



MAYOR OF LONDON
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RECOVERY
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Prepared by Six Till Six and MAKE Associates

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INTRODUCTION

This report is the culmination of research commissioned by the GLA with London Councils as part of London's Recovery Programme.

The research has identified projects, ideas and innovative ways of working by local authority licensing and regulation services which have supported, or have the potential to support, the economic and social recovery of London's high streets.

A wide range of stakeholders were engaged, including local authority officers and elected members in licensing and regulatory services, together with their colleagues in planning, regeneration and economic development.

Other key organisations have also made invaluable contributions, such as the Met Police, trade associations, business improvement districts, residents and specialist consultants.

This research will inform a grant funding programme to enable the trial, or expansion across London, of pro-recovery licensing and regulation initiatives that balance the needs of the authorities, residents and businesses.

For more information about this project or the grant funding programme, please contact the 24 Hour London Team at the GLA on night@london.gov.uk



FOREWORD

AMY LAMÉ - LONDON'S NIGHT CZAR

The hospitality, nightlife and culture sectors support one in seven jobs in the capital. Before the pandemic, London at night was booming. The economy was growing faster at night than in the day and there was increasing emphasis on the opportunities that life between 6pm and 6am presented.

However, the hospitality industry lost £80.8bn in sales between March 2020 and April 2021 according to CGA. Nightclubs were also hit very hard, with a quarter of London's clubs closing permanently according to the Night Time Industries Association. Whilst we're in a better place than we were in 2020, London's high streets still face an uncertain future as they start to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

A common thread that connects nightlife, hospitality and cultural businesses is the licensing and regulatory framework they operate within. It ensures a successful, vibrant and safe experience for everyone. Local authority colleagues have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to help businesses implement the ever-changing COVID-19 regulations and get them vital grant funding. This has helped many to survive and reopen as soon as restrictions were lifted.

This project is a celebration of the excellent licensing and regulatory work that takes place throughout London, the UK and globally. I hope it provides inspiration as we all continue to work together to support London's wonderful high streets to recover and thrive once again.





FINDINGS BY THEME

FINDINGS OVERVIEW

The research highlighted many ways that licensing and regulatory teams are providing business-friendly services. They fall into seven themes:

**THEME 1:
INNOVATIVE USE
OF PUBLIC SPACE
AND OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES**

**THEME 2:
HELP FOR
BUSINESSES THAT
ARE APPLYING FOR
A LICENCE**

**THEME 3:
USE OF
ACCREDITATION
AND BEST
PRACTICE
SCHEMES**

**THEME 4:
INCREASING
REGULATOR
AWARENESS OF
POST-COVID
BUSINESS
CHALLENGES**

**THEME 5:
HELPING
BUSINESSES TO
GROW AND
IMPROVE**

**THEME 6:
REDUCING THE
TIME AND COST
BURDENS ON
BUSINESSES**

**THEME 7:
BUSINESS
FRIENDLY POLICIES**

THEME 1. INNOVATIVE USE OF PUBLIC SPACE AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Authorities have used the public realm in imaginative ways to support business. This includes the rapid implementation of the Business and Planning Act 2020 which is now being utilised to enable pavements and other external areas to be used for leisure activities that benefit local businesses and communities.

CITY OF LONDON

During the pandemic, the local authority changed its pavement licensing rules to facilitate year-round outdoor dining. This included allowing the use of patio heaters, which were previously not permitted.

CROYDON COUNCIL

Croydon Council's regeneration and licensing teams worked with Croydon BID to make Surrey Street in Croydon town centre available to pubs seeking additional outside space. The businesses collaborated between themselves to purchase the furniture, while the BID provided security staff. The local authority Culture Team arranged for music and art to be showcased in that space to increase appeal and footfall.

THEME 1. INNOVATIVE USE OF PUBLIC SPACE AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

[Liverpool Without Walls](#) saw the local authority work in partnership with the BID to implement road closures, pop up parks, architecturally designed furniture, a business grant scheme and free trading permits to support the hospitality sector in the city.

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Businesses were permitted to place furniture outside premises before pavement licensing applications were granted, subject to an inspection.

KINGSTON & SUTTON COUNCILS

The local authorities sought to grant two licences for the same outdoor space to two different premises, enabling them to use one outdoor space at different times, providing the opportunity to a greater number of premises.



SPOTLIGHT ON: NORTHCOTE ROAD, WANDSWORTH

Background

The administration in Wandsworth were keen to do whatever it took to keep businesses afloat as they faced significant challenges due to the pandemic. Pavement licensing provided a clear opportunity and [Northcote Road](#), with its summer fair each year, was an ideal pilot location.

