

## Briefing on York's Evening and Night-Time Economy for Scrutiny Management Committee

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### Overview

- The evening and night time economy of York supports many businesses and jobs in the city centre. This includes 2 cinemas, 2 theatres, 7 ghost walks, 103 bars and pubs, 4 nightclubs, 101 (licensed) restaurants and 28 licensed cafes. This evening and night time attracts thousands of customers to the city centre (including visitors and local residents).
- Footfall cameras indicate that many (around 14,000) people visit the city centre between 6pm and 5am each week. This is about 10% of all weekly footfall in the city centre, with the bulk of night-time activity occurring on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Since the Licensing Act came into effect in 2005, we have seen a growing number of premises that supply alcohol in the city (despite the demise of the traditional off-licence). Some of this growth is welcome and promotes the vibrancy of the city centre economy. This includes new bars and restaurants – and new city centre retail outlets that sell alcohol (Budgens, Tesco Express, Sainsburys etc)
- However, the evening and night time economy also presents a number of challenges to manage. This includes:
  - A peak in violent crime and antisocial behaviour in the evening (between 6pm and 11pm and between 11pm and 6am), particularly on Saturdays.
  - The peak time for A&E at York Hospital is between midnight and 2am.
  - A number of city centre hotels have poor visitor ratings due to noise and antisocial behaviour from other residents.
  - A rise in the perception of a “drunken job” culture due to the number of irresponsible promotions from licensed premises. This is an issue mid-week in term times due to student promotions as well as at weekends. This impacts negatively

upon the footfall from other markets, including families and others not wanting to encounter this atmosphere.

- Anti- social behaviour relating to “pre-loading”; there are a number of people who have been drinking before entering the city-centre. There is feedback from bus and taxi drivers which has indicated that a number of people are being transported into the city who have been pre-loading.

### **Current approach**

- Positively and proactively managing the late night economy is a key issue for the City Council and a priority in the Council Plan Refresh that was approved by Cabinet in June. Several departments including the Policy Team, Economic Development Unit and Safer York are currently developing a vision of what the ideal York evening and night time economy looks like.

Part of our strategy must reflect the potential market for tourism provided by the early evening and night time economy. The emerging tourism strategy for York, led by the Council and Visit York, has identified the evening economy as an important issue to address in order to help deliver the ambition of doubling the value of tourism in York in ten years. Among other objectives, this increase in value can only be achieved by seeking to increase the length of stay of visitors, by attracting more people to stay overnight, including overseas and business visitors, and/or increasing the value of spend by each visitor (i.e. increasing the quality of offer and thus the value of that offer). The promotion of a quality and diverse evening offer will be necessary to encourage this – and will be enjoyed by York residents as well.

- Alongside this tourism activity, the Safer York Partnership are working with partners across the city to address the problems related to the night time economy through the Alcohol, Violence and Night Time Economy (AVANTE) group. Membership of this group includes council officers, environmental protection, the Police and representatives from public health and A&E. This group meets monthly to address all issues of crime and anti-social behaviour which are alcohol related. This includes those issues

which are linked to the night time. The group works to the National Intelligence Model, tackling issues related to victim, offender and location and delivers a multi-agency problem solving approach to addressing those issues.

- On licensing, we:
  - Hold regular enforcement meetings with responsible authorities (police, fire, trading standards, Environmental Protection and planning) where officers share intelligence and plan targeted enforcement work.
  - Have a statement of licensing policy which is reviewed regularly. The latest version is on [http://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/662/statement\\_of\\_licensing\\_policy\\_2011](http://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/662/statement_of_licensing_policy_2011).
- Prevention and enforcement –Safer York Partnership is re-visiting the concept of an alcohol restriction zone (formerly known as DPPO) for the area within the bar walls to provide police with the power to seize alcohol when it is linked to anti-social behaviour and crime. Particular issues which occur on a Saturday night are being addressed through Operation Erase, a joint approach between North Yorkshire Police and the British Transport Police. Other initiatives include a code of conduct, tackling problems of alcohol loading and working with the Emergency Department in York Hospital to look at tackling irresponsible drinking.
- Retailers also have a role to ensure that the evening and night time economy is safe and successful. A number of licensed premises in the city have established a Pubwatch Group, the police and licensing authority are represented at the meeting.
- The City Team is also currently working to develop a vision for the city centre of the future and of course includes the future of retailing – which it is recognised needs to develop and change to meet the challenge of the internet and multi-channel shopping.

## Recommendations for Scrutiny

- Managing the evening and late night economy is a cross cutting issue and an important element of the Council Plan. We recommend that, if scrutiny are minded to consider this as a topic, they should create a cross cutting committee.
- There are a number of areas which scrutiny could focus their attention on in a review. Below are a number of suggested topics to consider.
  - To develop a vision of what the evening and night time economy in York should look like in five years time.
  - To investigate opportunities to co-ordinate the effective development of the night time economy, to ensure that York's residents, businesses and visitors get maximum value from York's night time economy.
  - To examine the potential for encouraging businesses which are not reliant upon the sale of alcohol as their main attraction
  - To examine ways of reducing the fear of crime
  - To examine ways of enhancing access to and from the City centre at night time