



## Economic Growth Board

<b>Date</b>	6 March 2024
<b>Report title</b>	Night-Time Economy
<b>Portfolio Lead</b>	Councillor Stephen Simpkins
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<b>Report has been considered by</b>	N/A

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

#### Economic Growth Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the contents of the report and progress to date of WMCA work around Night-Time Economy
- (2) Ask each Local Authority to consider the West Midlands Women's Night Safety Charter and whether it can be supported through their processes.
- (3) Ask all West Midlands Local Authorities to consider that, where appropriate, Agents of Change principles are included within refreshed Local Plans

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report is brought to EGB to inform members of progress on issues and progress against Night-Time Economy priorities in the region.

#### 2. Background

##### Policy Background

- 2.1 Night-Time Economy (NTE), simply defined as economic activity which predominantly occurs between the times of 18:00-06:00, is an under-represented but vital area of economic activity. Nationally, 26.7% of workers consistently work at night (ONS, 2023)

with an estimated national value of £70bn to the UK economy (NTIA 2022) The WM has a higher than national average NTE workforce with 29% of WM workers employed in the NTE and circa 100k residents are employed in night-time cultural and leisure activities (ONS, 2023).

2.2 The Office for National Statistics split the NTE into four clusters:

- (1) night-time cultural and leisure activities
- (2) activities which support night-time cultural and leisure activities
- (3) 24-hour health and personal social services
- (4) activities which support wider social and economic activities

2.3 NTE is a comparatively new area of economic development policy activity, both internationally and nationally. The Greater London Authority appointed a NTE Tsar, Amy Lamé in 2016, Greater Manchester Combined Authority appointed Sacha Lord as their NTE Advisor in 2018 and Bristol City Council appointed Carly Heath in 2019. A number of other regions (including West Yorkshire, Edinburgh and Liverpool) are in the process of appointing NTE functions.

2.4 Activity in the West Midlands, in line with GMCA and Bristol, focuses on night-time cultural and leisure activities and supporting activities. The WMCA appointed a Senior Policy Officer for Night-Time Economy who commenced in role February 2023. In addition, an independent NTE Advisor for the West Midlands, restaurateur Alex Claridge, was appointed to role in May 2023.

### **Activity to Date**

2.5 The focus of the WMCA NTE activity has been on the following four areas:

NTE Governance  
Data  
Night Safety  
NTE Heritage

### **NTE Governance**

2.6 The key priority has been increasing understanding of NTE amongst our constituent LAs and improving NTE governance across the region. Given the inter-disciplinary nature of NTE policy and governance, crossing multiple departments, areas of statutory responsibility and agencies, more efficient working practices and understanding are vital to successful the development of NTE clusters to the benefit of local and regional economies.

2.7 Positive work by constituent members include:

- Two local authorities (Coventry, Wolverhampton) are set to develop their own NTE Strategies
- Three local authorities (Coventry, Solihull, Wolverhampton) have established internal NTE working groups (with expectation of two more in Q1 24/25).
- Two local authorities/Business Improvement Districts (Coventry & Solihull) have established NTE business forums (with two more expected Q1 24/25).

- Three local authorities (Birmingham, Dudley and Coventry) have adopted Agents of Change principles in their (draft) Local Plans. The Agents of Change principle is a core tenet of NTE governance, and all constituent members are encouraged to include Agents of Change principles in their refreshed Local Plans.

2.8 The 'Agent of Change principle' encapsulates the position that a person or business (i.e. the agent) introducing a new land use is responsible for managing the impact of that change. For example, if a developer builds flats next to an existing music venue, it is the developer's responsibility to mitigate any potential noise issues.

#### NTE Data

2.9 The standard of NTE data both regionally and nationally is poor, which makes meaningful analysis of the economic impact of the NTE challenging. Strengthening this is a key priority to drive funding applications and political lobbying for NTE as well as enabling accurate analysis of regional and local NTE clusters.

