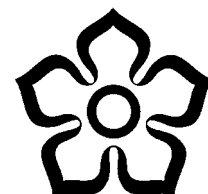


Final Report of Leicester's Night-Time Economy Review Group

A Sub-Group of the Council's Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny
Committee

July 2005



Leicester
City Council

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¹ Copies of the full report detailing the written evidence submitted are available by contacting the Council's Committee Services on 252 7110

Acknowledgments

Panel Chair:

Councillor Roman Scuplak (conservative)

Panel members:

Councillor Farmer (Liberal Democrat – Spokesperson)

Councillor Thomas (Labour – Spokesperson)

Councillors Shelton, Wann, Almey, Fitch

Others:

Councillors Grant, Allen, Smith, Henry, Corral, Kitterick, Waddington

Scrutiny Policy Officers:

Roy Roberts – Policy Officer

Beverley Hughes – Policy Assistant

Committee Services:

Mathews Reeves

Francis Connelly

The panel would like to thank all the organisations, individuals and Council officers who provided evidence to the enquiry. The panel also thanks those members of the public who have showed an interest in the investigation and who attended many of the public meetings held.

For further information contact:

Roy Roberts

Telephone 252 6778

Email: Roy.roberts@leicester.gov.uk

Chair's Forward

Having taken over the chair of the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Committee last October I was pleased to be leading the first of such reviews by the Council and fascinated by the thought that it would be looking at the night economy of the city. My days of venturing regularly in to bars, clubs and leisure establishments may be behind me but as a Councillor I welcomed the opportunity to look at this aspect of the city's life on which I have had my own reservations, particularly with regard to its vibrancy and diverse nature and the effect this can have upon the economy of the city.

Throughout the review I heard of many examples of how a rich and energetic nightlife can be of benefit to a city as well as many of the drawbacks, such as crime and disorder that if not managed can undermine the economy of a city. On one occasion Leicester's nightlife was described as being on a cusp that could go either way. Hopefully through the work of the review group it will begin to develop in to the city we all know it can be and begin hold its own in the region.

Some of the highs of the review for me has been the visit to a number of the establishment that operate in Leicester's night economy and hearing first hand the challenges they face, the frank exchanges of opinion with those that attended the public sessions in particularly members of the public who had much to contribute regarding their experience of living in the city centre, and the opportunity to work on a piece of work that was led by Members.

However, none of what the review group has achieved would have been possible without the support from those officers whose responsibility is was to support us, so my thanks go out to all of them.

Councillor Roman Scuplak

Chair of Leicester's Night-Time Economy Review Group

Introduction

1. In November 2004 the Council's Strategic, Regeneration and Planning Scrutiny Committee (SPAR) agreed to investigate Leicester's city centre night-time economy and set-up the Leicester Night-time Economy Review Group under the terms of reference set out on page 16. The aim of the review to investigate the diverse nature of Leicester's night-time economy and identify what the key agencies could do to facilitate its development.
2. Between November 2004 and January 2005 the review group requested written evidence from a range of stakeholders, including the public, and received a wide range of responses (see page 20 for a summary of the evidence submitted). A visit by the review group to a number of establishments operating in the night economy on Friday 25th February, and three public meetings on 3rd March, 14th March and 13th April followed this. Over the period of the review the exercise attracted a high level of publicity, much of this due to the introduction of the new licensing law and the interest of residents who live in the city centre.
3. At a pre-planning meeting for the review group Members decided who they wanted to invite to the public sessions and that these would be themed. The first focused on the 'the current night-time economy', the second 'What Potential for the City's Nightlife' and the last 'What can we do?' was aimed at trying to understand what actions could be taken to address the issues likely to be raised throughout the review.
4. Based on the evidence presented and their discussions with licensees the review group very quickly determined, in line with the objectives of the investigation, that practical steps were required by the Council and its partners to develop a more diverse night time economy in the city centre. The vast majority of respondents identifying shortfalls in what the city centre had to 'offer' in the early evening and into the late night.

"The night time economy is currently based around young people drinking, often excessively" city centre resident

"The user profile needs to change significantly to bring more families and older age group back to the city centre" City Centre Management Board

"Nottingham city centre is seen as a place that 'fills up' in the evening; Leicester city centre is a place generally vacated" De Montfort University

"There has been a decline in the availability in sectors such as sit-down entertainment, leisure activities and quality public events, all which are needed to balance and enrich Leicester's night time economy", Leicester shire Chamber of Commerce

“An ice skating rink, and city centre cinemas/theatre would be welcomed”
city centre resident

“Museums and Art Galleries should be open at night for free or very cheap”... “I want to visit more local cinemas” city centre resident

5. By the time the review group had completed its first two public meetings a number of themes and issues had emerged (Appendix 1) and formed the basis of the questioning that took place at the third meeting. All the invitees to this meeting were officers of the local authority.
6. The Council's Committee Services took notes of each meeting, though not a verbatim account they provide an overview of the debate and discussion that took place. Details of the notes can be found in the section 'Notes of Public Meetings' on page 31.
7. In putting together its conclusions and recommendations the review group have used the 'themes' as the basis for its thoughts. Under each theme are listed the conclusions relevant to that area along with a number of key concerns that the group considered needed to be acted upon if the 'offer' provided by the city centre was to be improved. The recommendations are also listed under each theme area, with a complete list set out in the following section for ease of reference.
8. The final report and its findings will be presented to the Leicester City Council Cabinet for its consideration and action. Responsibility for monitoring the work arising from the report sits with the sponsoring committee SPAR with officers reporting progress at regular intervals.

Recommendations

The following section lists the recommendations that the Leicester's Night-time Economy Review Group came up with following its investigation in the city's night economy. The conclusions relating to these can be found in the subsequent sections.

- a. That the City Council and its key partners note the findings of the Leicester City Centre Night-Economy Investigation by SPAR and agree to work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, including developers, to bring about a more diverse and vibrant city centre economy
- b. That the Council working with its partners, including residents, develops an appropriate management structure for the city centre with strong leadership, clear vision and which is accountable for key actions. Furthermore, that such a body has clear links to appropriate bodies set-up to address the immediate and on-going concerns of such groups as residents and licensees
- c. That Leicester Partnership uses the opportunity around the development of the revised Community Strategy for Leicester to provide a strategic steer for a future city centre and its night economy
- d. That the Council develops as part of the above structure a strategic plan and vision for the city centre and that a sub-strategy for addressing the needs of the night economy is also developed
- e. That the Council reaffirms its support for the proposed extension plans to the Shires, in particularly the proposed multiplex cinema and the proposed late opening hours initiative
- f. That the Council works with residents in the city centre to develop appropriate mechanisms for them to engage on issues that effect them, assist in making decisions and which provide them with the ability to address matters of concern quickly, including issues relating to policing
- g. As part of the above proposed strategic management structure that the Council calls upon the police to develop appropriate mechanisms for engaging with licensees regarding the policing of the city centre
- h. That the Council working with the police consider the development of actioned centred groups whose responsibility it would be to address emerging or on-going issues of mutual concern in the city centre, and that this is supported at the highest level in both organisations
- i. That the Council working with its partners considers how the development of late night events could be pursued

- j. That the Council working with its partners identify ways in which a more aggressive enforcement policy could be employed across the relevant areas noted by the review group and the new powers presented by the government utilised
- k. That the Council undertakes appropriate consultation with the public on the design and planning around the public realm improvements that will be funded from the £19.25m set aside for improvements to the retail offer and economy of the City Centre
- l. That the importance of social environment in facilitating a diverse and vibrant city centre, and the factors that effect it, is given greater prominence by the City Council and its partners involved in the renaissance of the city centre
- m. While the work of the review group ends with the publication of this report the group recommends that SPAR takes on the responsibility, as part of its work-programme, for monitoring the implementation of its recommendations, and
- n. That Council's Regeneration and Culture who have the lead for the City Centre report to SPAR on how the Council, working with its partners, will seek to implement the recommendations set out in the report along with any implications in doing so.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This section should be read in conjunction with Appendix 1 that lists the key themes and concerns of Leicester's Night-time Economy Review Group.

Diverse and Vibrant City Centre

2. It is generally agreed that we all wish to have a city centre that is an attractive place for people to live, work, socialise and visit. However, the challenge for the city is to balance the range of public interest with business needs.
3. The review group found that there was a distinct desire among the contributors and those quizzed by the media, to have a more diverse and vibrant city centre that provided a broad range of activities and attractions that appealed to a wide section of Leicester's population and equally, that this is supported by an appropriate infrastructure, e.g. car parking, family support, management, policing, public transport, etc.
4. On the matter of regeneration and development the review group concluded that the Council and its partners involved in the renaissance of the city centre should take account of the issues raised in this study, in particularly the poor 'leisure offer' that the centre provides. For example, the Waterfront and Old Town developments that aim to bring about an expansion of the city centre should put at the heart of their projects a diverse and vibrant leisure environment. The development of a restaurant quarter was also mooted as a possible benefit to the city.
5. The range of regeneration and development proposed for the city centre – the Shires Extension, the Office Core and the Cultural Quarter, were seen as a very positive move, however, the review group concluded that much effort would be required by all stakeholders to bring about a more vibrant night economy.
6. The review group saw that new innovative and proactive action as being needed, but that that this would require a leap of faith by the Council and its partners if something were to change in the city centre. For example, a programme of late night festival events in the city centre. The group were impressed by the suggestion by the Leicester Comedy Festival, for a sub-group of partners that would develop late night events, and the role this could play in helping change the perception of the city's night-time economy. Good behaviour displacing the poor as people of all ages and backgrounds are attracted into the city centre. Having a centre that more reflected the city's diversity e.g. ethnic minorities, the ²LGBT community, etc. was also appealing.

² Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community

7. The example of ³Birmingham and their approach to addressing the emerging problems around their night economy was also of interest, with such initiatives as environmental improvements, a taxi Marshals pilot, no nonsense' policing, happy hours – voluntary agreement, and a pro-active media relations seen to be bearing positive results. For example, a reduction in crime of 3.6% and improved perceptions.
8. The review group also saw the development of the early evening period between 5pm and 8pm as requiring attention, particularly by the business community. They welcomed the proposal by the Shires developers to extend late night shopping up to 8pm every day and hoped that this would act as a catalyst to others. Reading was cited as a city where workers socialised after leaving work, and Birmingham a city where late night shopping had worked and the benefits reaped.
9. A key area of concern noted by the review group was the need to take seriously the exodus of people who leave the city to participate in the nightlife of other cities, e.g. Nottingham. The restaurant chain Las Luanas informed the review group that a number of users of their Nottingham branch were from Leicester. The possible loss of higher social economic groups to the city centres' night economy, the lack of family oriented activities and non-alcoholic attractions were also of concern, as was the deep concerns of local residents regarding the effects of the night economy on their lives.

Recommendations

- a. That the City Council and its key partners note the findings of the Leicester City Centre Night-Economy Investigation by SPAR and agree to work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, including developers, to bring about a more diverse and vibrant city centre economy

Strategic Management

10. The review group found that there was a strong body of opinion that the city centre lacked strong leadership and a clear vision, and that the plethora of groups in the city centre were 'mosaic' – lacking synergy and leadership. Overwhelmingly people wished to see a strategic management structure for the city centre that had strong leadership, clear vision and accountability and which was part of a partnership consisting of all stakeholders, including residents and licensees.

