

Local alcohol
partnerships

London Assembly Economy Committee:

Towards a 24-hour city – London’s culture and night time economy

**Submission from the Portman Group on behalf of
the Local Alcohol Partnerships Group**

Introduction

The Portman Group is the responsibility body for UK alcohol producers. We regulate the promotion and packaging of alcoholic drinks sold or marketed in the UK; challenge and encourage the industry to market its products responsibly; and lead on best practice in alcohol corporate social responsibility.

Alcohol policy has been a high priority for successive Governments in recent years. National trends are encouraging. Over the last decade we have seen:

- Binge drinking fall by 14%¹
- Under 18s hospital admissions decline by 46%²
- The number of children aged 11-15 years drinking alcohol decline by 38%³
- Alcohol related violent crime fall by 36%⁴
- Drink driving related accidents decrease by 47%⁵

Nevertheless, there is still much more that can be done to reduce alcohol harms in local communities that are out of kilter with these national trends. Different parts of the country have different challenges; London, for example, in common with other large cities, experiences high levels of alcohol related crime. A Public Health England report from 2012-13 found that London experienced 9 alcohol related crimes per 1,000 people compared to an average of 5 crimes per 1,000 people in other regions of England.

¹ ONS

² PHE

³ NHS Digital

⁴ ONS

⁵ DfT

However, the capital has seen a 45% decline in alcohol specific hospital admissions for under 18s over the last decade, and has 40% less admissions (22 per 100,000) than the England average (37 per 100,000)⁶.

The Portman Group facilitates the **Local Alcohol Partnerships Group (LAPG)**, which enables collaboration between a range of industry partnership schemes to maximise their impact on reducing alcohol related harm in local communities and diversifying the night time economy. These include Pubwatch, Best Bar None (BBN), Drinkaware Crew, Purple Flag and Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAP), which work alongside Street Pastors and are also often supported by Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). The schemes complement each other, and can be integrated into existing local authority partnership structures to create a valuable toolkit to tackle alcohol specific-issues and help reduce the burden on local emergency services. The Portman Group works with the schemes by helping them to coordinate and target their actions and provides a point of contact for local partners looking for support to tackle alcohol related issues in their area. In addition to the schemes, the drinks industry also operates national ID policies such as Challenge 21 and Challenge 25, and the Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS), which specifically tackle underage drinking and prevent underage sales.

One of our key objectives is to tackle vulnerability in the night-time economy and ensure the safe movement of people in our towns and city centres. We work with both national and local partners to promote and improve communications between venues, door-staff, street pastors, street marshals, taxi marshals, police and local authorities, and drive up standards of management in venues and public spaces, to achieve safe, vibrant and thriving night-time economies, taking into account the need for differing approaches and needs in different locations.

The night-time economy provides employment across the whole of London. There are 50,000 employees working in pubs and clubs in the capital, with a further 114,000 working in licensed restaurants⁷. British pubs are hugely popular with visitors from abroad – over 19 million in bound tourists visited London last year, over half of whom visited a pub on at least one occasion during their stay⁸. Live music is also extremely important to London's nightlife. Attendance at live music events in the UK rose by 12% during 2016 to 30.9 million, generating £4 billion for the economy. Music tourism also supports 47,445 full time jobs in the UK during 2016.

LAPG has been working closely with Safer London and the Metropolitan Police Business Crime Hub since 2015 to promote the schemes and industry best practice, and held a joint best practice seminar last year which was very well attended by police, local authorities and businesses from across London.

LAPG is also committed to providing support for the Home Office Local Alcohol Action Areas (LAAAs), which were announced in January this year. This includes the seven London LAAAs – Camden, Haringey, Islington, Merton, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster. We have written to these areas, offering assistance from the Group (details of our offer to LAAAs is enclosed at Annex 1).

⁶ LAPE

⁷ Nomis part of ONS

⁸ Visit Britain

We have produced the enclosed profiles for the London LAAAs (Annex 2), which cover key statistics and trends for the areas, and which of the Local Alcohol Partnership schemes are in operation.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the London Assembly Economy Committee investigation into London's night-time economy. Our observations on the key questions raised by the Committee are as follows. **We would also be very happy to provide oral evidence to the Committee.**

Q1. What should a diverse culture and NTE look like, and are there any particular lessons to be drawn from examples around the UK and internationally to better shape the London offer?