Challenges

Initially there were challenges to the road closure from the police, counter terrorism and the council's licensing team. Northcote Road feeds 11 residential streets and so anti-social behaviour had to be prevented. The administration did not want to see the economic collapse of one of their flagship high streets and strongly encouraged all departments to work together to make it a success.

Implementation

On-street security was implemented and businesses were charged proportionally for it based on the number of outdoor tables operated by the venue. Pavement licences were strictly regulated based on customers being seated. No off-sales were allowed, all outdoor tables had to be cleared by 11pm and venues had to clean their own areas. At Wandsworth Council, the Economic Development and Highways teams issue pavement licences which made it easier to drive the initiative forwards.

All venues signed up to a code of conduct and larger venue operators worked collaboratively with smaller independent venues to ensure success, adherence to regulations and best practice sharing. Nobody wanted anything to jeopardise the scheme.

Continuation

The Northcote Road initiative will now go ahead every summer on Saturdays and Sundays from Easter until the end of September. Bus route diversions have been agreed by TfL over the weekend and Wandsworth Council has retained pavement licensing under Highways department control.

Several other roads were targeted as part of the council's pavement licensing scheme and activity was applied along similar principles.



SPOTLIGHT ON: EAGLE BREWERY WHARF, ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

Background

Using the 'Reopening High Streets Safely Fund', the council formed a solution-focused working group to encourage footfall back into the town. The group was chaired by Public Health and involved partners from Emergency Planning, Environmental Health, Highways, Police SNT, Property Services, Green Spaces, Cultural Services, Community Safety and the Business Improvement District. These meetings brought people together who might not previously have engaged on the same issues and virtual meetings helped break down silos. The main commercial centres and open spaces were evaluated to maximise their use. One location evolved into a focused sub-group – [Eagle Brewery Wharf](#).

The opportunity

A prime riverside location on the edge of the town centre with two pubs and resident neighbours, Eagle Brewery Wharf was a well-used space by office workers, families and visitors during the day. In the evening and night time, however, it suffered from street drinking, noise, crime and ASB issues, which a decade of minor interventions had not resolved. As lockdown eased, the Director of Public Health closed the space due to large gatherings. People still gathered nearby and continued to cause problems, showing that closure was not an adequate solution.

Implementation

The Business & Planning Act 2020 enabled pavement licences to be offered to the two pubs. The venues installed outdoor furniture and roped off the area, keeping the Thames River Path as a thoroughfare. The conditions of the licences required table service only, that the outdoor space closed at 10pm and door supervisors to be used until 11pm. Venues were required to provide public access to their toilets. The council provided COVID marshals, dedicated police & environmental enforcement officers. As a result, residents have seen a big improvement.

Continuation

The pavement licences were only seen as a temporary measure, as al fresco drinking and dining was weather dependent and only used when it was profitable for the venues to run. Therefore, the working group evolved its thinking to look to the future use of the space. This gave the impetus for the BID to lead on the redesign of Eagle Brewery Wharf as part of their broader placemaking strategy to raise the quality of the living experience and reveal and elevate the arts and green spaces.

This initiative was presented by Royal Borough of Kingston at the culmination event for this project and can be viewed [here](#).



SPOTLIGHT ON: AL FRESCO DINING POLICY, ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

Background

The government's lockdown policy during the pandemic precipitated the need for outdoor dining in order to keep local hospitality businesses economically viable. In addition, society's openness to eating outdoors increased during the pandemic due to public health benefits.

Challenges

Many of the licensing challenges were reduced by the introduction of the Business & Planning Act 2020, which eliminated a host of approval requirements and was a game-changer for businesses. The main challenge to overcome was ensuring that local residents were not negatively affected, so a 10pm curfew was implemented for all al fresco dining venues. There was also a challenge around the removability of the structures to undertake road and utilities works and how best to remove waste from these areas to keep disruption and noise to a minimum.

Implementation

The implementation was successful largely due to effective, joined up working across council services, including a team of on-street wardens who patrolled the area and who knew who to contact in the council to deal with each kind of eventuality. In total, there were 114 parklet terraces with 450+ licences which received a relatively low number of complaints. The initiative was deemed to be a popular addition to the borough via public opinion garnered through a citizen's panel survey, resulting in a consultation to make these arrangements permanent.

Continuation

Following the success of the initiative, the Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment for RBKC has made it a policy priority to embed a 'café culture' into the borough, which had previously focused on having decluttered streets. The policy sets out how they will regulate outdoor dining into the future in line with the Government's commitment to continue pavement licensing nationally. RBKC now plan to run pavement licensing for seven months of the year during British Summertime (March to September) as part of a wider placemaking strategy to create amenable public spaces where there is a natural demand for people to spend time outdoors.