2.10 The WMCA led on a successful application to HMT's Economic Data Innovation Fund (EDIF) landing £300,000 for an NTE data pilot. WMCA are the lead in partnership with DLUHC, ONS & GMCA. The pilot aims to develop new SIC codes for NTE activity and develop AI-driven modelling for NTE placemaking and has a scheduled end date of March 2025. A steering group is being established as part of the project which combined with engagement with WISE will enable Local Authority input.

2.11 An audit of regional NTE data has been completed and a regional NTE Economic Impact Study commissioned, which will include breakdowns by each Local Authority area.

#### NTE Heritage Preservation

2.12 Prompted by the Crooked House incident the WMCA has engaged in work around preservation of heritage pubs in the region. A report on approaches to pub preservation was produced as well as two roundtables held.

2.13 In October, the WMCA launched a List Your Local campaign in conjunction with CAMRA, encouraging members of the public to highlight their local pubs which they felt required more protection, with nine pubs submitted for statutory listings so far. Two local authorities have adopted preservation policies in their draft Local Plans.

2.14 A regional Guide to the Planning System for Grassroots Music Venues in collaboration with Music Venues Trust is due to be published March 2024. This will be done in consultation with local authority planning departments.

#### NTE Safety

2.15 A safe night-time environment (and perceptions of) is a key factor in any successful NTE cluster. The WMCA launched a West Midlands Women's Night Safety Charter (WNSC) in December. This is a voluntary scheme for businesses where they commit to working towards implementing seven principles to increase the safety of female staff and customers and is supported with a toolkit made available to those who sign up. To date, 84 businesses have signed the charter (for comparison the Greater London Authority WNSC established in 2018 and covering all thirty-two boroughs has just under twelve hundred signatories).

- 2.16 Local Authorities are being encouraged to sign the charter and to share it through their business networks.
- 2.17 A small amount of funding has been obtained for an initial wave of funding to NTE focused BIDs (Colmore, Coventry, Solihull, Southside, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton) to provide safety materials to NTE businesses in their area.
- 2.18 A NTE mental health pilot with funded wellbeing champion training for businesses is taking place in March.

### **NTE Priorities for the next six months**

- 2.19 There will be a continued focus on three of the four main strands: NTE Governance, Data and, Safety. In addition, work with TfWM to improve night-time public transport will be accelerated. Alongside the existing local authority officers group, we will bring together a regional private-sector NTE steering group that will help guide work from a business perspective.

## **3. Strategic Aims and Objectives**

- 3.1 The report aligns with the following strands of the WMCA's Strategic Aims and Objectives
- Promote inclusive economic growth in every corner of the region
  - Ensure everyone has the opportunity to benefit
  - Develop our organisation and our role as a good regional partner.
- 3.2 In addition the NTE is a key aspect of the region's foundational economy and plays an important role in the development of places attractive to both residents and businesses.

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Should there be any future investment then that would need to follow the WMCA governance routes to ensure alignment with strategic direction and represent value for money.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **6. Single Assurance Framework Implications**

- 6.1 There are no Single Assurance Framework implications.

## **7. Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 There are potential implications with respect to gender (women), age (young people) and sexual orientation (LGBTQ+) who are significant participants in the night time economy especially with regards to the social, cultural, employment and safety opportunities or issues. To understand the extent of the impact, it is recommended that each local authority carry out a Health and Equity Impact Assessment or similar.

## **8. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 8.1 The work on the Night-Time Economy (NTE) is part of the work around improving our understanding of the foundational, everyday economy in the West Midlands. This has a direct impact on transforming our knowledge in the inclusive economy fundamental.
- 8.2 Building a vibrant NTE is essential for the wider regeneration of our high streets, in line with the affordable and safe places fundamental.

## **9. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

- 9.1 This report applies to the WMCA 7 Met geography.

## **10. Other Implications**

- 10.1 N/A

## **11. Schedule of Background Papers**

- 11.1 N/A