Encouraging a Thriving and Diverse Night-Time Economy

The Local Alcohol Partnerships Group works to reduce alcohol-related harm in towns and cities across the UK, in order to assist the growth of thriving and diverse night-time economies. On behalf of the Group, the Portman Group recently commissioned Britain Thinks to produce a report on *Encouraging a Thriving and Diverse Night-Time Economy*, which identifies the building blocks of a successful night-time economy, ie. safe and clean town and city centres, which are attractive, inclusive and “buzzing” with choice across a diverse range of leisure activities. For the purposes of the research, focus groups were held in Nottingham and Exeter, with representatives from the local community and public sector stakeholders, including the council and the police.

The Report is enclosed for the interest of the Committee (Annex 3). The main findings are summarised below:

Perceptions:

Despite local interventions resulting in improvements in safety, consumer perceptions are often out of step with the reality, with local residents more likely to believe their town or city centre is unsafe at night.

There has been a shift from clubbing to a late night pub culture which is perceived to have led to an increase in rowdiness in town and city centres. The night-time economy can also be perceived as being centred on drinking or on specific groups such as students, perceived as reducing inclusivity for families and teenagers in particular. The reality is, that in many areas, leisure activities such as cinemas and bowling are being brought back into town centres, as part of regeneration and diversification projects.

Benefits and Challenges of a Thriving Night-Time Economy:

The Report highlights that the night-time economy can be an important driver for growth, providing local employment and leisure choice. Benefits include:

- A boost to the local economy;
- making areas more attractive and exciting places to live;

- strengthening communities within towns by providing social opportunities;
- attracting young people to the area, making it more dynamic.

At national level, the night-time economy is estimated to be worth approximately £66 billion a year to the UK economy and provides jobs for 1.3 million people. However, it is recognised that there can also be challenges, which can be more visible to the general public, for example:

- incidents of violence and disorder;
- challenges relating to the transport infrastructure to ensure customers can get home safely after a night out;
- dark, dirty, empty streets late at night.

What does “good” look like?

The Report identifies four key steps to creating a successful night-time economy with atmosphere and “buzz” (Figure 1 below):

