

MDA No.: 1325

Title: Rebuilding London's Night-time economy

1. Executive Summary

1.1 At the Economy Committee meeting on 6 September 2021 the Committee resolved that:

Authority be delegated to the Chairman, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree any output arising from the discussion.

1.2 Following consultation with party Group Lead Members, the Chair agreed the Committee's report on London's night-time economy, as attached at **Appendix 1**.

2. Decision

3.1 **That the Economy Committee's report, *Night vision: rebuilding London's night-time economy*, be agreed.**

Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Printed Name: Shaun Bailey AM, Chairman of the Economy Committee

Date: 08/12/2021

3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 The terms of reference for this investigation were agreed by the Chairman, in consultation with relevant party Group Lead Members, under the standing authority granted to Chairs of Committees and Sub-Committees. Officers confirm that the report and its recommendations fall within these terms of reference.
- 3.2 The exercise of delegated authority approving the report will be formally noted at the Economy Committee's next appropriate meeting.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services): L J Harvey

Printed Name: Lauren Harvey

Date: 06/12/2021

Telephone Number: 07729 625571

Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED

Note: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signature (Finance):


Printed Name:

Date:

Telephone Number:

Legal Implications:

The Chairman of the Economy Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature (Legal): 

Printed Name: Emma Strain, Monitoring Officer

Date: 06/12/2021

Telephone Number: 020 7983 6550

Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

- Hina Bokhari AM, Deputy Chair
- Marina Ahmad AM
- Zack Polanski AM

4. Public Access to Information

- 4.1 Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.
- 4.2 If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.
- 4.3 **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, until what date:

Part 2 – Sensitive Information:

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

Lead Officer / Author

Signature:

Printed Name: Dan Tattersall

Job Title: Senior Policy Adviser

Date: 06/12/2021

Telephone Number: 07783 805825

Countersigned by Executive Director:

Signature: 

Printed Name: Helen Ewen, Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 08/12/2021

Telephone Number: 07729 108986



**Night Vision: Rebuilding London's
Night-Time Economy**
London Assembly Economy Committee

LONDONASSEMBLY

Economy Committee



The Economy Committee scrutinises the work of the Mayor relating to economic development, wealth creation, social development, culture, sport and tourism in the capital. It also examines the Mayor's role as chair of the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP).

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Foreword



Shaun Bailey AM
Chairman of the Economy Committee

The COVID-19 pandemic stripped away our ability to socialise with friends and family, and shut down the places where so many of these meetings occur. This absence was felt particularly strongly for those activities taking place in the evening and at night – going clubbing, watching live music, eating in bars and restaurants, and visiting the theatre or the cinema. The experiences provided by these venues disappeared from our lives, in some cases for almost 18 months.

London's night-time industries were plunged into crisis. The doors of venues were closed, staff were sent home, income streams dried up. Businesses endured unprecedented losses. The Government's business-support packages provided a vital lifeline to night-time economy industries, and almost four-fifths of workers were placed on the furlough scheme at some point. Meanwhile, London lost one of the key pillars of its identity and cultural life, as the city lay dark and empty at night.

But since restrictions were lifted on 19 July 2021, London's nightclubs and music venues joined pubs, theatres and cinemas in reopening their doors and welcoming back their customers. It's a mark of the strength and resilience of the sector that it has bounced back so quickly. It's fantastic to once again see London's nightlife thriving, as Londoners and visitors alike have flocked back to our world-famous venues. It's heartening to see the West End bustling with people on a Saturday night yet again, as people eagerly return to the sorts of experiences denied to them for so long.

But this doesn't mean that we can become complacent and assume that the challenges faced by night-time businesses have gone away. It's clear from speaking to business owners across the night-time economy that the impact of COVID-19 is still being felt and the future remains uncertain.

This investigation by London Assembly Economy Committee has set out to better understand the challenges facing the sector and the action that the Mayor and Central Government can take to support it. We have heard from some of the key players in London's night-time economy about the impact of the pandemic upon the sector, the reopening process that has taken place over recent months, and prospects for the sector's future. The recommendations in this report are all aimed at supporting London's night-time economy, from supplying the skills needed by businesses, to making sure Londoners feel safe at night, to ensuring that support for night-time industries is embedded in the Mayor's recovery missions.

I want to see London's night-time economy recover from the pandemic and come back stronger than before. I am a Londoner born and bred, and I remember a time when the words 'London' and 'nightlife' were intimately related. I am not sure this is the case now. London's night-time economy is one of our cultural gems, and makes enormous social and economic contribution to our city and country. It needs celebrating and promoting on the world stage.