³ Jenny Inglis, City Centre Director, Birmingham City Centre Partnership, gave a presentation to the review group on 3rd May 2005 on the actions the partnership had taken to address the problems around Broad Street and the focus for their Business Improvement District bid.

11. The consultation undertaken on developing an updated ⁴Community Strategy for the city indicated how important people viewed the city centre and its importance to the city. The role of the Community Strategy was also seen as important as it could provide a steer for the development of a strategic vision for the city centre and its night economy, Manchester being an example where the group noted that this had been enacted.
12. The review group found the examples of city centre management from other cities of interest and recognised that there were lessons Leicester could learn from them. For example, Birmingham, who are a pilot city for Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), and the model of devolved city centre management adopted by Coventry City Council and its partners.
13. The key concerns of the review group related to such matters as the lack of consultation and engagement with local residents on such issues as the management and policing of the city centre, and the deteriorating relationship between licensees and the police. The introduction of the new door supervisor's scheme was of concern as the deadline for its introduction was seen as having been implemented with little regard to the effect any delays in processing applications may have upon licensed premises. Members of the public indicated a level of powerlessness to influence their social environment, for example, the rubbish and low-level crime associated with the night economy. The review group however noted that there could sometimes be difficulties involving members of the public in high-level strategic bodies.
14. The group also noted the project management arrangements for the City Centre set out by the Corporate Director of Regeneration & Culture in ⁵June 2004. The proposals sought to ensure joined up working between teams, and give both senior officers of the Council and Members oversight of the work for improving Leicester's city centre.
15. The review group also noted the work of the City Centre Virtual Team (CCVT) and its aim to establish the structures and systems that would be needed to improve co-ordination of city centre services by Leicester City Council and its partners, and that work was still required to engage with other key partners – including the public, provide the level of leadership seen as being required and agreeing a shared vision.

⁴ Leicester's Community Strategy is known as the 'Community Plan' and was first developed in 1999. The plan was then modified in 2003 to inform people of the range of new developments and plans for undertaking a full review. The Plan sets out the strategic priorities for the city and how they are to be achieved.

⁵ Leicester City Council – Cabinet report June 21, 2004 'Project Management Arrangements for the City Centre & Cultural Quarter'

16. It was also noted that the recent government publication “⁶How To Manage Town Centres” set out four principles for effective management of town and city centres. These included the preparation of a strategy and the development of effective partnerships.

Recommendations

- b. That the Council working with its partners, including residents, develops an appropriate management structure for the city centre with strong leadership, clear vision and which is accountable for key actions. Furthermore, that such a body has clear links to appropriate bodies set-up to address the immediate and on-going concerns of such groups as residents and licensees
- c. That ⁷Leicester Partnership uses the opportunity around the development of the revised Community Strategy for Leicester to provide a strategic steer for a future city centre and its night economy
- d. That the Council develops as part of the above structure a strategic plan and vision for the city centre and that a sub-strategy for addressing the needs of the night economy is also developed
- e. That the Council reaffirms its support for the proposed extension plans to the Shires, in particular the proposed multiplex cinema and the proposed late opening hours initiative

Partnership

17. Partnership working was seen as being key to the future development of the night economy. The review group was provided with information regarding a range of issues that they felt could be addressed with bit innovative thinking and partnership working. Licensees and residents often felt that they were being imposed on and that they had little opportunity to influence the decisions that affected their immediate area, and that problems took too long to be addressed. The review group concluded that links needed to be made between these groups and agencies, as well as between themselves.
18. The development of a Business Improvement District (BID) in the city was welcomed as an opportunity to build relationships between the various stakeholders, and add to the diversity and vibrancy of the city centre.

⁶ “How To Manage Town Centres”, March 2005, is one of three guides that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is producing under The Cleaner Safer Greener Communities initiative. The four principles of effective management of town and city centres were – Know your town centres, Develop local leadership, Prepare your strategy and Creating successful partnerships.

⁷ Leicester Partnership is the name of the city’s Local Strategic Partnership. They have responsibility, in conjunction with the City Council, for developing a community strategy for Leicester.

19. Taking instant action on such issues as policing and the social environment can be very difficult. However, the city should look to other cities and boroughs to see how they are addressing the daily problems that plague their night economy for possible solutions. For example, the City of Westminster where the staff from the local authority and the police have teamed up to address issues of mutual concern around the West End and Soho and where there is strong support from the Leader of the Council for ensuring issues are resolved quickly.
20. The Leicester 'Reassurance' project in New Parks was noted as an example where the Council and the police have worked in partnership to take action on issues raised by the public. Resources were currently being sought to be roll the project out city-wide as requested by the Home Office.
21. Other examples which the review group thought should be considered for Leicester were the staggering of club closing times to reduce the concentration of people in the early morning, and restrictions on take-a-ways that can act as a congregating point for large numbers of people. In the West End, the opening hours of a Mc Donalds store was restricted to reduce the numbers of people congregating around it late at night, many waiting for illegal taxis. This decision was arrived at through consultation between the police and the local authority. Consideration for introducing nighttime taxi licences with financial incentives was also suggested, and though there were such groups as the Crime Action Group in place in the city centre residents' issues were not seen as being at the forefront.
22. An area of concern for the review group was the perception held by many that current policing policy for the city centre helped to reinforce bad behaviour. A number of instances were conveyed to the review group where the police had chosen not to take action against the perpetrator of a minor crime. For example, police officers that separated a street fight by ordering the offenders to walk away in opposing directions.
23. Another area of concern was the relationship between the 'planning' and 'licensing' functions, where the review group wished to see the two functions affectively interact with each other.
24. The setting up of a sub-group charged with looking at the development of late night events was an initiative the review group agreed could provide real benefits for the city, but one that would require a leap of faith by all partners if it was to happen.

Recommendations

- f. That the Council works with residents in the city centre to develop appropriate mechanisms for them to engage on issues that effect them, assist in making decisions and which provide them with the

ability to address matters of concern quickly, including issues relating to policing

- g. As part of the above proposed strategic management structure that the Council calls upon the police to develop appropriate mechanisms for engaging with licensees regarding the policing of the city centre
- h. That the Council working with the police consider the development of actioned centred groups whose responsibility it would be to address emerging or on-going issues of mutual concern in the city centre, and that this is supported at the highest level in both organisations
- i. That the Council working with its partners considers how the development of late night events could be pursued

Zero Tolerance

- 25. A more aggressive but proportionate enforcement policy regarding low-level crime & disorder, including illegal traders, graffiti, urination, drinkers, etc and improved management of the issues regarding litter and rubbish collection was viewed by the review group as needed if the perception of the city as an unsafe and unclean place was to be addressed. This did not denote the need for a more confrontational policing policy.
- 26. Bingley Place in Birmingham was cited as an example where high level of security had led to people feeling safer.
- 27. The key issues of concern for the review group included litter, general loud behaviour, urination, and vomiting and lewd acts on the streets as a result of the night economy.

Recommendations

- j. That the Council working with its partners identify ways in which a more aggressive enforcement policy could be employed across the relevant areas noted by the review group and the new powers presented by the government utilised

Social Environment

- 28. A more balanced approach to the physical regeneration and the city centre's social environment was seen as requiring immediate action. While the review group supported the range of physical regeneration taking place they agreed that the level of attention given to this aspect of the city centre's development was probably at the expense of the social environment.

29. The example of the restaurant chain Las Iguanas put this in to sharp focus, where its own research indicated that while customers of their restaurant in Leicester liked the service and the design of the unit they were very critical of its location. The social environment was also cited by the owners as a significant reason for the under performance of the unit.
30. The review group noted the work of the City Centre Development Project and the £19.25m capital expenditure that had been set aside for schemes that would improve the retail offer and economy of the City Centre. One of the priority areas for CCVT – improvement to the appearance and accessibility of the city centre.
31. Key areas of concern noted by the review group included poor parking facilities, the need to identify late night uses for the Market, and the many large open spaces in the city centre that become soulless no-go areas in the evening. Street parking the choice for many visitors to the city centre in the evening is seen as dark and un-welcoming in most areas, as are many of the centres 24hr car parks. While areas such as Lee Circle currently see little or no activity at night so for many become no-go areas, and the Market cherished in the day but is dark and unattractive at night.
32. Accessibility to and from the city centre via public transport during the late evening and early morning was also of concern, however, the review group recognised that there were major challenges for the city regards funding an expansion of the current system and building sustained demand that would have the support of the private operators.
33. The perception of the city centre as a high crime area was also of great concern to the review group, but felt that more was being made of incidents than was necessary. The attention given by the media to such negative features was seen as leading to a distorted picture of the city centre and aiding to promote the view that it was a 'no-go area'.

Recommendations

- k. That the Council undertakes appropriate consultation with the public on the design and planning around the public realm improvements that will be funded from the £19.25m set aside for improvements to the retail offer and economy of the City Centre
- l. That the importance of social environment in facilitating a diverse and vibrant city centre, and the factors that effect it, is given greater prominence by the City Council and its partners involved in the renaissance of the city centre

Promoting the City Centre

34. If the experiences of other cities were to be believed then a PR campaign would be central to turning around the fortunes of Leicester's night economy. If the progressive work that is required for the city centre is to mean anything then it will need to be 'shouted' about - what would be the point of positive improvements if no one knew about them? The review group therefore views the development of a PR campaign to promote the city centre and its night economy, on the back of the positive work to address its problems, as essential.
35. The main area of concern noted by the review group was negative press and media coverage that aided to discourage people from using the city centre at night, and the strong view held by many that there was very little at present to shout about.

Recommendations

- m. That the Council working with its partners, particularly Leicester Shire Promotions, develop a strategy for promoting the night economy of Leicester and for combating the negative perceptions that many currently hold, both within the city and further afield

Monitoring and Evaluation

Recommendations

- n. While the work of the review group ends with the publication of this report the group recommends that SPAR takes on the responsibility, as part of its work-programme, for monitoring the implementation of its recommendations, and
- o. That Council's Regeneration and Culture Department who have the lead for the City Centre report to SPAR on how the Council, working with its partners, will seek to implement the recommendations set out in the report along with any implications in doing so.

Terms Of Reference

AIM

To investigate the diverse nature of Leicester's night-time economy and identify what the key agencies can do to facilitate its development.

Objectives:

- to define the diverse nature of Leicester's leisure night-time economy within the city centre, and
- identify what practical steps if needed the Council and its partners can take to develop a more diverse economy.

DEFINITION

For the purpose of this investigation the *Night-time Economy* is defined as goods and services that directly or indirectly affect the economy of the city centre outside normal working hours, while *Diverse Nature* refers to the range of goods and services available for the leisure needs of all Leicester's residents and visitors to the city.