This initiative was presented by RBKC at the launch event for this project. You can view this [here](#).

THEME 2. HELP FOR BUSINESSES THAT ARE APPLYING FOR A LICENCE

This theme highlights the way in which authorities have developed resources to help businesses understand and navigate licensing procedures. This can reduce time and cost burdens on businesses and improve the prospects of receiving licensing approvals and reducing regulatory issues.

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

The local authority engaged the [Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency](#) to provide free environmental health and licensing start-up advice for food and beverage entrepreneurs and enabled them to test trade in its markets. Comprehensive business classes that range from operations to regulation are provided. developing a pathway for businesses to be self-sustainable.

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

The local authority licensing department has provided a pre-application advice service for years, helping businesses negotiate the process of applying for a licence. It offers an Award for Personal License Holders (APLH) course which generates income to support the local authority to provide non-statutory services, such as this advice and support.

THEME 2. HELP FOR BUSINESSES THAT ARE APPLYING FOR A LICENCE

HARINGEY COUNCIL

The local authority has developed a set of pre-application tools for its different communities in appropriate languages and via community networks, to ensure any barriers to applications due to language are overcome.

WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL

The local authority created a Night Time Economy Business Application Toolkit, with licensing, environmental health, trading standards and planning regulation guidance in one place – [available here](#).

THEME 2. HELP FOR BUSINESSES THAT ARE APPLYING FOR A LICENCE

CORNWALL COUNCIL

The local authority provides an extensive pre-application support service designed alongside the businesses they regulate. This is called the [Sustainable Regulatory Model](#) - more information [available here](#).

TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL

The events team at Tower Hamlets Council are well informed of licensing requirements for events and are therefore able to provide support and guidance to event organisers that require a licence. This ensures that smaller event organisers and grassroots organisations are not deterred from applying due to being daunted by licensing considerations.



SPOTLIGHT ON: BUSINESS SUPPORT, CITY OF LONDON

Background

The Square Mile adapted its ways of working to support business recovery throughout the pandemic and into the future. It understood that political direction and support was really important to delivering business recovery initiatives – in the city, key messages were led by the Lord Mayor himself alongside the Chairs of Policy and Licensing. In accordance with the primary authority scheme, these politicians were also instrumental in lobbying for grant support for SMEs to support licence fees and late night levy fees.

Challenges

The task of helping businesses recover seemed rigid and inflexible initially, but by using imagination and seeking good legal advice, opportunities to innovate emerged. The local authority sought to implement business-friendly working practices wherever possible, for example altering processes and making changes inter-departmentally to facilitate same-day responses to emails and calls.

Implementation

To support business recovery, they developed quick and free pre-application services, virtual webinars, and training, seven days a week including evenings. They co-located Police, Environmental Health, Community Safety, Trading Standards and City Licensing services all on one floor with good collaboration, communication and shared resources. Monthly licensing liaison partnership meetings were held with all responsible parties and roundtables with the licensed trade were held to listen to their needs and maximise collaboration and partnerships.

Continuation

The council launched a new licensing policy in January 2022 with a view to support business recovery. It has no cumulative impact zones and no framework hours, but the policy still enables the local authority to limit licensable activity if it is likely to jeopardise any of the four licensing objectives. It also implemented pro-business pavement licensing that facilitates year-round dining, with no licence fees and fast track renewals. The council also worked closely with counter terrorism colleagues to devise a risk matrix to aid proportionate decision making. Finally, business representatives were also brought onto the latenight levy spending board.

This initiative was presented by City of London at the culmination event for this project. You can view this [here](#).

THEME 3. USE OF ACCREDITATION AND BEST PRACTICE SCHEMES

Schemes ranging from Best Bar None and Purple Flag, to Ask for Angela and Night Safety Charters have been implemented in ways which have assisted the recovery from COVID-19, keeping customers safe and driving footfall to businesses in a sustainable manner.

HARROW COUNCIL

Management of Pubwatch has moved from the local authority to the Harrow BID. The local authority is still a strong supporter, however venues are more engaged in the initiative since it has been taken over by the BID. The [Harrow Best Bar None](#) awards now include a category for venues to vote for each other. Both schemes have built closer working relationships between the venues and statutory partners in the borough.

CITY OF LONDON

The City of London's [Safety Thirst](#) accreditation scheme promotes high operating standards and a safe, pleasant environment in which to socialise. It is available free of charge to all licensed premises in the local authority area.