"Definitely we would say that footfall is still much reduced... Confidence comes into that. It is about the ability of people to want to spend dwell-time. They have to have the confidence to come in, to go to the one destination that they want to go to, let us say that is a restaurant for a particular meal. But then it is about the confidence to stroll around the city, take the tube to other parts, spend dwell-time."

**Rowena Howie, Greater London Representative
Federation of Small Businesses**

"[The late-night economy has had] a fantastic bounce-back since the 19th [July]. It has been exceptional business. Many have utilised the opportunity and the desire – particularly for youth culture, the 850,000 new 18-year-olds that have had two years of none of this experience, including freshers, etc – to come in and try to do as many sessions as possible."

**Michael Kill, CEO
Night Time Industries Association**

Executive Summary

This report explores the impact of the pandemic on London's night-time economy and the challenges faced by the sector since reopening in the summer of 2021. It offers a series of recommendations for how the Mayor and Central Government can support the night-time economy to rebuild in the aftermath of COVID-19.

London's night-time businesses are key drivers of growth and employment, contributing £17bn-£26bn to the UK economy before the pandemic¹ and employing 594,200 workers in the cultural and leisure segment of the night-time economy alone.² London's nightlife is one of the most vibrant in the world, integral to the lifestyles of many Londoners and drawing in millions of domestic and international tourists every year.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact upon the night-time economy. Between March 2020 and 19 July 2021 nightclubs were closed under the Government's lockdown laws. Businesses and venues such as pubs, restaurants, theatres and live music spaces were legally required to be fully closed, or to periodically open with only partial and socially distanced capacity. This was a hugely challenging time for night-time economy businesses, with many accruing significant debts and some struggling to survive despite benefitting from various government support measures, including the furlough scheme, business grants and the Culture Recovery Fund.

The night-time economy in London was permitted to fully reopen with the lifting of Government restrictions in England on 19 July 2021. Since then London's night-time venues have once again opened their doors to customers, and the sector has started to bounce back, with some business reporting a return to pre-pandemic levels of spending. But the situation remains precarious: footfall is still below pre-pandemic levels and advance bookings are lower than they should be for 2022.

At a meeting on 6 September 2021 and a subsequent roundtable on 7 October 2021, the Economy Committee heard from industry stakeholders and experts about the main challenges faced by night-time economy businesses. These included a lack of consumer confidence; a shortage of staff in parts of the workforce; the changing landscape as a result of the UK's exit from the EU; the impact of workers not returning to the office; reduced bookings for future months; and the confusion created by mixed messaging about restrictions such as vaccine passports.

This report makes a number of recommendations to the Mayor and Central Government to help rebuild consumer confidence, boost footfall and ensure that London's night-time economy can fully recover from the pandemic. These recommendations cover areas including the workforce, safety at night, the night tube and licensing arrangements. The report concludes by recommending that more should be done to celebrate and promote London's night-time

¹ [The clubbing map: What has happened to London nightlife?](#), NESTA, 4 September 2017

² [The Night Time Economy in London and Manchester, 2001 to 2017](#), ONS, 23 March 2018

economy, and that it should be seen as central to future domestic and international tourism campaigns.

"Although our costs are higher, I must say that our turnover has gone back to pre-pandemic levels, although the shape of the spend is very different. Mondays and Fridays are a lot quieter. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are a lot busier. That is because that is when people tend to go in to work. They are not going in five days a week. They tend to go in in the middle of the week."

**Paul Kohler, Owner
CellarDoor Nightclub**

"Our ticket sales are 20 per cent down and that is a consistent number throughout... Interestingly, for the quarter period from 1 July to 30 September [2021], we are 21 per cent up in terms of our income and in terms of what we generate."

**James Lindsay, Chief Executive Officer
Royal Vauxhall Tavern**

"Pre-booking of advance tickets beyond probably the end of this month is significantly down, much lower than we would expect for this period. It is about 35 per cent off where we would normally expect to be."

**Mark Davyd, Chief Executive Officer
London Music Venue Trust**

"We are finding that younger audiences are coming back in large numbers. Contemporary music gigs are selling out. Comedy is selling out. Talks aimed at younger audiences are selling out. Classical music has been much slower, and I know from the Arts Council that that is pretty widespread across the country. It suggests that older audiences might be more hesitant."

**Elaine Bedell, Chief Executive Officer
Southbank Centre**

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should set and publish targets on how many additional workers from the hospitality sector will be trained and helped into good-quality work as part of the Mayor's Academies Programme.