SCOPE

The areas to be covered by the investigation: -

- To consider the effects that planned and on-going regeneration around the city centre might have upon the diverse nature of the night-time economy. For example, the Cultural Quarter and the Shires extension. There is a perception that the economy is currently dominated by bars, some restaurants and has a lack other activities such as non-alcohol based activities, e.g. Cinema's and theatres
- To consider the experiences and views of proprietors in and around the city centre with regards to the changing night-time economy and the expansion of 'satellite night economies', for example Braunstone Gate and Queens Road
- To consider views on how the council working with its partners can facilitate a more diverse night-time economy while balancing the concerns around Crime & Disorder
- To consider the proposed changes to the Council's licensing policy and the role it could play in facilitating a more diverse night-time economy

- To consider a range of crime and disorder measures which could be more effectively deployed in the city centre, e.g. Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), education about alcohol use, appropriate Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets
- With the increase in city centre residential living to consider the needs of those opting for this type of living and the impact of the night-time economy on their social lives
- To consider policies that support the management of door supervisors
- To consider the views of and experiences of staff in LRI Accident and Emergency
- To consider views regarding the profile of users of the city centre night economy in terms of age and ethnicity and their use in terms of particular areas, etc.
- To consider the arrangements currently in place for managing the city centre, e.g. the City Centre Virtual Team
- To consider the environmental impact of the night-time economy, e.g. noise, litter, light
- To seek views on the role of taxis and public transport to the night-time economy and the feasibility of having a 'night bus' service
- To consider what impact if any changes in the gaming laws could have on the night-time economy
- To consider the views of other cities regarding the diverse nature of their night-time economy, its management and their views on the advantages/disadvantages of facilitating a more diverse night-time economy.

RATIONALE

Having an effective and diverse night-time economy would have a major impact on the economic and environmental well being of the city and its residents. Furthermore, the economy of the city has on many occasions been compared to neighbouring cities, in particular Nottingham, whose night-time economy is seen by many as being superior to Leicester's.

METHODOLOGY

1. Written Evidence: This would be requested from a range of interested parties in respect to a specific question that relates to the scope of the review. This information is to be provided on no more than two sides of A4.
 - Possible media involvement with views collected via the papers/radio

2. In-depth Questioning: Providers of written evidence whose evidence is deemed to require further consideration would be asked to attend a meeting of the Review Group – maximum of 2 sessions of up to three hours.
3. Visit: A visit to the city centre that provides Members with a visible impression of Leicester's night-time economy.
4. Concluding Thoughts: Two meetings of the Review Group that brings together Members views and opinions regarding all the evidence presented and an opportunity to put forward recommendations. Two meetings.
5. Report to SPAR: A final report with the conclusion and recommendation from the Review Group presented to SPAR.
6. Report to Cabinet: The report from SPAR along with a report from officers to go to Cabinet for consideration.

PROPOSED CONTRIBUTORS

Leicestershire Constabulary
 Cultural Partnership
 Leicester Regeneration Company
 Leicester Economic Regeneration Partnership
 Crime & Disorder Partnership
 Leicester City Council Departments
 Licensing Officers
 Planning Officers
 City Centre Residents
 Leicester Shire Promotions
 Providers of Night-time Goods and Services
 General Public/Leicester's People Panel
 LRI Accident and Emergency
 City Centre Management Board
 Door Management Companies
 Chamber of Commerce
 Leicester City West and Eastern Leicester Primary Care Trusts
 De Montfort University and the University of Leicester
 Other Local Authorities
 Chamber of Commerce

10-Nov-04

REVISED TIMETABLE

Nov – Jan 05	Written Evidence Requested
Feb - April	Maximum of three in-depth questioning sessions Plus a pre-meeting with Members of Revision Group
February	City Centre visit
May	Concluding Thoughts – Two meetings
May	Comments from main contributors
June	Final report to SPAR
July	SPAR and Officer Report to Cabinet

3-Feb-05

Summary Of Evidence Submitted

This summary report was presented to members of Review Group for its pre-planning meeting and ahead of its deliberations as part of a ⁸pack detailing the written evidence presented to the enquiry.

“Evening and night-time activity in urban areas has developed at an extraordinary pace in recent years. Some areas in our major cities are now effectively open 24-hours, demanding planning and management solutions to cope with the resultant impact. Even smaller towns now have Friday and Saturday night crowd management issues. Remarkable commercial opportunities have opened up, and the challenge for local authorities and other agencies is to balance a range of public interest with business needs. Those in both public and private sectors have a vast amount of new information to absorb.”
LANDOR Conferences, The Night Time Economy, 9th February 2005.

On the 10th November 2004 SPAR agreed to undertake an investigation into Leicester’s night-time economy with the objective to identify what practical steps if needed the Council and its partners could take to develop a more diverse economy. A sub-group of SPAR called the ‘Review Group’ was set-up to steer the investigation. Its membership was made up from all the members of SPAR and a number of other Councillors who indicated an interest in participating in the investigation following an invitation to all Councillors. A key element of the study was the submission of evidence from a range of interested parties, including the public, with regard to the scope of the review. The deadline for submissions was 14th January 2005 for key stakeholders and partners and 21st January 2005 for all others.

This summary report provides the Review Group with an indication of the range of comments that have been received and is intended to support the groups’ considerations and deliberations regarding all the submissions.

1. Leicester City Council and the Management of the City Centre

A response from the Licensing Unit has been included along with a report on the management arrangements for the city centre that was considered by Cabinet in June 2004.

Also included is an overview of the City Centre Virtual Team (CCVT), a cross cutting group of Council officers who have responsibility for aspects of City Centre management and development.

⁸ Copies of the full report detailing the written evidence submitted are available by contacting the Council’s Committee Services on 252 7110

2. Public and City Centre Residents

- Welcome a more diverse range of activities and attractions that support the night-time economy in the city e.g. cinemas, theatres, comedy clubs, non-alcoholic late establishments, late entertainment (street performers, etc.), more gay venues, Asian/Caribbean venues, late museums and art galleries, jazz bar, late night cafes, ice skating, etc.
- Many feel the city has a vibrant night economy but that it is too focused on the needs of young people – “What about a night club for over thirties”.
- Concerns regarding the Lee Circle area of the city centre was sited, e.g. its poor reputation and its run-down look.
- Any development of the city centre’s night economy should take into consideration the effect noise from patrons and music has on residents.
- Many city residents noted litter on the streets as a major concern and an unwelcome product of the night economy.
- Many feel more should be done to build upon the city’s multicultural heritage with regards to the night economy, e.g. wider variety of restaurants.
- Residents in the city centre welcome a vibrant night economy but stress the need to ensure that it is well serviced, e.g. health and welfare services and amenities, e.g. porta loos.
- There was support for making establishments responsible for such things as litter, graffiti and noise related problems.
- Major concerns from city centre residents regarding ‘fear’ of walking around the centre late at night, while the low presence of the police at night was sited as an issue.
- Most who made reference to the new licensing laws are supportive so long as there is good management e.g. policing, environmental factors, etc.
- Though residents in the city centre are more likely to fall between the ages 20-29 most of those who responded would seem to be older and clearly wished to see greater diversification in the range activities on offer in Leicester’s night-economy.

3. Community Plan Consultation Programme

Consultation was conducted between October 2004 and January 2005 with the people of Leicester and the various sectors about the issues of concern in the city a head of the next plan in 2005.

Across all consultation events one of the issues that provoked most comment and/or raised most emotion was “Regeneration issues, especially concern around development projects and the city centre”

Formed on the basis of such issues and comments as:

- The night culture, e.g. number of bars and 'job culture' were noted as things residents disliked about the city centre. These were also seen as a deterrent to people coming into the city centre.
- The movement of entertainment out of the city centre was seen as an issue across the consultation, creating the need for a car to participate. As was the accessibility of the Cultural Quarter in terms of its possible affordability.
- Many key change's residents would like to see in the city centre centred on the night/day economy, e.g. family friendly day & night economy, and more culture and entertainment.
- A theatre and swimming pool were also mentioned, as provision would like to see in the city centre.
- The limitations for Muslim young people and the city centre was also raised – few 'non-alcohol' alternatives.
- That Leisure and entertainment are very important factors for people relocating to the city.

(A copy of the full draft report is available from the Council's Chief Executive's Office)

4. Central Government

This section details extracts of some of the issues raised in a number of Government papers relating to the night-economy is included for Members information. A presentation from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) given at "⁹The Night Time Economy" conference, On 9th February 2005 is also included for information

The key messages from these would seem to be:

- A wish to see an urban renaissance of city centres and agreement that a wider cross-section of people must be attracted into city centres in the evening and night if this is to be successful.
- The management of city centres is vital to the renaissance. The preparation of a city centre strategy is seen as an important aspect as is the involvement of appropriate stakeholders.
- View the new Licensing Act 2003 as being supportive of the aim to widen the diversification in the night economy.

⁹ Organised by LANDOR Conferences and supported by ODPM. The Night Time Economy – 24:00 CITY, Understanding and managing evening and late night leisure activity: the tools for the job. Wednesday 9th February 2005, Savoy Place, London WC2

- Local authorities have the power to do anything to promote or improve the economic, social and environment well-being of their area unless prohibited elsewhere in legislation.
- Support the development of action plans aimed at encouraging non-alcohol centred evening activities.
- View positively the development of Business Improvement District (BID) as a way of developing the night economies of cities and encouraging the involvement of licensees.
- As we near the start of the new licensing laws issues relating to the night economy have risen up the political agenda, e.g. *the binge drinking culture, plans for pubs to meet more of the cost for its introduction, etc.* In response to this a number of newspaper articles have been included for reference.

ODPM were proposing to produce a Night Time Economy (NTE) guide but have now taken another approach as part of its Liveability agenda – Cleaner, Safer, Greener Communities Programme. Three “How To” Guides will now be produced and be supported by an “academy” aimed at developing and promoting good practice. Managing the NTE will be covered in the Town Centre Guide. This will be the first of the three guides produced and will be published around March 2005.

5. Partners and Key Stakeholders

- Viewed the SPAR investigation as too focussed on the symptoms and problems of the night-time economy e.g. crime & disorder, rather than the issue, such as greater diversification, e.g. people and activities, etc.
- Suggested there was a need for the city to learn from other UK and European cities.
- The focus of regeneration should not be just about buildings, but people, activities, the landscape, etc.
- City centre needs a broad range of cultural and leisure opportunities to provide a counter balance with clubs and pubs, and change significantly the perceived wider profile of the city centre.
- The Cultural Partnership has as one of its objectives “To create a city centre which exemplifies the richness of the city’s cultural diversity and which is accessible and welcoming to all”.
- One of the roles of Leicester Shire Promotions is to facilitate and co-ordinate the creation and management of the “destination” – the city centre included.
- If the aim of this investigation is realised it will attract more visitors to the city centre and create more economic wealth which is the main driver to regenerate in the city.

- Developers Hammersons confirm (24.01.05) that a cinema multiplex would be included in the Shires shopping extension (*noted by most respondents as much needed in the city centre*). Plus there is scope to increase trading hours to reflect the early evening economy.
- Much work is needed to change the perception/reputation that Leicester has at night.
- The new community/housing projects proposed will create bigger city centre population.
- There needs to be almost a media campaign to show that the city centre is open and a great place to visit after 6pm, this can be driven by City Centre Management Team (CCMT) and City Centre Virtual Team (CCVT). One of Fosse Park's busiest times is between 5pm and 8pm.
- Time to check the trend towards an alcohol-led night economy, and time to do more to offer and promote a good mix of alternatives that appeal to other age groups and offer greater cultural variety.
- The Council should consider a moratorium on takeaway food outlets and ways of raising the standards and cleanliness of the streets as a result of the night economy.
- The attention to non-alcoholic activities sited in the scope of the review was welcomed, as there are many cultural groups within Leicester that do not consume alcohol.
- Note should be taken that night-time economies are also prone to fashions and trends. For example, Birmingham Broad Street, as new venues have opened elsewhere in the city Broad Street has become more of a basic drink and night club location.
- Commonly, Nottingham city centre is seen as a place that "fills up" in the evening, Leicester a place that is vacated – apart from those activities that congregate around the consumption of alcohol. The resounding question that needs to be answered is - ***why should people want to come into the centre of Leicester City?***
- Urban Practitioners Ltd. Specialists advisors to the House of Commons ODPM Select Committee on the evening economy and the urban renaissance - *Opportunities and challenges for city's and their night economies*, are sited.