THEME 3. USE OF ACCREDITATION AND BEST PRACTICE SCHEMES

BROXBOURNE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The "[Safe to Trade](#)" scheme developed by leading environmental health specialists was paid for by the local authority and rolled out across Hertfordshire. This allowed venues to demonstrate and communicate their 'COVID safe' credentials, improving consumer confidence to return into the county's licensed venues.

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

Westminster is launching its [Night Stars](#) initiative, that will see volunteers patrol areas of Westminster alongside St John Ambulance and Metropolitan Police. The local authority is in the process of establishing a new night hub in Soho at which individuals can receive medical attention if required. Further night hubs will be launched across Westminster.



SPOTLIGHT ON: HACKNEY NIGHTS PORTAL, HACKNEY COUNCIL

Background

[Hackney Nights](#) is an holistic programme funded through Hackney's late night levy to create a safer night time economy in the borough. The scheme also supports business in legislative compliance. Hackney Nights is comprised of several strands, including social marketing and campaigns aimed at nightlife businesses and users, violence against women and girls campaigns and training for management and staff. More recently, opportunities for best practice and information exchange and a standards and accreditation programme have been added.

Challenges

Whilst other standards and accreditation schemes exist, council discussions with local operators felt that a bespoke approach was required for Hackney that responded to their unique late night trading requirements. An important challenge has been to ensure the scheme is driven by businesses' needs rather than via a top-down council approach.

Implementation

Hackney has employed a late night levy coordinator to develop and manage Hackney Nights. The online portal is an interactive repository for all Hackney Nights' online training modules, Pubwatch information, licensee events and a place where venues, the council and police can exchange information. The training section contains more than ten modules on topics including alcohol and vulnerability, counter terrorism and violence against women and girls. Staff participation and test results are logged and certificates evidencing completion are accessible via the portal, allowing venues to evidence due diligence.

Continuation

Hackney Nights evolves as a programme, in concert with business need. It is an open-ended platform rather than a prescriptive programme that can be adapted to business requirements. It has sustainability through the late night levy used to fund it.

THEME 4. ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Authorities have been working to improve the knowledge of officers, members and the public about the challenges faced by hospitality and NTE businesses. This was driven by a desire to ensure fair and consistent application of policy, regulation and compliance through more informed decision-making.

CAMDEN COUNCIL

The borough is developing a Community Improvement District, bringing together local residents and businesses to overcome barriers and generate joint solutions. It is hoped that this closer working will enhance understanding between the parties and enable pragmatic and less commercially impactful solutions to be found to common issues.

CITY OF LONDON

The local authority engaged a leading barrister to develop training for elected members that enhanced their understanding of operating a licensed premises. The intention was to educate the members on the impacts of decisions made by committees and the local authority on local businesses.

THEME 4. ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE AND PARTNERSHIPS



INSTITUTE OF LICENSING

During National Licensing Week, the Institute of Licensing encouraged job shadowing between different roles within the licensed trade and regulators. This allows officers and members to really understand the challenges facing NTE and hospitality business and, equally, the restrictions and challenges for regulators.



HILLINGDON COUNCIL

Hillingdon enjoys cross borough partnerships with Ealing and Hounslow. This ensures expertise is shared and that a consistent approach in dealing with issues is applied, for example in relation to shisha bars.



SPOTLIGHT ON: NIGHT TIME ECONOMY GROUP, SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Background

As the fourth largest city in the UK, Sheffield City Council recognised the need to implement an NTE strategy for the city. One of the first steps was to create an NTE group. This ensured a partnership approach could be taken with all the work that relevant partners, services and organisations were doing, such as Best Bar None, Licensing Watch (Pubwatch) and Ask For Angela coming under one workstream.

Challenges

Given that there are so many different workstreams and partners involved in the NTE group, one of the main challenges has been the logistics of being able to work together. This has been tackled in a number of ways. First, the growth in popularity for online working as a result of the pandemic has enabled different teams to work together easily and more frequently. The licensing team has aligned its operating hours with the operating hours of businesses they are most likely to work with, providing an NTE licensing support hotline.

Implementation

The NTE Group and partnership involves the Police, Ambulance and Fire Services, Sheffield Drug and Alcohol/Domestic Abuse Coordination Team (DACT), Street Pastors, city centre ambassadors, licensing, sports grounds, local councillors, two universities and their student unions, Sheffield Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre, police licensing, and a representative from Paul Blomfield MP's office.

The council has produced a Project Outline Document for the wider five year NTE Strategy project and also a project timeline. The first meetings of the project board, project champions group, four theme groups, independents group and NTE group are incorporated in the timeline to ensure they all dovetail with the strategy.