Step One: Create a safe, clean environment

Step Two: Create an attractive environment

Step Three: Attract a diverse crowd

Step Four: Make it a unique and exciting offer

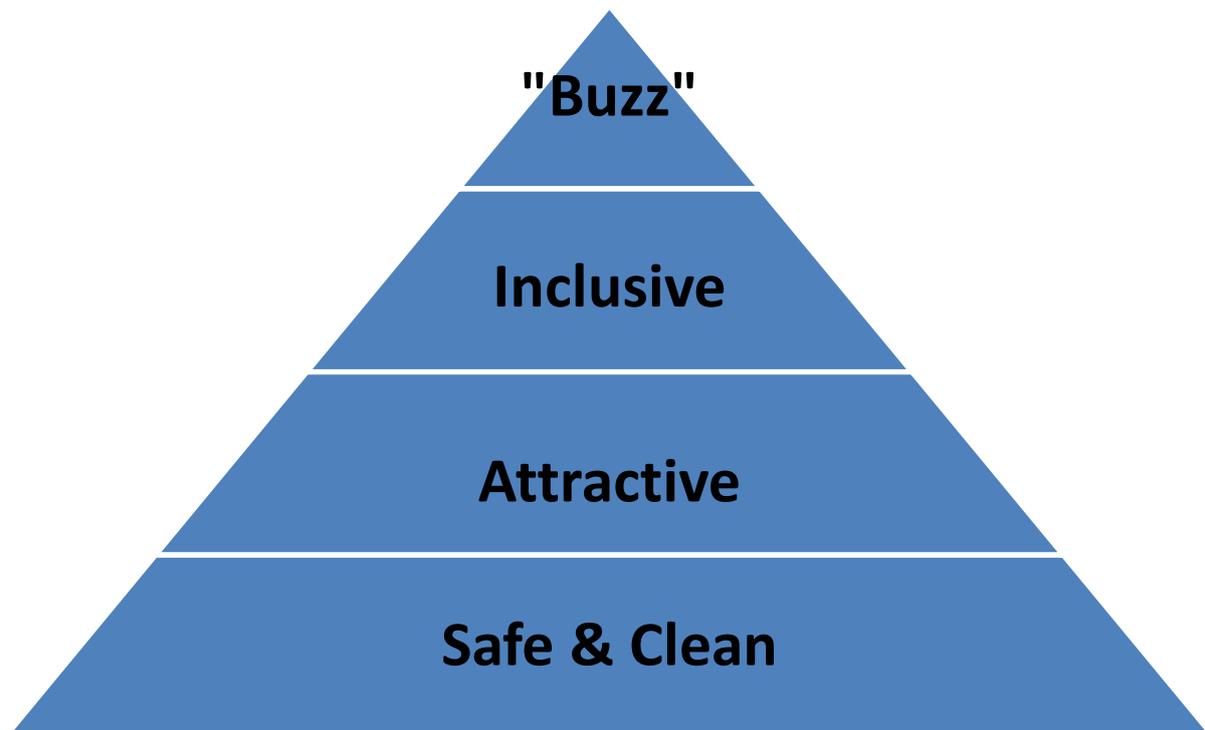


Figure 1: “Pyramid of Buzz”, *Encouraging a Thriving and Diverse Night-Time Economy - 2017* (Britain Thinks)

The Report includes a Toolkit to assist local areas to hold their own focus group discussions with local residents and public sector stakeholders to gain insights about how their local night-time economy is perceived.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with two or three London Boroughs to test the Toolkit and identify any potential solutions to alcohol related issues.

The Importance of Local Partnership Working and Best Practice Examples

The Britain Thinks Report also highlights the importance of strong partnerships in the management of the night-time economy. Where there are issues relating to the misuse of alcohol, these are best resolved by local, targeted action. The Local Alcohol Partnership schemes make an important contribution to supporting local communities, and are important tools in the pro-active management of the night-time economy (Figure 2 below). Between them, they can tackle issues of disorder and anti-social behaviour (Pubwatch), drive up management standards in licensed premises (Best Bar None, Drinkaware Crew), guard against under-age sales (Proof of Age Standard Scheme and Community Alcohol Partnerships) and help manage the public space so that its local character and assets can be showcased to maximum benefit (Purple Flag and Street Pastors).

Issue	Pubwatch	BBN	CAP	PASS	Purple Flag	Street Pastors	BIDs
Under 18s: e.g. underage sales, anti-social behaviour	√	√	√	√			
Licensed premises: e.g. liaison, management standards, collective action against individuals	√	√		√	√		
Town city/centre: e.g. management of public spaces, special events, infrastructure					√	√	√

Figure 2: *Local Alcohol Partnerships: How the Industry Can Support Local Areas in Creating Safer, Healthier High Streets* (Portman Group)

The schemes already operate in a number of locations across London (details enclosed), but there is scope to roll them out further in the London Boroughs where they can provide solutions to local issues as appropriate.

Any areas wishing to discuss this further are very welcome to contact the Local Partnerships Director at the Portman Group for an informal discussion on how LAPG may be able to assist.

The schemes work well together and are instrumental in ensuring good communication links between all partners and agencies working to ensure the safe movement of people in the night-time economy, including venue managers and bar staff, SIA registered door staff, and street/taxi marshals.

Case studies on the successful management of the night-time economy in Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Glasgow and Nottingham are enclosed for the interest of the Committee (Annex 4).

The Local Alcohol Partnership schemes can also help to tackle issues of vulnerability in the night-time economy, ensuring that vulnerable persons are identified and looked after by those working in licensed premises or in the public space. The Portman Group recently commissioned MAKE Associates to carry out research into Safe Spaces operating in local night-time economies, identify the number and type of schemes across the UK and review the impact they can have in preventing crime and injury as well as diverting users away from Accident and Emergency Departments. The research is due to be published shortly and will be sent to the Committee for further information.

A very good example of a successful Safe Space is the Help Point in Swansea. Some of the key findings of the evaluation of the Swansea Help Point are summarised below:

- Over a 12 month period; 1,560 people attended the Help-Point service for assessment; with the highest number of referrals (25%) from the police;
- 61 per-cent of referrals to the Help Point were classed as 'vulnerable'; with accidents, violence and acute alcohol intoxication cited as main reasons for referral;
- 74 per-cent of individuals were discharged following assessment and treatment at the Help point service; 12% were transferred to the local Emergency Department and 1% referred to the police;
- The estimated costs of delivering the Help Point service were £260,048; of which the main cost drivers were the resources consumed by the attendees using the service (£111,153) and the annual running costs of the service (£148,895). When compared to the costs of no service (which assumed that 80% of people who attended Help Point would have attended the local Emergency Department); the potential costs that could be offset by the Help Point over 12 months compared to no service was estimated to be £655,360 or £420 per person attending.
- The Help Point service was seen as a successful model of partnership working between key agencies in helping to make Swansea City Centre night time environment safer for all patrons.

The full evaluation report for the Swansea Help Point is enclosed for the further interest of the Committee (Annex 5). Four additional case studies of safe space schemes are also enclosed for the interest of the Committee (Annex 6). These focus on the safe spaces operating in Clapham, Chelmsford, Exeter, and Hereford.