6. The Police Authority

- Would welcome and advocate the introduction of a City Strategic Management Group, a 'one-stop-shop' concept for all strategic issues.

In particularly such a board could cover:

- Crime & Disorder

- Economic Development
 - Planning
 - Transport
 - Street Cleaning
 - Communication
 - Licensing Approach
 - Cultural issues/activities
 - Health Promotion
- Stress the rising trend in violence in the city centre as demonstrated by the Crime & Disorder Audit, and is working with partners to develop a related PSA target.
 - To tackle the rise in violence the police have implemented the City Centre Violence and Disorder Team.
 - Its initiatives to date have included:
 - SOS Safety Bus – a triage station and first point of contact for those lost or needing help in the city centre and night.
 - Street Pastors – about 40 cross-denominational volunteers supported by the Urban Canon of Leicester. Hope to be operating by spring onwards.
 - Operation Lion – ran throughout the summer 2004 aimed at adopting a proactive and low tolerance positive policy approach.
 - As part of the implementation of new Licensing Act in Leicester the police made representation for a saturation zone to be declared in the city centre.
 - They note the city centre capacity at 40,000 people (*based on occupancy figures of premises that are never full at the same time, and probably a gross overestimate, Leicester City Council*).
 - View the use of CCTV as an important aspect of the city and are keen to see their use as part of the opportunity to design out crime.
 - Gun Crime – firearms related offences have increased in Leicester by 20% during last 3 years, though still a relatively small number (33).
 - Behave or Be Banned initiative: Dispersal Zone has been created (in the city centre) where any group of two or more persons causing harassment, alarm, or distress can be ordered by an officer in uniform to leave and not return within 24 hours.

7. The Health Community – St Johns Ambulance

- St Johns Ambulance has been operating a Safe Haven bus (SOS) in the city centre since July 2004 between 10pm and 3am Fridays and Saturdays.

- The SOS bus has treated casualties that would otherwise have been referred to hospital thereby relieving pressure on A&E departments and the ambulance service.
- The cost to date £9,475 (running costs only).

8. Other Local Authorities

Submissions were received from six local authorities, along with a visit to Manchester, and the West End and Soho to view their solutions to city centre management. Information has also been included from the presentations by Wolverhampton City Centre Company and the Greater London Authority at “the Night Time Economy” Conference. *Copies of the full reports received can be obtained from the Chief Executive's Office.*

- Examples of a night economy and a city strategy from **Woking District Council** and Nottingham respectively are included for Members information.
- **Nottingham's** strategy went out for consultation October 2004 and includes a specific vision for the evening economy. The overall aim being “To grow Nottingham's position as the prime leisure destination in the East Midlands”.
- A research study was carried out by the Mayor of London in to the night-time economy in **Camden Town** as part of their investigation into London's night time economy. *(Full Report available from the Policy and Performance Team, Chief Executive's Office)*
- **Burnley** Against Night-time Disorder (BAND). The establishment of a pub watch style scheme where licensees could ban violent or anti-social people from their premises in addition to being dealt with via the Criminal Justice System.
- **Birmingham** – as far as management of the night economy is concerned Birmingham sees its self as supporting ‘vibrant urban villages’ and has many areas that are developing local entertainment centres with mixed use. Furthermore, they will be using the new Licensing Act to support this.

City Centre Partnership: involves the City Council, the Police, local businesses and residents, and has introduced a Broad Street Management Plan following a ‘summit’ involving around 80 businesses and other stakeholders. Is also proposing a Business Improvement District (BID) in the area.

- **Coventry** – A partnership company called CVOne Ltd manages the city centre. They deal with cleansing, maintenance, toilets, promotion, tourism, etc. of the city centre.

“What is clear to us is that people not only need a ‘destination’ or reason to come into the City Centre, but that the conditions to that experience need to be right, i.e. the journey, the environment, the atmosphere, safety etc. The City Council cannot deal with all these issues on its own” *Coventry City Council*.

Manchester City Centre Management

An independent company set-up to manage aspects of Manchester city centre.

- Have developed a city centre strategic plan that sets out an agreed framework for sustained regeneration, investment and service improvement in Manchester city centre over the next three years. Furthermore, the plan informs the development and delivery of the Manchester Community Strategy (MCS).
- The document is prepared by the Council and the Manchester City Centre Management Company, a company incorporated in 2000 whose key focus is to ensure the highest possible standards are attained within the city centre and that the functionality and management of the city centre is constantly improved.
- Unlike the CVOne Ltd of Coventry the Management Company has no executive responsibilities, but is chaired and led by the majority private sector partners.
- Though not mentioned as part of the overall plan the night-time economy is referred to in the development approaches to the constituent areas of the city centre, e.g. Chinatown, Peters Fields, and the Gay Village.
- Messages provided by the Chief Executive and officers:
 - ✓ Public realm is different in the day compared to the night – pedestrianised ways were opened in evening (6pm-8am) and has worked well
 - ✓ Without the high level of confidence that the private sector has in the local authority and its ability to deliver what it says much of what has been achieved since 1996 would not have happened
 - ✓ Have put in place environmental enforcement teams for the city centre within a strict enforcement regime
 - ✓ Have a successful night bus service that runs up to 3am
 - ✓ Have plans to develop the retail sector so that it opens six days a week up to 8.00pm
 - ✓ Is a BID pilot city and is working with developers in the Piccadilly Gateway to develop proposals. Is also considering a BID aimed at the night economy – pubs, restaurants, hotels, etc. (*a similar small and short term exercise was tried in Peters Street where extra police were provided to make the*

place feel more secure to visitors between 5pm-9pm – it was successful)

- ✓ *“The community strategy provides overriding principles and values about how we wish to see the city economically, socially and environmentally...provides a set of strategic regeneration frameworks including one for the city centre...all linked to clear messages about the sort of city we want to be” Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive Manchester City Council*

Wolverhampton City Centre Company

An independent company set-up to manage aspects of Wolverhampton city centre.

- A family of partnerships, connecting the wide variety of cultural, economic and community organisations that works across the city centre, both in the public and private sector.
- Unlike the CVOne Ltd of Coventry the Management Company has no executive responsibilities.
- One of its key aims is to promote Wolverhampton as a vibrant city
- The key sub-groups are – Safety & Security, Marketing, Environment and Business.

The West End and Soho

- The management and development of the night time economy is the responsibility of the Civic Watch West End Hotbox Team.
- Leadership is given from the highest level. The Leader has been called upon on a number of occasions to deal with blockages in addressing problems regarding the night time economy that have been identified by the team and its partners.
- Close partnership working is seen as essential, with all the key partners who have a stake in the area involved, both in the public and private sector. This includes residents, who also work closely with the police out of the community safety office in the heart of the area. Many have been around for many years and see real benefits in a thriving night economy, for example, the social environment and property prices.
- The Civic Team - a small initiative set-up between the Council and the Police that meets on a regular basis to identify issues of mutual concern, and measures to address them. For example, from a range of funding sources lighting costing £2,500 and commercial bins with locks was introduced to an area that was plagued with litter, drug taking, urination, etc.

- Urination was viewed as a major problem in the area, particularly in the earlier hours of the morning. Money was identified to erect more porta loos plus a number of pop-up loos.
- The enforcement of laws governing such things as graffiti and fly posting is viewed as essential.
- Following noticeable improvements the Team working with its partners has achieved over the past few years, such as lower levels of crime and disorder, the team working with local businesses has begun to promote the area. A number of initiatives have been used such as radio and TV.
- The team also sees improving the experience of the 'visit' as being part of their role.
- Successful management of the night time economy has brought more people to the area, which in turn calls for continued management and vigilance.
- The area is monitored 24 hours a day by over 200 CCTV cameras.

The Greater London Authority

The slides included describe London's night time economy, its importance to the city's economic prosperity and a description of the leisure industry and its related problems.

9. The Drinks Industry

Included in the pack are presentations given by the British Beer and Pub Association and the BII to "The Night Time Economy" Conference on 9th February 2005.

The British Beer and Pub Association – state bar ownership has moved from national Brewers to public companies run by licensees and views the new licensing laws as an opportunity to take the noise and music out of late night bars. The biggest area of growth in sales for pubs is tea and coffee.

BII – the professional body for the licensed retail sector. Under the Licensing Act 2003 Personal Licence Holders must hold a licensing qualification. This would cover such areas as licensing laws, risk management, conflict management, dealing with drug misuse and other legal and social responsibilities.

10. Licensees

Representation was received from Las Iguanas, Belvoir Street, on the findings of a brand development study in 2004 into peoples eating out repertoire in Leicester and Sheffield - the site of recently opened venues for the restaurant chain.

One of the key message from the study was “Leicester City Centre is not considered appealing as a location – too rough, with other ‘satellite’ villages offering good alternative eating and drinking out offers - with a market that is less cosmopolitan and much more budget constrained.” Furthermore, one of the directors of the company informed officers that the Leicester unit was performing below expectations.

11. The Security Industry

The Security Industry Authority (SIA) now licenses door supervisors. The new regime came into effect in Leicester on 18 October 2004 but an amnesty was agreed until 14th February 2005. After that time it became illegal for anyone to work as a door supervisor. A number of establishments in the city have indicated that they are experiencing problems due to a backlog in applications.

Notes Of Public Meetings

FIRST EVIDENCE SESSION MEETING – 3 MARCH 2005

In Attendance

Ward Councillors

Cllr Roman Scuplak (Chair)
Cllr John Thomas
Cllr Mark Farmer
Cllr John Fitch
Cllr Patrick Kitterick
Cllr John Allen

Witnesses

Chief Superintendent Ian Stripp	Leicestershire Constabulary
Superintendent Graham Middleton	Leicestershire Constabulary
Luke Russell	Development Manager – Crime and Disorder Partnership
John Hussain	Independent publican/restaurantier
Steve Mason	Independent publican/restaurantier
Arran Ally	Las Iguanas Restaurant
John English	City Centre Management Board
Tony Greenwood	St John's Ambulance
Geraldine Newton	Leicester Royal Infirmary
Andrea Mulvaney	Leicester Royal Infirmary

The Chair, Councillor Roman Scuplak noted that this would be the first of three evidence-gathering sessions. He also noted that members of the Review Group had been on a night visit to the city centre.

The witnesses were given 5 minutes each to make their statement to the review group followed by 5 minutes for clarification of any points that were made. This was to be followed by an open debate for all to make contributions. The Chair then thanked all those present for their attendance.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors were asked if they had any declarations of interest in any of the business to be discussed.

Councillor Thomas declared a personal interest, as he was president of the Railwaymans Club in Leicester that held a liquor license.