Recommendation 2

Hospitality and creative hubs within the Mayor's Academies Programme should prioritise skills provision in areas where there is a particular shortage, including door security and certain technical roles in the creative industries. The Mayor needs to work with industry to identify where these shortages are when providing skills to help Londoners into work.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should work alongside employers and skills providers to improve perceptions and working conditions of jobs such as door supervisors and other roles in hospitality, in order to encourage more people to enter the sector. The Mayor, employers and providers should also work to improve the attractiveness of these jobs, ensuring they provide good-quality work and that there are progression opportunities in the sector, including through the Skills Academy hubs.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor and Central Government should work together to ensure the UK's new visa and immigration system following the UK leaving the EU is working in the right way to address London's skills and labour shortages in the night-time economy

Recommendation 5

The London Recovery Programme should include a strategy for supporting the night-time economy to build back from the pandemic. It should also explain how the success of this support will be measured.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should demonstrate what measurable impact the Women's Night Safety Charter has had since its implementation, and set out an action plan to increase the number of organisations signed up to the Charter.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should set out what action he is taking to improve safety for all groups in the context of the night-time economy.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor and TfL should set out an appropriate timetable to ensure that the rest of the night tube returns as soon as is feasibly possible, given its importance to the recovery of the night-time economy, particularly in relation to feelings of personal safety. They should also provide as much notice as possible about this, to enable night-time economy businesses to plan for its return.

Recommendation 9

The Mayor and London Councils should work with Central Government to review London's licensing arrangements, to ensure that schemes work for both businesses and residents. This work should be undertaken this winter to allow plans to be put in place in time for summer 2022.

Recommendation 10

The Mayor should work with local authorities to investigate the feasibility of meanwhile use of vacant premises for night-time businesses and events.

Recommendation 11

There needs to be clear and consistent messaging from the Mayor and the Government going forwards about the safety of London's night-time industries in relation to COVID-19, in order to help rebuild confidence in the sector.

Recommendation 12

The Mayor and Central Government should do more to celebrate and promote London's night-time economy. The night-time economy should be seen as central to future domestic and international tourism campaigns. This should include the Mayor's future promotional activity once the Let's Do London campaign has concluded.

The night-time economy workforce

Recommendation 1

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text here.

The shutdown of the night-time economy during the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound and long-lasting impact upon the sector's workforce. An inquiry carried out by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Night Time Economy in February 2021 found that businesses in the night-time economy had on average made 37 per cent of their total workforce redundant; that 78 per cent of all employees in the sector had at some point been on furlough; and that 85 per cent of people working in the sector were considering leaving the industry.³

Even as the night-time economy started to open up in the summer of 2021, the lasting impact of the pandemic upon the workforce was still being felt. Research commissioned by the Night

³ [Covid-19 and UK nightlife](#), APPG for the Night Time Economy, February 2021

Time Industries Association in October 2021 estimated that 393,000 jobs have been lost across the night-time economy due to COVID-19, including 86,000 in the “night-time cultural economy”, which includes nightclubs and theatres.⁴

Several industry stakeholders who spoke to the Committee also made clear that there is a considerable shortage of staff in parts of the night-time economy. The uncertainty generated by the pandemic has meant a lack of confidence about long-term job security; this has resulted in workers leaving the sector, and is deterring new entrants from joining. It is likely that the UK leaving the EU is also having an impact upon staff shortages, as the hospitality sector has often been reliant on labour from the EU. The Hospitality Insider Report has estimated that more than 92,000 workers from the EU have left the UK's hospitality sector since the start of the pandemic.⁵ It was noted in the Committee's meeting that the Mayor and UK Hospitality had called for a coronavirus recovery visa to accelerate the return of foreign workers to the hospitality industry.⁶ The Committee heard that it is difficult to distinguish the impact of the UK leaving the EU from the impact of the pandemic upon staff shortages, given that these two events coincided. Going forward, it will be important that the new immigration system implemented after the UK's exit from the EU works and is able to address London's skills and labour shortages in the night-time economy.

Furthermore, as is well documented, the pandemic did not affect all Londoners or businesses equally. The diversity of London's night-time economy venues and workforce – including London's LGBT+ community and the city's ethnic diversity – is a core part of its significance. As Carolyn ML Forsyth, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director at Talawa Theatre Company, told the Committee, it will be important to ensure “that we do not lose the diversity and representation that we have created”.

Staff shortages are more acute for some roles in the night-time economy than others. The Committee heard about shortages in certain technical roles in the creative industries but also in roles such as marketing. One repeatedly mentioned area with staff shortages was door security, where the sector is operating at about 80 per cent of pre-COVID-19 levels. This is a particular concern given that venues have implemented additional public safety measures in response to the pandemic, such as checking of vaccination status or a recent negative test; these measures have capacity implications for door security.