Continuation

The council is looking to create a Five Star Premises Licensing Scheme similar to the food hygiene scheme. To get five stars, businesses will have to be a member of Licensing Watch, be Best Bar None accredited, have a five star food hygiene rating (if they supply food) and meet other core criteria. The NTE Group is also looking to restart the responsible retailer scheme and include counter terrorism in the scheme.

Premises that achieve the five star status will be promoted by the council through social media and other channels.



SPOTLIGHT ON: CITY CENTRE FRAMEWORK, BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Background

Bristol City Council was creating a new City Centre Framework when COVID-19 struck and alongside clear challenges came opportunities to do things differently. The resulting document put the importance of 'culture and the night time economy' on a par with the development principles commonly included such as public realm, movement, residential, retail and sustainability.

Challenges

As the city centre has become more residential, there have been challenges from newer residents to longstanding live music and nightlife venues, most famously the Thekla, the legendary floating music and club space located in Bristol's docks. The challenge for Bristol was to create a policy that both permitted new city centre living but which also protected existing nightlife venues from noise complaints whilst promoting new night time spaces.

Implementation

Bristol City Council worked with stakeholders such as the city's new Night Mayor and the Bristol@Night Panel. The panel advises the city on how to protect and grow the existing music and nightlife ecosystem and ensuring culture, hospitality and night time economy venues were fully represented in the framework and its development principles. The Bristol@Night Panel advises the council not just on planning but licensing and regulatory matters.

Continuation

The City Centre Framework and its development principles are now a material consideration in the planning process. A key aspect of the Framework is the embedding of the 'agent of change' principle. This seeks to protect existing land use including culture and nightlife venues from complaints by incoming developments and owners, that may have previously closed down those venues.

THEME 5. HELPING BUSINESSES TO GROW AND IMPROVE

Authorities are complimenting their regulatory and enforcement activities with initiatives to support operators to improve existing businesses and access new commercial opportunities, with the aim of aiding recovery and expanding their businesses.

WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL

Recognising the increase in food delivery services and the opportunity this presents to late night licensed food premises, the council is conducting a feasibility study to provide a dedicated building for those food and drink couriers facilitating 24 hour deliveries.

HACKNEY COUNCIL

With a rising number of issues caused by food delivery couriers congregating in the high street whilst waiting for food orders to be prepared by late night licensed food premises, the council has given over part of its car park as a designated waiting area. The operators of the food premises are working in collaboration with the council to provide further facilities for drivers.

THEME 5. HELPING BUSINESSES TO GROW AND IMPROVE

HILLINGDON COUNCIL

During the pandemic, Hillingdon Council noticed a rise in home-based alcohol delivery service applications. The licensing team took learnings from processing the initial applications received to refine a tailored approach for the benefit of other applicants, providing a useful steer on operating models and reducing potential issues.

LEWISHAM COUNCIL

As a result of the Startup in London Libraries project, Lewisham Council is launching the first Business and Intellectual Property Centre in South London. It will be a physical hub with market research tools, data and grant information, co-working space, smart boards, IT facilities. It will be leveraged for the night time economy, in particular for trialling ideas, exploring opportunities to diversify and support and advice in navigating the licensing and regulatory landscape.

BROMLEY COUNCIL

Bromley Council has licensed a number of its public squares and parks and is planning for a series of evening markets in Bromley town centre. Working with partners, this is part of a plan to drive footfall back to the town centre and diversify the appeal of the evening economy to families and older people, as well as to offer activities beyond drinking. The markets are intended to give local entrepreneurs and traders and artists a new shop window to develop their businesses.



SPOTLIGHT ON: HOSPITALITY SKILLS BUFFET, HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

Background

Horsham District Council, in partnership with Mole Valley District Council, Surrey County Council, Sussex Chamber of Commerce, Experience West Sussex, Office for Products Safety and Standards (OPSS), Chichester College Group and other local authorities, has developed a comprehensive training programme for current and prospective staff in the hospitality industry. The training aims to improve skills in the industry, address current staff shortages and improve regulatory knowledge amongst managers and staff.

Challenges

The main challenges with this project are funding and the need for strong interdepartmental and partnership working. As the project is broad and the training is offered to businesses and staff for free, it has been quite expensive and has therefore required partner funding. The scope of the project has also meant that a large number of partners have been needed to ensure its successful implementation.

Implementation

The Economic Development Team at the council had spoken to hospitality businesses in the local area who detailed their issues with staff shortages. The team then developed the idea of a "[Hospitality Skills Buffet](#)" that would train staff and prospective hospitality staff. The Economic Development team then worked with the Environmental Health team to add licensing and regulatory training to the project. The Environmental Health team invited OPSS to get involved in a funding and oversight capacity. The teams developed a training programme with the help of Chichester College Group who will deliver the programme and provide certification upon completion of modules. The training will be delivered by tutors, individuals in the industry and regulatory officers both at the college and in venues to ensure the widest reach possible.