Introduction

The Chair gave a formal introduction to the meeting. He explained that the Council was seeking to look at ways in which key agencies could do to help the development of the city centre.

Chief Superintendent Ian Stripp and Superintendent Graham Middleton

Ian Stripp started his presentation by stating that he hoped to present a balanced view of the problems of disorder in the city and he praised the work that was currently going on in the city to make it safer.

Graham Middleton gave a presentation that focused on an audit undertaken by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. He pointed out some statistics such as a 92% rise in crime over the past five years and a 12% rise in violent crimes this year alone. He noted that 70% of violent crime that took place in the city happened between 6pm on a Friday and 3am on a Sunday morning. He made reference to other cities, which showed that by comparison Leicester had a significant amount of violent crime. He also noted that there had been a 56% rise in licensed establishments since 2001 and that the capacity of venues in the city centre was approximately 40,000 and the two biggest capacity venues were very close to each other. He raised concerns about the potential affects of the new licensing laws. He also showed a diagram of the city that showed the areas where most violent crimes were taking place that appeared to be Churchgate, Belgrave Gate and High Street. He also noted that there was a great deal of collaboration between the Police, partners and Licensees to work together to reduce violence.

To make improvements to this situation he made a number of suggestions; he felt that the city's transport infrastructure needed improving as this could reduce the potential for anti social behaviour. Consideration should be given to closing roads, consideration should be given to moving taxi ranks. He also queried whether there was a licensing forum where issues could be discussed and solutions sought. He noted that the government wanted the acceptable behaviour levels to be brought up and he felt that to do this there needed to be a long term strategic licensing plan for the city.

Ian Stripp then made some further points. He said that there were opportunities to build on the current good work that was in place and there were agencies that were well placed to take action to alleviate problems such as the transport issue and greater use could be made of shared data. He also spoke of the possibility of holding a 'Golden Hour' where the music in the clubs could be lightened and things like a breakfast brunch could be served as had been done in Westminster and Cardiff. He felt other evidence-based initiatives should be considered with a view to reducing the violence. He also suggested that there needed to be consideration of the strategic management of the city centre and perhaps a review of the forums that existed and perhaps a violence task force created. He stated that it was the aim of the Police to

reduce people's fear of entering the City, focusing attention on the small minority of persistent offenders would do this.

Councillor Kitterick queried why Belvoir Street didn't seem to suffer from the same violent crime problems as the Churchgate / High Street area. Ian Stripp said it would be interesting to consider the differences between the areas and see if any lessons could be learnt from the way the area is lit and generally managed.

Councillor Farmer requested that the Police provide the Council with more information about potential solutions and reasons why Leicester's violent crime was so high. Ian Stripp undertook to do this.

Ian Mason then queried the statistics provided by the Police, whether the means of recording had changed in recent years and whether other authorities used the same means of recording. Ian Stripp commented that all authorities used the same means of recording and that this system of recording was the most accurate means of recording trouble. Councillor Scuplak sought further clarification as to what area the statistics covered. Ian Stripp commented that the violence statistics covered the City Centre Beat which as well as the city centre it included areas such as Westcotes and outer lying areas such as Eyres Monsell.

Luke Russell – Development Manager of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

Mr Russell informed the meeting that the Partnership had undertaken an audit of the crime that had taken place in the city and it sought to categorise this crime. Following on from this audit it was planned to create a thematic group to address violence in the city. The City Council would play a key role in this group. He noted that the audit had shown that the Castle Ward was a crime hotspot although it did include the city centre. He also commented that a picture of the average victim had been mapped, which showed to be a male in his early 20's. He also noted that national research showed that half of all violent crime was alcohol related which demonstrated a clear link to the licensed economy. He stated that tackling these issues were not just through policing but including other forms of intervention. Consultation had also shown that the public thought that the city was an unsafe place.

Councillor Kitterick queried what the profile of the average attacker was. Mr Russell stated that it was generally the same as the average victim. Councillor Kitterick also queried whether there was a small minority of repeat offenders carrying out the majority of the crime. Mr Russell said that this wasn't generally the case, most alcohol related crimes were carried out by people who have jobs and generally regret what they have done come Monday morning.

John Hussain – Independent Publican / Restaurateur

Mr Hussain commented that he felt anecdotally as a country, alcohol related problems were widespread throughout all towns and cities and that other countries were different. Britain had a strong drinking culture that related to many other cultural attributes and this had been developed over a long period of time.

He then spoke of his involvement in café Bruxelles that he saw as a microcosm for the city's general state. He stated that the venue opened in 1992 which did good business for 6 years and then a number of establishments opened on the opposite side of the road which catered for a different demographic. This decreased his businesses profitability. This, he felt was not due to competition but due to the clientele of the other businesses putting off the customers to his establishment.

Mr Hussain also felt there was a polarisation in the city between different communities and this he felt would explain some of the crime statistics, and that there was a shift of users in the city centre towards more C, D & E's social economic groups.

Mr Hussain also commented on the differing economics between running a restaurant / bar business in Europe and in Britain. He commented that most businesses in Europe were family run and had been for a number of generations unlike Britain where big corporations run the businesses and they were mostly concerned with volume and profit. He also commented that the British culture was about drinking a large amount in a short time and the opposite was generally true in Europe. He also said that to make the same profit in Britain you would need to sell three times the amount of alcohol it was necessary to sell in Europe.

In terms of the future, Mr Hussain was of the opinion that there were positives coming forward such as more housing in the city centre and the cultural quarter. He felt that Leicester had a problem as he did not consider it a pretty city, that there was no centre and no focus; to remedy this he suggested that the market should be moved and a square be developed. He also commented that the increase in migration of new communities in the city brought a number of challenges for the night economy.

Steve Mason – Independent Publican – Undecided, Churchgate

Mr Mason informed the meeting that he had been in business on Churchgate for 18 years. He commented that as soon as he had developed a successful business there was an overbearing presence from the Police outside his establishment every Friday and Saturday. He felt new rules from the Police were making it harder to operate a business and that good locally based business owners were leaving the trade.

Mr Mason felt that problems relating to binge drinking were the responsibility of the Council and the Police. He noted that drinks could be purchased from supermarkets and shops for far less than he was selling it for; he felt more consideration should be given to where people were buying their alcohol. He also commented that the Leicester Mercury focused too heavily on the violence in the city and this was putting people off coming in to the centre.

Mr Mason also felt that Nottingham was far more successful in appealing to a wide range of people, indeed many people from Leicester went out in to Nottingham on nights out as evidence by the number of adverts for nights outs there in the Leicester Mercury

Councillor Scuplak sought to clarify whether Mr Mason felt that there was a problem of perception not being the same as the reality. Mr Mason commented that the relationship with the Police has changed over the past five years. The creation of the violence and disorder team had meant that there was no process of dialogue with the Police but strict orders to undertake action at their request. He felt that Police priorities were wrong at night and he also felt that the Police and the Council should tell the Mercury that the city was generally safe at night.

Eren Ali – Las Iguanas Restaurant chain

Mr Ali explained that his restaurant chain owned seven establishments, six of which were a success. Mr Ali said his company had undertaken research and modelling exercise on footfall in Leicester before the restaurant opened. On the basis of this research he felt that the restaurant was under performing by about 30%, he felt it was hard work running a restaurant in Leicester. He felt that the City Centre was like a no-go area after 6.00pm, it wasn't an attractive environment and places weren't made safe in a design context. He also thought that there was an overt police presence that wasn't friendly. Mr Ali said he was aware of other multi site restaurant companies who wouldn't invest in Leicester and he wouldn't be recommending the city as a place to make good investments.

Mr Ali made some suggestions as to how the situation in the city could be improved. He thought that more pedestrianisation should be considered, better signage to direct visitors, he thought that safe, well-lit car parking was lacking. He commented that the absence of a cinema wasn't good, as well as the situation regarding theatres. He also felt it was disappointing that there was the absence of the regular branded restaurants, with more of a family appeal. He felt that there ought to be a move to provide more mixed-use developments in the city that bring an offer to a range of people. Furthermore, a more holistic approach was required through partnership and vision that was supported by a PR campaign.

Sister Andrea Mulvaney and Deputy Sister Geraldine Newton – Leicester Royal Infirmary

Geraldine started by stating that Leicester's night-time economy had had a stressful and demanding impact on staffing at the hospital. Traditionally, these problems had mainly occurred during the weekends, but they had now spread throughout the week. It was at the weekend however, when a significant increase in both attendees and violence within the department had occurred. In general, a visit to the Casualty Department during the night-time at weekends was described as a frightening experience for members of the public and hospital staff.

The Government had set a target of four hours as the time in which people must be in and out of hospitals. Geraldine explained that this was extremely difficult to achieve at weekends. Furthermore, patients experienced a significant increase in waiting times during these periods. The majority of complaints addressed were listed as ranging from minor cuts and bruises, and ankle injuries resulting from trips and falls, to major head injuries, often caused by serious violence. It was stated that approximately 70% of the people that were treated during this period had been in the City Centre. The impact on financial and staffing resources was described as huge. Tending to a minor cut can cost between twenty and ninety pounds. A serious head injury could cost up to thousands of pounds.

The Chair queried how Leicester compared to other cities in terms of dealing with the patients that visit the hospital during these times. Geraldine explained that the main difference was that the LRI covered a radius of 30 miles, stretching as far as Rutland. She added that Nottingham, like Leicester only has one Hospital with an Accident and Emergency Department, but this was situated on the outskirts of the City, and was beyond walking distance from the City Centre, so consequently does not suffer the same kinds of problems at weekends as Leicester.

Councillor Thomas asked what action could be taken to make the jobs of hospital staff easier. Geraldine explained that she could not clearly see how improvements could be made. She felt that it lied with altering young people's attitudes towards drinking. Furthermore, the broadening of the night-time economy in terms of offering alternative amenities was viewed as something that could only be positive.

Tony Greenwood – St John's Ambulance

Tony informed the meeting that the Crime and Disorder Partnership had provided funding for converting an old bus into a first-aid post manned by St John Ambulance Staff. He explained that since July 2004, 224 people had been treated on the bus, and that 65 of these visitors carried major injuries and required hospital treatment.

Tony added that since the service had begun, the Police force had ensured that officers stayed with the bus when possible. The Police can direct the bus if they are aware of a location where somebody requires medical assistance. This service was recognised as one that helped to alleviate some of the pressure on the Leicester Royal Infirmary.

The biggest problem in terms of providing the service in the future was in terms of funding. It was hoped that the service would also become available for Thursday nights but this would depend on additional funding or sponsorship.

Councillor Thomas enquired whether the service was likely to be lost if further funding did not become available, and how much sponsorship money would be required to extend the service. Tony responded by stating that funding from the Crime and Disorder Partnership was secured until July 2005, and that St John's would seek £10,000 to continue the running of the bus.

John English – Chairman of the City Centre Management Board

John informed the meeting that he would offer a different perspective to the views that had already been heard, as his views were from a business and regeneration angle.

He made the Committee aware that it was the intention of the City Centre Management Board to attract more businesses into the City. The Board had been acting as a pressure group, and had considered the factors that blighted the City. He made clear that one objective of the Board was to create a restaurant quarter comprising of around fifteen different venues, that would be situated slightly away from the City Centre. Projects such as this, he believed, would help to make Leicester become a widely recognised City. He informed the meeting that Leicester was currently ranked twelfth in terms of credit card expenditure, and whilst this was commendable, he felt that there was strong potential for this to increase.

