appointing town centre managers, or similar, in London's main town centre areas to co-ordinate issues relating to the night-time economy and particularly to be a point of contact for residents of those areas.
6. Building on the success of the Business Improvement District (BID) pilots, the LDA should allocate further funds to pump prime more Business Improvement Districts in areas of importance to the night-time economy, with the aim of new BIDs being set up.
7. Local authorities should consider using planning agreements on street cleaning for new applications for planning permission. These agreements would place the onus on businesses to be responsible for managing street areas outside their premises to keep them clean and integrate with local authority services such as rubbish collection. They should ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of such agreements.

Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee Members

Dee Doocey, Chair	Liberal Democrat
Bob Blackman, Deputy Chair	Conservative
Tony Arbour	Conservative
Angie Bray	Conservative
Nicky Gavron	Labour
Sally Hamwee	Liberal Democrat
Peter Hulme Cross	One London
Joanne McCartney	Labour

Terms of reference for the night-time economy investigation

- To consider whether policies to support the night-time economy in some areas of London conflict with the needs of local residents;
- To consider the challenges arising from implementing policies to increase housing in town centres (including above shops and entertainment venues);
- To consider the effectiveness of regeneration and planning policies in the design of town centres in London, particularly in improving the use of space, access and quality of life of Londoners;
- To investigate how potential conflicts over mixed-use developments can be overcome, particularly through design.
- To examine what mechanisms are in place to support an ongoing dialogue between local residents, the voluntary sector, business, housing associations and local authorities. To investigate how engagement and communication between these groups works in practice and what partnerships exist; and,
- To identify and share any best practices in planning and design to assist the management of the night-time economy across London.

Contact:

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Janet.hughes@london.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7983 4423

List of those who provided views and information

The following organisations provided written views and information to the Committee:

Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers	GLA-policy & partnerships
Notting Hill Housing Group	Whitbread
London Borough of Hillingdon	Westminster City Council
Society of London Theatre	London Borough of Lambeth
Young's Brewery	Manchester City Council
ODPM/GOL	Town & Country Planning Association
Leeds City Council	Commonwealth Business Institute London
Corporation of London	Better Bankside
LB Richmond	Central London Partnership
London Chamber of Commerce and Industry	English Partnerships
Kingston Town Centre Management	Transport for London
London Borough of Islington	London Borough of Southwark
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea	Birmingham City Council
London Borough of Camden	London Development Agency
Fullers Brewery	Royal Borough of Kingston
St George plc	London Borough of Hackney
Earls Court & Olympia Group	Soho Housing Association

The following people attended a meeting of the Committee:

Patricia Brown – Chief Executive, Central London Partnership
Pat Cox – Team Manager, Planning & Environment, London Borough of Camden
Graham McNally – Town Centre Manager, Kingston Town Centre Management Limited
Charmaine Young – Regeneration Director, St George plc

The Committee also made three site visits, to Islington, Westminster and Croydon.

Principles of London Assembly scrutiny

An aim for action

An Assembly scrutiny is not an end in itself. It aims for action to achieve improvement.

Independence

An Assembly scrutiny is conducted with objectivity; nothing should be done that could impair the independence of the process.

Holding the Mayor to account

The Assembly rigorously examines all aspects of the Mayor's strategies.

Inclusiveness

An Assembly scrutiny consults widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost.

Constructiveness

The Assembly conducts its scrutinies and investigations in a positive manner, recognising the need to work with stakeholders and the Mayor to achieve improvement.

Value for money

When conducting a scrutiny the Assembly is conscious of the need to spend public money effectively.

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