⁴ [Night-time cultural sector hit with 86,000 job losses due to Covid-19](#), *The Guardian*, 11 October 2021

⁵ [More than 92,000 EU workers estimated to have left UK's hospitality sector](#), *The Caterer*, 5 August 2021

⁶ [Mayor pledges to tackle acute staff shortages in hospitality industry](#), Mayor of London, 3 June 2021

“We are seeing quite large shortages of staff at the moment. We are seeing shortages in some of the technical areas – stage management, sound, wardrobe – quite wide-ranging, but also some of the areas back-of-house. Marketing resource is a real scarcity.”

**Julian Bird, Chief Executive
Society of London Theatre**

The Committee also heard that the negative perceptions that exist around certain jobs, including door supervisors, are acting as a barrier to attracting more workers into the night-time economy. Efforts therefore need to be made to change perceptions about these roles. This is particularly important given that the sector has traditionally been reliant on EU workers, but will have to attract more workers from the UK in the future. The attractiveness of roles such as these is vital too, and the quality of work and working conditions should be a point of focus for the Mayor and employers. The importance of pay and working conditions for night-time workers is something the Economy Committee has emphasised for a number of years, and formed a key part of the Economy Committee's 2018 report 'Rewrite the Night'.⁷

The Mayor has an important role to play in meeting the skills needs of night-time businesses, through his oversight of the Adult Education Budget and the Mayor's Academies Programme, which aims to support Londoners hardest hit by the pandemic into work in sectors key to London's recovery.⁸ Hospitality has been identified as one of the priority sectors, and it is vital that this programme focuses on skills training in areas where there are the greatest shortages. The Mayor should publish targets on how many additional workers from the hospitality sector will be trained and helped into good-quality work as part of the programme.

One of the key pillars of the Academies programme is the creation of 'Academy hubs' in particular sectors, which will bring together training providers, employers and other local partners. As well as delivering training, these hubs have a role to play in identifying where skills gaps exist, and in working to improve perceptions about certain roles in the night-time economy. Given the immediate need for staff in the night-time economy's hospitality and creative sectors, it is important that this work starts as soon as possible.

The London Recovery Programme

⁷ [Rewrite the night: the future of London's night-time economy](#), London Assembly Economy Committee, February 2018

⁸ [Mayor's Academies Programme](#)

Recommendation 5

The London Recovery Programme should include a strategy for supporting the night-time economy to build back from the pandemic. It should also explain how the success of this support will be measured.

The London Recovery Programme includes the aim of reversing 'the pattern of rising unemployment and lost economic growth caused by the economic scarring of COVID-19'. Overseen by the London Recovery Board, which is chaired jointly by the Mayor of London and the Chair of London Councils, it is comprised of nine recovery missions.⁹

The Committee heard from the Night Czar, Amy Lamé, that the London Recovery Programme includes some provisions that are relevant to the night-time economy, including the Good Work for All and High Streets for All missions. The High Streets For All Challenge Fund will support several initiatives to develop night-time strategies for high streets across the capital, including 19 projects with 'a night-time element' and 11 with 'significant night-time plans'. The Mayor and the Night Czar also launched the Night Time Data Observatory in March 2021, which contains research and data on London at night and aims to support local decision-makers in improving their night-time offer.¹⁰

Whilst these initiatives are welcome, there is no specific recovery mission for the night-time economy, and no specific performance indicators directly linked to the night-time economy as part of the other missions. Without a strategy with performance indicators, there is therefore a risk that attempts to support the night-time economy as part of the recovery programme are not sufficiently prioritised, joined-up or measurable.

⁹ [London Recovery Programme: Overview Paper](#), GLA, October 2020

¹⁰ [Night Time Data Observatory](#), Mayor of London

Personal safety at night

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should demonstrate what measurable impact the Women's Night Safety Charter has had since its implementation, and set out an action plan to increase the number of organisations signed up to the Charter.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should set out what action he is taking to improve safety for all groups in the context of the night-time economy.

The Committee repeatedly heard that the return of consumer confidence was central to the full recovery of the night-time economy. Consumer confidence is intrinsically bound up with feelings of safety, both in respect to catching or spreading the COVID-19 virus, and from abuse as Londoners and visitors will only return to the capital's clubs, bars and theatres if they feel safe doing so.