It was agreed that it was essential that the user profile of amenities within the City Centre at night had to change. Integrating younger people with families and elderly people was welcomed. If this were to be successful, then the minority of those that currently engage in anti-social activities would be likely to be driven out.

One key issue that John made reference to was the fact that very little activity happened in the City Centre during the 'after-work' period, between 5 and 8pm. He gave Reading as an example of a place that was vibrant and offered appeal for workers to socialise within the Centre after 5pm. He was pleased that the Shires was to extend its opening hours to 8pm, but questioned whether the City was ready for such a move, and if it would prove to be a profitable venture. A massive public relations task was seen as a way of ensuring that the move would be positive and rewarding. He felt that *John*

Lewis' was a huge coup for the City, and that this will lead the way for other large retailers to move to Leicester.

It was in John's opinion that the biggest need was a change in the mindset of people and the overall perception of the City Centre. If this could be achieved, then it would become difficult for retail outlets to open any later than 8pm.

Councillor Thomas questioned John as to why he felt that encouraging people into the Centre after 8pm would be difficult. In response, John made assurances that The Shires would extend its opening hours until 8pm, but reiterated the point that it was still unknown whether this would be successful, as no similar venture had been previously attempted. Birmingham was cited as a City where such a move had worked and the benefits there were being constantly reaped. He stressed that it was essential to do more to encourage a greater number of people into the Centre, and that offering alternative options and activities during the evenings was the key to this.

Comments by Ward Councillors

Councillor Scuplak thanked all of the witnesses for speaking, and offered Councillors to put forward any thoughts and comments that they had resulting from the views that they had heard, and to focus on what the key themes were in terms of developing the night-time investigation.

Councillor Scuplak began by looking at criminality. He saw the control of criminality as a major factor in terms of furthering the City's night-time economy, but felt that there was almost a moral panic, and that the issue around violent behaviour could be more down to perception rather than reality. Councillor Kitterick also saw the issue of violence as being overstated, and added that a heavy police presence could give out the wrong impression. He encouraged the Police Force to look at and review their current methods in terms of patrolling the City during the night.

The Chair's second major point was around the variance of social opportunities within Leicester after 8pm. He welcomed the extension of the Shires, as it was perceived that it would go a long way to re-shape the night-time economy. Councillor Kitterick added that if the night-time economy was to become more varied, then a public relations exercise would need to be undertaken, and that there had to be greater provision of places that encouraged people to visit following work. He saw the EXPO festival as one attempt that did not completely work, but urged the need for more festivals to be held during the evening. He saw the marketplace as being a location that needed to be utilised as part of improving the night-time economy. The marketplace was commonly regarded as a central attraction, and one that needed to be brought to greater use. Mr Hussein added that Leicester required a vibrant market square that engaged in trade during the day, before being transformed into a venue suitable for night-time use.

Furthermore, Councillor Kitterick was thought that a restaurant quarter would be beneficial to the city. However, he felt that if such a development were to succeed, then careful consideration would need to be given in terms of how it would be marketed.

A further key theme that emerged was transportation of people from the City Centre during the night. A greater dispersion of taxi ranks was seen as a way of avoiding the current problem of having too many people in a concentrated space after night-clubs have closed. Staggered closing times were also viewed as a method that would reduce such concentration.

Concluding Thoughts

Following the comments made by members, the Chair finished by attempting to draw out what moves could be made to take forward some of the ideas that had been expressed throughout the discussion.

Mr Hussain felt that the creation of greater open space was essentially required. He stated that it should be an underlying priority to beautify the City. Mr Mason explained that the Churchgate area had recently begun to be decorated, and that further visual enhancements throughout the City were needed.

The prime suggestion that was derived was the establishment of a high level strategic management group that could consider all of the issues that directly affected the night-time economy such as the diversification of amenities, public safety, regeneration etc. Such a forum would need to incorporate those people seen as the big players in terms of helping to deliver improvements within the night-time economy, with clear vision, leadership and accountability. The current picture was seen as a mosaic, with a lack of synergy between groups.

It was felt that such a forum would need to collaborate with the media. Ian Stripp saw the need in communicating the positive moves that had been made to enhance the night-time economy, and saw the media as the tool in delivering such positive messages to the public.

The Chair emphasised that it was imperative to work with all of the necessary partners to seek expertise to ensure that movements were made in the right direction, and that such a Forum could probably provide the single, clear vision many had allured to.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

SECOND EVIDENCE SESSION MEETING – 24 MARCH 2005

In Attendance

Ward Councillors

Cllr Scuplak (Chair)
Cllr Thomas
Cllr Farmer
Cllr Kitterick
Cllr Waddington

Witnesses

Dennis Allum	City Centre Resident
Wendy Allum	City Centre Resident
Andrew Parkes	City Centre Resident
Marybeth Parkes	City Centre Resident
Sheena Chatwani	Young Person's Representative
Yasser Meheter	Young Person's Representative
Steve Compton	Development Director, LRC
Geoff Rowe	Leicester Comedy Festival/Cultural Strategy Partnership
Dermot Breen	Chamber of Commerce

Declarations of Interest

Councillors were asked if they had any declarations of interest in any of the business to be discussed.

Councillor Thomas declared a personal interest, as he was president of the Railwayman's Club in Leicester that held a liquor license.

Main Introduction

The Chair allowed each witness to speak for no more than five minutes in turn. Once all witnesses had spoken, members would have the opportunity to ask questions, and engage in a discussion. Members were however, permitted to ask witnesses to clarify points immediately after they had spoken if this was thought necessary.

Dennis and Wendy Allum (City Centre Residents)

Mrs Allum felt that greater effort could have been made to engage City Centre residents in the review process, and was disappointed that a larger and more representative sample of residents had not been consulted.

Wendy explained that she and her husband enjoyed living in the City Centre, but constantly had to tolerate anti-social behaviour. She cited drunkenness, drug use, dealing and discarded needles, murderous intent, noise and crime generally as examples of this behaviour. These traits figured prominently in their lives, but they strongly wished to live in a more peaceful and normal environment. Every night for them and their neighbours was like a lottery; they were unable to predict whether there would be disturbance and if they would even be able to sleep. Mrs Allum questioned how an 'improvement' in the Night-time Economy would improve the quality of lives for City Centre residents.

A further factor that she expressed dissatisfaction with was the role and effectiveness of the Police within the City Centre. She felt that the Police did not appear to be targeting the real perpetrators of crime, and that it sometimes seemed that they ignored disturbances. She made reference to the previous Night-time Economy meeting, where licensees did not welcome a visible police presence. This was in complete contrast to her view, as she felt that a greater police visibility was exactly what was needed. She also referred to the discussion at the last meeting around the reasons as to why more people do not visit Leicester City Centre and said that numbers of visitors would rapidly increase if greater control was exercised over litter, begging, crime etc.

Wendy felt that it was vital that there needed to be an increase in the sport and leisure opportunities offered within the City Centre. A central sporting venue would help to raise the profile of sport within Leicester, and would help to encourage the rise of different sports. Wendy cited Leicester's Hockey Club as one team that need to be assisted, as they did not currently have a home within the City.

Mr and Mrs Parkes (City Centre Residents)

Mrs Parks explained to the meeting that she and her husband had chosen to live in Leicester City Centre. They, like Dennis and Wendy encountered anti-social behaviour every Friday and Saturday after 8pm, and their quality of life dramatically deteriorated. They explained that they wished to live in a 24 hour economy, but stressed that if it were to succeed, then it would require an increase in policing for City Centre residents who currently felt extremely unprotected.

Mrs Parker outlined four key areas that she felt needed to be given a closer look:

1. The link between the granting of licensing and customer behaviour – It was in Mrs Parkes opinion that late-night licenses should only be provided to those licensees who had acted responsibly in the past. She added that the permission of late night licenses to those that have acted irresponsibly in the past would continue to make life difficult for City Centre Residents, and that careful consideration needs to be given whilst granting. Those licensees that have proven to cause persistent severe problems should be closed down.

2. The Role of The Police – Mr Parkes described the way that the police patrol the City Centre during the night as woeful, as he had witnessed officers separating street fighting by ordering the offenders to walk away in opposing directions. This, he felt, does not resolve the problem, but simply reinforces bad behaviour, and allowed offenders to re-offend. Furthermore, the lower level of criminal behaviour, such as urinating in public and criminal damage appeared to go unpunished. He stated that it was imperative for the appropriate authorities to pursue a pro-active rather than a reactive approach, and that the police should do more to ensure that licensees act responsibly.
3. Licenses - Mr Parkes urged members to think carefully when granting late licenses, and spoke on behalf of those people who would be on their way to work at 5am on a Saturday who could encounter a drunken group of people.
4. The diversification of the night-time economy would fail under current policing regimes.

In response to these comments, Councillor Scuplak wanted to clarify whether the main concern regarding policing was with the attitude of officers. Mr and Mrs Parkes agreed that this was part of the problem, and that officers were too greatly concentrated around the Churchgate area, and the rest of the City was largely ignored. It was in their opinion that police avert the trouble, rather than protect the public.

Steve Compton – Development Director, Leicester Regeneration Company (LRC)

The Chair asked Mr Compton for the LRC's view on developing Leicester's night-time economy, and whether their developments would be stalled given the current policing strategy.

Mr Compton informed the meeting that there were two ongoing consultation processes for developments around the edge of the City; within Lee Circle and the Waterside. One of the key concerns that has arisen from the consultations was the guarantee of public safety. It was seen as imperative to seriously consider crime and disorder implications if the Night-time Economy was to improve. The LRC had been looking at how the issues of crime and disorder had tackled by different authorities. He agreed that irresponsible licensees should be sanctioned, and that the new licensing law, if applied appropriately, would help to alleviate the concerns put forward by City Centre residents.

It was a chief aim of the LRC to improve the growth and diversity of the City Centre by developing the areas on the border of the City Centre, with the hope that different areas could be brought together, creating a varied night-time economy. He added that part of this focus was around encouraging a wider scope of persons, such as families in to the City Centre at night, and that there had been much consideration around non-alcohol based amenities.

Diversification was viewed as a key tool in terms of ensuring long-term business stability.

Furthermore, Mr Compton mentioned that the City was in apparent danger of losing the attraction of city dwellers, and was aware that this could damage regeneration plans. The unattractiveness of the City streets during early morning hours was seen as a major deterrent for potential business investors.

The Chair thanked Mr Compton for his overview, and asked what non-alcohol offerings could be provided within the City Centre as part of the night-time economy. Steve suggested that juice bars offer a social environment without alcohol consumption, and that there could also be a greater scope for evening sport and leisure opportunities. He felt that this development would require funding from both the local authority and private operators.

One member asked how the LRC were attempting to address concerns of the Leicester City Council around the office core. Mr Compton replied that the LRC were attempting to design the office core in ways that sought to minimise the potential for anti-social behaviour. It was hoped that crime and disorder would be addressed within proposals by employing a delivery team that involved the police, local residents and various other partners to eradicate issues of concern.