Continuation

Soon to launch, OPSS, Horsham District Council, Chichester College Group and other partners are keen to have this training programme replicated and implemented in other local authorities and regions. The partners are willing to support other regions and local authorities in setting up these programmes, and OPSS hope to use Horsham District Council as a case study of best practice.



SPOTLIGHT ON: FORE STREET FOR ALL, ENFIELD COUNCIL

Background

Fore Street For All is one of the projects funded by the Mayor of London's High Streets For All Challenge. This is a "Community First Approach to Creative Enterprise & Cultural Programming" that seeks to rejuvenate Fore Street in Upper Edmonton. The project is led by a partnership including Enfield Council, REACT Community, Artist Hive Studios and architecture studio Fisher Cheng. This approach is multifaceted, involving regeneration of the high street, including public realm improvements, art installations and a programme of cultural events.

Challenges

Enfield Council realised the need for the flexibility demonstrated in its approach to licensing and regulation during the pandemic to continue. The challenge was convincing some within the council that this approach was necessary given the changes caused by the pandemic, as some wished to return back to pre-pandemic ways of working.

Implementation

On 9th December 2021, Fore Street For All hosted its inaugural pilot event "Fore Street Lates". This pilot tested whether a community driven programme of cultural and leisure events could create an exciting night time offer on Fore Street. Fore Street Lates saw businesses on the high street, as well as the Fore Street Living Room Library, stay open later to host cultural events including music, installations and food.

Continuation

Minimising the bureaucracy of regulation can help fuel more innovative practices for councils and businesses alike. Being more flexible and less risk averse in the approach to regulation on the Fore Street For All project has led to strengthening of relationships between the council, community and businesses. This event was popular and successful which will likely lead to it becoming a regular occurrence on Fore Street. The creation of an exciting night time economy on Fore Street not only improves the leisure offer for residents and increases opportunities for businesses, it also seeks to minimise criminal activity and ASB through increased footfall and natural surveillance.

THEME 6. REDUCING THE TIME AND COST BURDENS ON BUSINESSES

Authorities are seeking ways to reduce the cost and time burdens placed on businesses by amending their policies and procedures to allow informal amendments to authorisations, flexibility of fee payment and provision for applications to be made through new technology and streamlined processes.

HOUNSLOW COUNCIL

Hounslow Council is developing an integrated CRM system for its licensing services. All information about licences, applications and contact points will be fully integrated for the first time. As well as allowing online applications and viewing of licence applications, it will allow the licensing team to push key updates to relevant licence holders about events, new legislative requirements or reminders and consultations on policy and fee renewals in an integrated fashion rather than working reactively from multiple manual databases.

NEWHAM COUNCIL

The licensing team at Newham Council has reviewed and adjusted its approach to new applications to reduce time and cost burdens on both the applicant and the authority. When applications are received, the local authority seeks to work with applicants to develop their application, for instance suggesting relevant conditions, rather than automatically dealing with applications through committee hearings.

THEME 6. REDUCING THE TIME AND COST BURDENS ON BUSINESSES

HAVERING COUNCIL

The local authority licensing team has developed an online application system during COVID-19 which also enables online payment of fees at point of application by quoting the application reference number. This will save time for applicants and the local authority compared with the previous system of taking payment by phone.

KINGSTON COUNCIL

As a Google authority, Kingston Council has used Google forms to facilitate online applications. It has also used this technology to enable inspections to be recorded digitally, preserving officer time to support other work.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGE-SHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The council has refreshed its street trading policy to include 'consented zones', which are private spaces, such as car parks, that the premises owner can get consent for multiple traders/operators to use on an ad-hoc basis. More information on the policy is [available here](#).



SPOTLIGHT ON: OPEN MARKETS APP, HACKNEY COUNCIL

Background

Hackney Council has led the development of the Open Markets platform and app on behalf of the Mayor of London with a consortium of local authorities. This allows entrepreneurs to view vacant pitches and make a single application to trade across seven other boroughs, at present. This saves time, reduces red tape, promotes markets and the evening economy and stimulates high street recovery.

Challenges

Currently each London borough has a different process for accepting trader applications which can take several months to process. No licensing facility enables traders to easily move between boroughs. Each trader must register in every borough that they wish to trade in – limiting how and when traders trade. The technical challenges of the project have included ensuring that information about the vacant pitches is consistently updated by boroughs.

Implementation

Hackney has been working with a specialist technology provider to build and implement the bespoke back-end system with the app goes live in summer 2022. The control group of six London boroughs has provided feedback on the system and a testbed to allow for the wider rollout across these and any other interested authorities.