Q2. How can the Mayor best support London boroughs to develop a diverse and sustainable local cultural and NTE offer?

One of the key challenges for London is the close proximity of residential areas to licensed premises and late-night venues. It is important to ensure a balance between the rights of businesses operating in the night time economy, and the concerns of residents. This is not just an issue for high profile, central London venues such as Fabric. The increasing development of residential property in town centres across London, particularly in some of the outer London Boroughs with thriving night-time economies, such as Kingston, Havering and Croydon, is giving rise to similar issues. It is important that the support of the Mayor and the Night Czar extends to these more outlying areas as well as central London.

In our experience of working with local areas, we have found that pride in the local community, coupled with a desire on the part of the local authority or a Business Improvement District (BID) to make improvements for the benefit of all those who live and work there, is usually a key driver for areas to build partnerships which can help them realise their vision for their particular area.

The promotion of civic pride, community and inclusivity across London Boroughs is crucial so that they are able to celebrate their individual “unique selling points” (“USPs”) within London as a whole. Introducing a BID can be an excellent starting point for regeneration projects and also help to kick-start a culture of wider partnership, if it does not already exist, between public sector stakeholders and local businesses which pay a percentage of their business rates to the BID.

In addition to BIDs, a number of the Local Alcohol Partnership schemes highlighted above can also be helpful in instilling a sense of community pride and place. Pubwatches, for example, are voluntary organisations, reliant on local licensees coming together to tackle anti-social behaviour, crime and security issues in their venues. Local Pubwatches are supported by the National Pubwatch Committee network of Regional Representatives, also volunteers. Similarly, Street Pastors are volunteers from local churches, who are passionate about their communities.

The Purple Flag programme, run by the Association of Town and City Management, can also help harness pride in the local area. Purple Flag status means that a town or city centre has met or surpassed rigorous standards of excellence in managing the evening and night time economy. In London, Beckenham, Kingston, Leicester Square and Angel have all achieved Purple Flag, so there is experience and good practice available that could be shared across other London Boroughs.

There are a range of mechanisms available for doing this, for example through the Safer London Business Crime Partnership, the Metropolitan Police Business Crime Hub, or the London Night-Time Commission. The Local Alcohol Partnerships Group works with all of these bodies, and will continue to support them.

A clear expression of support for local partnership working and proven solutions and initiatives from the Mayor and MOPAC would send out a very positive message to those areas that may be struggling to find a starting point to develop initiatives in their areas.

Q3. Is a continuing overview of London's culture and NTE needed, and how might that best be delivered?

We agree that it is important for the capital city to lead by example in its support of cultural activity and the night-time economy, recognising the benefit and contribution that it can make to the local economy overall and the wellbeing of local communities.

In our view, the Mayor's London Night-Time Commission is well placed to work closely with London Boroughs in order to ensure that London's cultural values and its night-time economies continue to thrive and be of economic benefit to local communities. Local night-time economies need to be increasingly well-managed, in order to ensure that they are safe and inclusive.

We suggest that the London Night-Time Commission could champion and celebrate success stories which demonstrate good practice and growth in cultural activity and the night-time economy, sharing learnings and innovation across the London Boroughs. The Mayor could also consider support for Safe Space initiatives in London for night-time economy hotspots as appropriate, encouraging local NHS Trusts and Public Health partners to engage in local partnerships where the establishment of a Safe Space is under consideration.

Q4. How can we ensure that an extended culture and NTE is inclusive to all Londoners?

While this is outside our area of expertise, we would suggest that this objective is best achieved by ensuring a range of opportunities for cultural events and social interaction in London Boroughs, which meet the needs and individual character of local communities across all age groups and ethnicity. For example, night markets, live music and family oriented events have proved successful elsewhere (see the National Market Traders Association - <https://www.nmtf.co.uk/> and the Association of Town and City Centre Management – <https://www.atcm.org/>). Some cities have also developed cultural "Quarters", highlighting the specific history or activity associated with that particular part of town. Close to home, both Belfast and Dublin have gone down this route. Listening to and working with community leaders to celebrate cultural diversity is also essential to ensure the needs of the local community are being met.

Closing Comments

The Portman Group and the Local Alcohol Partnerships Group look forward to supporting the work of the London Assembly Economy Committee going forward. If we can be of any further assistance, or provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. We continue to work with all our London partners to ensure that London is a successful, world leading night-time economy and cultural showcase for the UK.

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