The Chair felt that every agency had a part to play in terms of appropriately regenerating and developing the City's night-time economy. It was agreed that the formulation of a strategic management board would be a positive step to help everybody achieve the economic revival of the City. For this to be given a chance to succeed, it was widely felt that such a Board would require a broad delivery team, and sought comments from a wider spectrum of people.

Sheena Chatwani and Yasser Maheter – Younger people's views

Ms Chatwani and Mr Maheter spoke as people who regularly visit Leicester's nighttime economy. Ms Chatwani said that although she did visit the City Centre at night, she would avoid staying out too late through fear of danger. She offered sympathy for those living in the City Centre who are victims of anti-social behaviour.

Mr Maheter echoed some of the earlier views by stating that the police did not always respond to disturbances and anti-social behaviour. This slow response, he added, prompted people to break the law as they were not likely to be punished.

Both Mr Maheter and Ms Chatwani saw the need for varying the type of amenity offered by Leicester's nighttime economy, especially in terms of widening the sport and leisure opportunities. The provision for more youth activity opportunities was viewed as a way of decreasing anti-social behaviour. In addition, they both felt that a limit should be imposed on the number of licensed premises within the City Centre.

The Chair posed the question of whether a larger number of people would visit the City Centre to access leisure facilities if they were in place, and would these facilities not be better situated in more suburban areas. It was commonly thought that people would do so, as accessibility to the Centre is far better than to other parts of the City, and that if more alternatives were available, then visitors could combine various activities within one evening. It was felt that if such alternative amenities closed before a time when anti-social behaviour was exercised, then nothing would change. The Chair saw the extension of the Shires opening hours until 8 o'clock as an act of faith and a possible pathfinder that may encourage other amenities to extend their hours of opening.

Geoff Rowe – Leicester Comedy Festival/ Cultural Strategy Partnership

Mr Rowe started by stating that whilst investigating Leicester's nighttime economy, the Council had to balance the needs of all people. He showed the meeting a video displaying a street festival in 1997. Such street festivals had attracted between 1000 - 7000 visitors, encompassing people of all ages. He explained how those performances helped to change the whole feel of a city during the nighttime, and even those people who had been out to consume alcohol had engaged in the events. He added that even minor temporary alterations such as adding illuminated lighting to trees could offer a completely different feeling to town and city centres at night, as it changes the perception of a place.

Mr Rowe explained how other cities had experimented in night-time diversification by extending the opening hours of libraries and museums, and that this had been successful. Other cities had extended the opening of shopping centres up until midnight. He summarised by stating that holding any event on the streets at night could really help to change the perception, and cited the Taste Asia expedition as an event in Leicester that proved to be a huge success, and would strongly encourage more similar events.

One member asked Mr Rowe to comment on the success of such events in other cities. He responded by stating that the success had been huge, and this has not only been in large cities. He gave Stockton-on-Tees as an example of a place that had attracted up to sixty-thousand people to watch a street-art performance.

In response to a further question around utilising the potential of Leicester's marketplace, Mr Rowe replied that those events that had been held in the marketplace in the past had been tremendous and strongly encouraged these to continue. He added that although Taste Asia was a huge hit with the public, it finished at 8pm, and felt that it would be beneficial to extend the length of these events. He continued by saying that these events had proven to be extremely cost-effective, and had driven to alter the perception of certain cities.

Members agreed that the events discussed could help to change Leicester's night-time perception, with the hope that good can displace the bad that was currently perceived.

Dermot Breen – Chamber of Commerce

Mr Breen started by emphasising that an increase in the night-time economy would undoubtedly lead to an increase in vibrancy around the city Centre, but wanted to avoid focusing too centrally on youth and alcohol. He felt that a great amount of effort needed to be directed towards promoting alternative amenities for people of all ages. The Chamber of Commerce was the prime motivator of bids, and exercised active engagement on seeking a way forward with bids.

In terms of tackling anti-social behaviour and the environment, Mr Breen felt that this process would be assisted by the removal of late-night mobile food outlets, and the cessation of opening new fast food restaurants. He felt that this should be coupled with an improvement of food standards within pubs and clubs. He added that the ability of the new licensing powers would help greater success be achieved.

One member asked why it was that restricting pressure should be put on to take-aways and fast-food outlets. Mr Breen explained that this was needed because take-aways were a congregating point once night-clubs have closed. The fact that many people would be drunk or semi-drunk at this time of night made it far more likely for disturbances. Secondly, he stated that the mess caused by the provision of food was visible the following morning. It was seen as a clear objective to ensure that people leave the City Centre on Friday and Saturday nights without them having to stay in the vicinity.

The Chair explained that it was imperative for a diverse night-time economy to be created. He asked Mr Breen whether he felt there was a strong possibility that large businesses would be encouraged to assist making the City more diverse. Mr Breen recognised that there was a gap from between 5pm until 8pm during weekdays, where very little activity occurs in the Centre, and is hopeful that a sit-down cafe culture could be created during this period.

Concluding Thoughts

The Chair felt that one major issue that had been arisen was around the consideration of alternative amenities at night-time, and he strongly recommended that the City should host a greater number of festivals. It was suggested that the Council, along with appropriate partners need to undertake a 'leap of faith'. The effects of pursuing initiatives such as some that had been mentioned were unclear, but the general feeling was generally that the night-time economy would not improve if new initiatives were not undertaken. Proactive, rather than re-active approaches were strongly favoured.

The Chair added that as millions of pounds was to be invested into the City's infrastructure, an appropriate way forward could be to invest a small proportion of this into some of the initiatives and ideas that had been discussed.

The Chair thanked all for their attendance and contributions, and encouraged any member of the public present at the meeting to put forward any further recommendations that they may have had to the Council.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

THIRD EVIDENCE SESSION MEETING – 13 APRIL 2005

In Attendance

Ward Councillors

Cllr Farmer (Chair)
Cllr Thomas
Cllr Kitterick
Cllr Waddington
Cllr Fitch
Cllr Corral

Officers

Jeff Miller – Service Director, Regeneration
Mike Broster – Head of Environmental Health & Licensing
Bobby Smiljanic – Team Leader, Licensing
Mike Candler – Cultural Quarter Project Director
Dave Best – City Centre Manager
Barry Pritchard – Team Leader – City Centre
Andrew Thomas – Head of Regeneration Policy
Daxa Pancholi – Head of Economic Development and Community Safety
Frazer Robson – Service Director, Environment
Adrian Russell – Service Director, Community Protection & Wellbeing
Liz Blyth – Cultural Strategy Manager
Richard Downing – Project Manager
Maggie Shutt – Festivals and Events Manager
Mike Richardson – Head of Development Control

Review Support Team

Roy Roberts – Policy Officer
Matthew Reeves – Committee Services
Francis Connolly – Committee Services

Declarations of Interest

Councillors were asked if they had any declarations of interest in any of the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations made.

Main Introduction

The Chair outlined the purpose of the Night Time Economy Review and what it hoped to achieve. He further detailed the purpose of the meeting which was to learn what the Council is currently doing in relation to the night economy and

what, if anything was needed to be done differently. He also noted that it was intended to make the final report of the review group in June.

Presentation on the City Centre Virtual Team

Daxa Pancholi, Head of Economic Development and Community Safety gave the meeting a presentation on the City Centre Virtual Team (CCVT). Daxa gave an introduction on what the CCVT was, how and why it was developed, its purpose, the area it covered and its aims, objectives and vision. She also informed the meeting that the initial work of the CCVT had focused on identification of priority areas which were the improvement in the appearance and accessibility of the City Centre, strengthening the retail circuit and stimulating the local economy, the night time economy and a communications strategy. These priorities were being taken forward as part of the City Centre Development Project which arose from discussions with major retailers, and was seeking to spend a large amount of capital funding on improvement schemes in consultation with partners and stakeholders. There would as part of this project, be a number of physical improvement schemes on major streets in the city and economic improvement schemes such as a retail academy.

The work on the night time economy was being led by this review group. A communications strategy would be developed which would look to create a co-ordinated approach on events in the city centre. The management structure for the CCVT was also outlined as was the way these matters would be taken forward.

Councillors then raised a number of questions on the presentation and other matters on a range of topics, as follows:-

Involvement of residents on matters relating to the City Centre

The points raised on this matter were:-

- The lack of involvement of ward Councillors and residents in decisions relating to the city centre, how was this squared with the Government aim of community leadership?
- How could residents be involved in decisions relating to the expenditure of Section 106, planning gain monies? Could they send in suggestions?
- Any high level group that was given power over the city centre should consider residents views.
- Visually impaired citizens have requested that excess street furniture and signs be removed.
- How can councillors and residents have input into how the £19 million capital money is spent in the city centre?
- Street by Street consultation on uses of the £19 million would be preferable.

Responses to these points were as follows:-

- It was intended to have a city centre consultative forum, however plans needed to be agreed before they were consulted on.
- Residents views were welcomed on the expenditure of the £19 million and if they wanted to send in their suggestions, they would be welcomed.
- Full consultation would take place on the detailed expenditure of the Capital money.
- Each street would be consulted where changes would be taking place.
- Unnecessary street furniture would be removed.
- Details of the development of the City Centre forum, which residents and stakeholders would be involved in, would become clearer on May 12.
- 'Patch Walks' had been a successful methodology where residents were able to make their concerns clear to the Council and the Police.

The impact that this investigation will have

Members challenged officers to think about the evidence that had been submitted as part of the night time economy investigation. An open query was put to officers asking what they would do different as a result of the evidence that had been put to them. Members wanted to ensure that something concrete arose from this investigation and the need for a high level group to manage the city centre was stated. This group needed to have real power to affect change and take on board the views of residents.

Relationship Between the Police and Residents and Businesses

- There appeared to be a divergence of opinion between the residents and business owners about policing the city. The belief of residents was that Policing wasn't vigorous enough at night. The view of business owners was that there was too much police presence at night. It was queried what type of discussions the Council could hold with the Police to bring forward a policy that brought together these divergent views.
- The Crime and Disorder Partnership and the Police Authority should be vehicles by which the Council could apply pressure to ensure the Police tackle the issues faced by residents.

Responses to this point were as follows:-

- A Community Safety Strategy was currently being written.
- A previous element of the crime and disorder strategy was a city centre group which looked at crime issues, it was expected that this group would be retained as it was a means for the police, businesses and the Council to discuss matters relating to the City Centre.
- The 'Reassurance' project was noted as being an example of good practice where it had been used in the New Parks area of the city. It was a project which enabled the Police and the Council to take action on issues raised by

the public. The Home Office requested that this was rolled out city wide but there have been issues with regard to resourcing this.

- The Crime Action Group had just been reconstituted, previously known as the Fear of Crime Group. The Leicester Housing Association Managing Director chaired it. It sought to get the views of residents on a range of issues and it had proved to be successful in dealing with a range of issues such as late night buses and street drinking. The Chair of the group would welcome residents taking part.

Cultural and Entertainment Facilities for the City's Different Communities

The points raised on this subject were as follows:-

- Concerns were expressed about the potential loss of venues used by the City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. It was queried what help could be provided to retain these venues.
- Were the needs being met of the cities Asian communities in terms of cultural events / entertainment?
- Has the Shires development been linked to the cultural partnership?