Continuation

The project has been funded by the Mayor's Good Growth Fund. It seeks to be self-funding in the longer term by driving up the use of vacant pitches, which in turn increases authority revenue. KPIs have been set to measure success, including increases in new trader applications, occupied pitches and traders moving between two or more local authorities. The project seeks to reduce application time, improve trader satisfaction and reduce trader rejections.



SPOTLIGHT ON: PLANNING & LICENSING CO-LOCATION, COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL

Background

Coventry City Council underwent an office planning exercise due to reorganisation, which resulted in the co-location of the planning team and licensing team.

Challenges

The move goes some way towards the recommendation contained in the House of Lords Select Committee Review of the Licensing Act 2003 (published in 2017) which suggested the two legislative regimes were merged, albeit the government resisted calls for this in its response. Despite offering an increasingly joined up response to those applicants whose developments require both licensing and planning consents, the two regimes remain separate. There are therefore times when the council can't deliver the perfect integrated approvals.

Implementation

The benefits of colleague interaction through co-location became immediately apparent. Initially, this involved casual conversations between planning and licensing officers about applications arriving with the respective teams. The council has now developed systems where applicants can see both teams for pre-application meetings. Also, if an application arrives in one team only but clearly requires the other team's involvement, they alert colleagues who then inform applicants that they will need to apply for both permissions. Many applicants for licensed venues are not aware when they require both licensing and planning consent.

Continuation

The building is on a long-term lease to the council but, as with all authorities, there is always the possibility of further reorganisation which may result in separate offices for the teams once again. The systems that have been developed will mean that co-working is now embedded in the organisation's 'cultural memory', however, and therefore will not be lost.

THEME 7. BUSINESS FRIENDLY POLICIES

Authorities are amending existing policies and developing new ones that acknowledge the way in which businesses can provide benefits to local communities and facilitate communication and positive relations between stakeholders.

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

Southwark Council has a clear Statement of Licensing Policy that sets out the types of applications they would welcome in different areas. This makes it easier for businesses to gauge their chance of success before applying, saving wasted time and money on applications that are unlikely to be viewed favourably by the local authority.

HAMMER-SMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL

The local authority, like others, has chosen not to renew its Cumulative Impact Policies, previously in place in Fulham and Shepherds Bush. In July 2021, Hammersmith and Fulham Council went through a formal process to consult on the policies and felt that the evidence was not available at the time to continue supporting them.

THEME 7. BUSINESS FRIENDLY POLICIES



ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

The Council is consulting on a draft Street Entertainment Code of Conduct and Policy. The proposed Code of Conduct and Policy will allow the council to better support and regulate street entertainment in the borough generally and specifically target regulation on areas where problems have arisen. There will be a light touch licensing scheme applicable in Greenwich Town Centre which means that street entertainment can take place under licence on two designated pitches, with performers required to apply for a licence to perform and keep to the terms and conditions of the licence.



BRENT COUNCIL

The Kilburn Town Centre management team are working to ensure that the high street has a diverse offer. It has put pub protection policies in place to ensure that pubs remain a key fixture on the high street.



SPOTLIGHT ON: SQUARE MILE FUTURE CITY, CITY OF LONDON

Background

The City of London has 950 licensed venues, 300 of which operate after midnight, plus a number of very late and 24 hour licences like The Steel Yard and Duck & Waffle. Culture, heritage and hospitality are deeply rooted in the City's history and are part of what makes the Square Mile so attractive to visitors. The local authority is also one of the biggest supporters of culture and has developed an over-arching corporate plan with key aims of contributing to a flourishing society, shaping outstanding environments and supporting a thriving economy.

Challenges

Due to the geographic density of the Square Mile, it can be a challenging and complex urban environment in which to balance the varying needs of business owners, office workers, visitors and tourists, plus a very small and well-represented resident population of 7,500.

Implementation

The City of London Recovery Taskforce ran a major consultation which formed the basis of the recommendations on how to support business recovery. Licensing, regulation and 'red tape' was a recurring theme mentioned as being responsible for holding businesses back and limiting recovery. To address the issues surrounding prohibitive policy, they developed the Square Mile Future City Strategy. The licensing team was brought into the 'vibrant city' workstream and was required to report back regularly on how it was adapting its approach to support business recovery.

Continuation

The Square Mile Future City Strategy also involved a five year marketing campaign to enable and animate the City's weekend and night time offer and generally help leisure businesses to thrive. The figures on the return in workforce and footfall are growing. Pre-COVID, half a million people came into the city every day. Latest figures show about 70% of that number are back in terms of workers on the highest days, with retail and recreation around 50%.