Responses to these points were as follows:-

- More work could be done with the LGBT community which was lively and visible in Leicester. A history project through the Community Cohesion fund had taken place. More could be done to make use of the pink pound.
- There was no awareness of the threats to venues used by the LGBT community.
- Through the Cultural Strategy it was planned to link the Comedy Festival to the Pride festival.
- The visions contained in the CCVT strategy encourage the development of diverse use of the city centre and specific tasks to meet this aim will be identified.
- The aim of the cultural strategy was to represent all of the city's communities.
- The expenditure of the £19 million capital money should be used to give a flavour of all the city's communities in the city centre.
- The key to meeting the needs of all of the city's communities should be to do more of what was already being done. A wide range of cultural events had already been undertaken.
- Discussions had been undertaken with the Shires developers and the Asian community about providing shop units and facilities such as a prayer room.

Other Matters Raised

- What help could be provided from the bus companies to meet the Council's priorities.

- Concerns were expressed about the planning and licensing systems not being in alignment.
- People needed to be able to leave the city as quickly as possible, congregating groups of people meant trouble could start.
- Could planning gain money be used to fund buses to transport people out of the city?
- Could a late night only taxi license be introduced? Are the taxi ranks in the right places?
- Could different zones of the city have staggered closing times?
- Could a Business Improvement District (BID) be introduced?
- A report on the transport issues regarding buses and taxis was requested.

Responses to these points were as follows:-

- Close partnership working with the bus companies had taken place and one of the companies had recently invested heavily in new buses. It was conceded that more work needed to be done to improve less commercial services in the evenings, but it was felt that a heavy handed draconian approach to dealing with the bus companies was inappropriate.
- Planning and Licensing undertook different roles and were governed by different sets of statute. Opening hours were both a planning and licensing issue and ways in which the systems could work together was being explored. The planning authority could object to a resolution of the Licensing Committee but this hadn't happened yet and would be unlikely.
- Late night buses have been provided but the very late night ones were stopped due to insufficient demand. The bus companies are requesting security staff be supplied for the buses.
- Consultation was taking place about whether or how to ask venues to deal with trouble by measures such as funding buses through the licensing regime. There were problems with identifying where trouble was occurring and if it was in a particular venue they would have the opportunity to address that trouble first.
- A review of taxi services was being undertaken, night taxis could be introduced, but it would mean a large increase in the fleet and incentives may be required.
- Differing hours for different premises under the licensing regime could be difficult.
- The City Centre Management were looking at the BID model with consideration being given to a focused area based on the night time economy. This could provide resources for services such as late night buses.

Comments from Residents at the meeting

- Publicity about this investigation was poor.

- More positive stories needed to be published in the Leicester Mercury about the night time economy.
- A query was raised over change of management for licensed premises and whether the license remained when this happened.
- Residents actively requested to give their views on expenditure of the £19 million capital money.
- The range of activities for young people had been reduced, there was a need for more leisure activities, too many venues in the city centre had been closed down and / or demolished.
- Were Council's able to provide extra leisure facilities in the current financial climate?
- Safety is a paramount issue for the public and taxi drivers.
- Disused and listed buildings were important and care should be taken of them.
- Consultation should take place regarding the loss of LGBT community venues.
- Street furniture was often a hazard and the big information boxes should be removed.

Responses to these points were as follows:-

- The editor of the Leicester Mercury took decisions about what to print, the Council had little control over this.
- Under the new licensing regime there was a premises license, but this could be reviewed if complaints were made by residents or the Police.
- Residents were welcomed to send in their views on the expenditure of the £19 million.
- It was agreed that there was a need to provide more restaurant and leisure facilities in the City centre.
- The role of Council's was now to work in partnership with other organisations to provide services and facilities, how they were paid for was not the central issue.
- The Cultural Quarter proposals would increase the city's leisure facilities. Diversifying the city's entertainment was seen as key to bringing in a wider range of people.
- The Shires development would bring in more diversity in terms of leisure facilities.
- There were currently a range of evening activities in the City. The museums do about 100 evening events a year, the expo festival, lights switching on, jazz shows at the Y Theatre were given as examples. Festivals and events were done well by the city and they brought a wide range of city in.

- The security of taxi drivers had been looked at previously, new purpose built taxis had a security screen and doors, lockable by the driver. CCTV had been proposed for taxis but the take up was low.
- The best way of maintaining listed buildings was to find a suitable use for them which was sympathetic.
- A review of street furniture would be looked at as part of the city centre redevelopment and consideration for expenditure of the £19 million.

Chair's Summary and Recommendations

- There were areas that had not been covered by this meeting that would have to be revisited.
- There was a need to consider ways to fight the negative image of the City centre. There was a conference in Manchester in May on this area.
- The development of a 24 hour economy needed more consideration, what were the barriers and what were the possibilities.
- More information was required on the possibility of introducing zero tolerance policing policies.
- A national conference was taking place in Leicester on the night time economy, overseen by the Association of Public Service Excellence on 19th May.
- Reports were requested for the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the City Centre Strategy and Business Improvement Districts.
- The proposed way forward for this investigation was for the Councillors to consider the evidence gathered and then recommendations will be made and the final report will be considered by the Cabinet. It will be the Cabinet's responsibility to take the matter forward working with the Council's partners.

The Chair then thanked the Members of the public for attending, especially those who showed up on a regular basis. He also thanked Officers, particularly Roy Roberts, Councillors and partners for assisting with the investigation.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

EMERGING THEMES & ISSUES

Diverse and Vibrant City Centre

Desire to see a more diverse and vibrant city centre with a range of activities and attractions that appeal a wide section of Leicester's population, and which is supported by an appropriate infrastructure

- A more attractive place to live, work socialise and visit
- More leisure attractions, e.g. cinema, sports
- More non-alcoholic attractions on offer
- Better quality car parking at night
- No focal point in the city centre
- Need for more mixed use areas
- The exodus of people from Leicester to Nottingham for a night out
- More family focussed entertainment
- Lack of diversification in the activities on 'offer' in the night economy including the cultural 'offer'
- Growing appeal of satellite night economies, particularly for higher social economic groups
- Consideration to the social infrastructure that would be required to support family city centre living
- More attention to the possible contribution of Leicester's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual community
- Developing the early evening economy between 5pm and 8pm, and extending late night shopping

Strategic Management

- The strategic management of the city centre through strong leadership, clear vision and accountability and through a partnership with all stakeholders, including residents and licensees
- Overwhelming view that strong leadership, clear vision and accountability that reflects its economic importance to the city is required for the city centre
- A plethora of groups in the city centre but no clear leadership on the issues affecting it, 'mosaic' and lack of synergy

- No agreed city centre strategy or vision – government good practice
- Assist move towards a 24 hour city – 8pm shopping as part of Shires extension
- Links to other forums and the development of others, e.g. licensees
- Lack of consultation and engagement with residents regarding the effects of the night economy
- Deteriorating relationship between club/pub licensees and the police
- The development of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)
- The role of the Cultural Partnership and its vision for the city centre and that of the City Centre Virtual Team, and the role of Leicester Shire Promotions
- The role of Leicester Partnership
- Desire for City Council to be more proactive in managing and developing the city centre
- Lack of awareness among the public for the current management structures in place for the city centre and proposed initiatives
- The 5pm – 8pm lull in city centre activity
- Examples – Wolverhampton, Coventry, and Manchester

Partnership

The setting up of cross stakeholder teams and task and finish group to address on-going and emerging issues within the city centre night economy

- Need to identify supportive measures that address night economy policing issues – crowd management, transport, acceptable behaviour levels, etc.
- The enforcement of new policies without consultation with those effected
- Lack of consultation with residents
- Deteriorating relationship between licensees and the police
- The introduction of the new door supervisors' scheme and its associated problems
- The use of a stick and carrot with licensees – close bad ones
- Current policing policy seen as reinforcing bad behaviour
- The banning of inappropriate drink promotions
- Set-up a festivals sub-group that would look at late night events
- Moratorium on food outlets – encourages people to congregate in particular parts of the city centre
- The implementation of the new licensing policy
- A licensing forum to look at long term strategic plans for the city

- Discussions regards identifying solutions to the dispersal of people in the early morning
- Improvement to the city's transport infrastructure to reduce anti-social behaviour
- Working partnership to support good late night initiatives – The SOS Bus
- Night-time taxi licences
- Bringing together residents and licensees

Zero Tolerance

A more aggressive enforcement policy regarding low-level crime, including illegal traders, graffiti, urination, etc and improved management of the issues regarding litter and rubbish collection

- Need to deal with the number of illegal traders
- Litter as a result of the night economy
- Urination, drug taking, vomiting and lewd acts on the streets
- Noise and general loudness behaviour
- Early morning street cleaning programme
- Address begging
- Current policing policy seen as reinforcing bad behaviour

Social Environment

Greater attention to the social environment and the use of space within the city centre

- Too focussed on the physical regeneration of the city centre
- Large open spaces that become soulless/no-go areas
- Need to identify uses for the Market in the evening
- The pedestrianisation/de- pedestrianisation of streets
- Look at ways of designing out crime and disorder
- No focal point in the city centre
- The perception as a high crime and disorder area
- Mainly on street parking on dark un-welcoming streets and need for better signage
- Learning lessons regarding lighting and management of different areas of the city centre
- Initiatives to address young people's attitudes to drinking

Promoting the City Centre

The development of a PR campaign to promote the city centre and its night economy on the back of the positive work to address the problems of the centre's night-time economy

- Current press and media coverage is very negative and discourages people from coming into the city centre at night
- Need to generate positive news
- Late night festivals and events that could lead to positive PR for the city
- Good messages/behaviour displacing the bad
- A clearer view on the size and worth of the night economy
- Perception that there is very little at present to shout about

2005-04-21

INVITED WITNESSES TO PUBLIC SESSIONS

3rd March 2005 - the current night-time economy

Chief Superintendent Ian Stripp & Superintendent Graham Middleton
Luke Russell – Development Manager, Crime & Disorder Partnership
John Hussain – Independent publican/restaurateur
Steve Mason – Independent publican
Eren Ali – Independent publican, Las Iguanas
John English – Chairman of the City Centre Management Board
Commander Tony Greenwood – St. Johns Ambulance
Andrea Mulvaney (Sister) & Geraldine Newton (Dep. Sister), Leicester Royal
– Accident & Emergency Department

14th March 2005 - what potential - the city's nightlife

Dennis and Wendy Allum, City Centre residents
Marybeth and Andrew Parkes, City Centre residents
Sheena Chatwani and Yasser Meheter, Young People Representatives
Geoff Rowe, Leicester Comedy Festival
Steve Compton – Development Director, Leicester Regeneration Company
Dermot Breen, Chairman – City Centre Committee, Chamber of Commerce

13th April 2005 - what can we do?

Jeff Miller, Service Director (Regeneration)
Mike Broster, Head of Environment Health & Licensing
Bobby Smiljanic, Team Leader – Licensing
Mike Candler, Cultural Quarter Projects Director
Dave Best, City Centre Manager
Barry Pritchard, Central Area Team Leader - City Centre
Andrew Thomas, Head of Regeneration Policy
Daxa Pancholi, Head of Economic Development & Community Safety
Frazer Robson, Service Director (Environment)
Liz Blyth, Cultural Strategy Manager
Richard Downey, Project Manager – City Centre Forum
Maggie Shutt, Festivals & Events Manager
Adrian Russell, Service Director - Community Protection and Wellbeing