This initiative was presented by City of London at the culmination event for this project and can be viewed [here](#).



SPOTLIGHT ON: NOISE AND SOUND STRATEGY, CITY OF LONDON

Background

Due to the urban composition of the Square Mile with its mix of businesses, office spaces, hospitality venues, tourist attractions and residential pockets, they have a unique acoustic environment which houses both the loudest and the quietest locations in London.

Challenges

The challenges of managing this unique mix of needs for the City to do business, support hospitality, entertain visitors and for residents to have a high quality of life and to sleep at night precipitated the need to look at a long-term strategy.

Implementation

The local authority are about halfway into delivering a ten year, award-winning City of London Noise Strategy ([The Right Sound, in the Right place, at the Right time](#)) designed with the Environmental Health department. First, in dealing with unwanted sound they have an effective rapid response noise service which runs 24/7 except on Christmas Day, which has been fundamental in enabling the City both to sleep and do business. In parallel, it also contributes to a very low level of licensing reviews and hearings and generally provides an excellent service.

Continuation

The Soundscape chapter takes an alternative approach and instead of addressing 'unwanted' sound, it talks about 'wanted' sound or more specifically: the right sound, in the right place, at the right time. The local authority has tried to integrate and embed this approach into all other strategies as they recognise that sound can be used as a resource to attract visitors and promote the local economy, but only if it is properly planned. This approach allows Environmental Health staff to balance their duty to prevent noise nuisance but also to engage constructively with creative arts and wider initiatives.

This initiative was presented by City of London at the culmination event for this project and can be viewed [here](#).



SPOTLIGHT ON: 24HR ECONOMY STRATEGY, SYDNEY

Background

In 2013 there were two tragic incidents where two young men were killed in the city's King's Cross nightlife area. The remedy the NSW government took was to introduce 'lock-out laws' which restricted the time that alcohol could be served. The laws had the wider impact of reducing visitor numbers across the city, however, and it painted Sydney as a city with no nightlife. This had a huge impact on the hospitality and culture sectors, together with the wider economy.

Challenges

In addition to the 'lock-out laws', the city was subject to an archaic regulatory framework. Examples of regulations included prohibiting venues having a mirror ball in case it should encourage dancing, which was argued would lead to ASB, restrictions on the number of musicians and instruments that could be on stage at one time, and rules restricting spirits after midnight in any bar or club. The city was dealing with a bizarre framework of regulations.

Implementation

NSW Government began by developing a 24 Hour Economy Strategy focusing on how the city's 32 local councils could work in a coordinated manner. It appointed a 24 Hour Economy Commissioner and set up an advisory group made up of industry, creative institutions, councils and state government all working together. In tandem with the strategy, it set out to reform the regulatory framework. Around 600 legislative amendments were made or removed along with the 'lock-out laws', whilst retaining a strong focus on customer safety.

Continuation

Aligned to its reforms, NSW has legislated to allow councils to designate an area as a Special Entertainment Precinct. This is typically an area that includes entertainment venues amongst a diverse mix of land uses and which gives greater flexibility around noise and opening hours for some venues.

This initiative was presented by NSW at the launch event for this project. You can view this [here](#).

NATIONAL CHANGES NEEDED TO SUPPORT BUSINESS

The research highlighted various ways that national and local government can help businesses to remain viable and recover from the pandemic.

PAVEMENT LICENSING

Repeal section 115E of the Highways Act 1980 and establish a new scheme based on the pavement licence in the Business and Planning Act 2020. Make provision in the new scheme for central tools (e.g. forms) and resources to be available to authorities and applicants. Provide protections for occupiers of premises adjoining or near to areas covered by pavement licences, to prevent them creeping across frontages and/or obstructing access. Food areas covered by pavement licences added to the list of exemptions from a Public Spaces Protection Order contained in section 62 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

CONSISTENCY

Address the inconsistencies that occur between different authorities on the interpretation and implementation of legislation and guidance (e.g. what constitutes a minor variation or whether tables and chairs are permanent structures).

NATIONAL CHANGES NEEDED TO SUPPORT BUSINESS

EXTEND ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM

Retain the GOV.UK online application system and ensure that it is implemented by all authorities. Extend the system to include other areas of licensing (in addition to the Licensing Act 2003).

FLEXIBLE CHANGE OF USE

Provide more flexibility to allow change of use from retail to leisure, facilitating innovation taking place more quickly and with the minimum burden on resources of authorities and businesses.

LOCALLY SET FEES

Allow for licensing fees to be set locally, on a cost recovery basis, to enable more resources to be made available to authorities in connection with the discharge of their licensing responsibilities.