The Committee heard that the Mayor is taking action to improve safety at night through the Women's Night Safety Charter and the Ask for Angela campaign. The Women's Night Safety Charter was created as part of the Mayor's Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and is part of London's commitment to the UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces global initiative.¹¹ It contains seven pledges, broadly grouped into issues around communication, training, and design or layout of a building or a public realm, and the Committee heard that new resources and training will be rolled out across 2022. Any organisation that operates between 6pm and 6am can sign up to the Charter, and it currently has more than 600 signatories. The Night Czar told the Committee that the Women's Night Safety Charter is an 'inclusive charter', and recognises that a large proportion of women from ethnic minorities do work at night.

The Night Czar also told the Committee that the Ask for Angela campaign has been refreshed. People who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened can discreetly seek help by approaching venue staff and asking for 'Angela'. This code-phrase will indicate to staff that they require help with their situation, and a trained member of staff will then look to support and assist them.¹²

¹¹ [Women's Night Safety Charter](#)

¹² [Ask for Angela](#), Metropolitan Police

The Committee welcomes these initiatives and would like to see evaluation of the impact of the Women's Night Safety Charter. The Mayor and the Night Czar should also outline how they intend to increase the number of organisations signed up to the Charter.

The safety of all Londoners must remain a priority. The Committee heard that personal safety for a number of groups across London – including, but not limited to, LGBT+ Londoners and Londoners from minority ethnic groups – remains a key concern, and the Mayor should set out what action he is taking to improve the safety of all groups in the context of the night-time economy.

The night tube

Recommendation 8

The Mayor and TfL should set out an appropriate timetable to ensure that the rest of the night tube returns as soon as is feasibly possible, given its importance to the recovery of the night-time economy, particularly in relation to feelings of personal safety. They should also provide as much notice as possible about this, to enable night-time economy businesses to plan for its return.

The night tube was suspended at the start of the pandemic in an attempt to limit the spread of COVID-19, and did not immediately return when London's night-time businesses started to reopen. This was due to delays to driver training as a result of restrictions during the pandemic, and the need to coordinate with vital upgrades to the tube network and the necessary engineering closures.

The Committee heard from several guests that the return of the night tube is essential for the recovery of the night-time economy. The night tube is perceived by some as being safer than other modes of transport at night, and is therefore central to building customer confidence in going out at night. It is also a vital mode of transport for weekend workers in London's night-time businesses, who have been reliant on other modes of transport to get home from work.

"Clearly, for Friday night and Saturday night, getting the tube back up and running again is critical to all our business recoveries in London."

**James Lindsay, Chief Executive Officer
Royal Vauxhall Tavern**

Geoff Hobbs, Director of Public Transport Service Planning at TfL, highlighted challenges around training tube drivers while social distancing requirements are in place, as well as the uncertainties around TfL's funding settlement. Recent income has also been negatively impacted because of the pandemic. The night tube returned on the Central and Victoria lines from 27 November, and some night-time overground services will resume from 17 December. The Mayor has said that other lines will reopen once enough staff are available. It is of vital importance to the night-time economy that this happens as soon as possible, and this was recognised by the London Assembly in November 2021 when Assembly Members unanimously called on the Mayor and TfL to set out an appropriate timetable for reopening all night tube services.¹³

Licensing arrangements

Recommendation 9

The Mayor and London Councils should work with Central Government to review London's licensing arrangements, to ensure that schemes work for both businesses and residents. This work should be undertaken this winter to allow plans to be put in place in time for summer 2022.

Recommendation 10

The Mayor should work with local authorities to investigate the feasibility of meanwhile use of vacant premises for night-time businesses and events.

During the pandemic, the Government made it quicker and less expensive for businesses to get a temporary pavement licence, in order to support more 'al fresco dining'. In the Government's Hospitality Strategy, published in July 2021, ministers stated that they would 'extend these temporary easements and are considering their long-term future, with the aim of consulting on how to make them permanent'.¹⁴

The Committee heard that extending these licensing arrangements could significantly improve prospects for night-time businesses. This would need to be balanced against considerations of residents.

One of the highest-profile examples of a pavement licence scheme put in place during the pandemic was in Soho; the road closures that supported this scheme have now been removed.

¹³ [London Assembly Motion: Night Tube](#), London Assembly, 11 November 2021

¹⁴ [Hospitality Strategy: Reopening, Recovery, Resilience](#), BEIS, July 2021

Cllr Matthew Green, Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning at Westminster City Council, told the Committee that this scheme was always intended to be temporary, but noted that the council would like to redesign a scheme in cooperation with residents that allows al fresco dining to continue. The Committee would like to see the Mayor, Central Government and London Councils working together to explore options for the future of al fresco dining across London. This co-working to aid businesses' future sustainability aligns well with a previous call of the Economy Committee for the Mayor, business representatives and community representatives to work together to ensure that the Government's ongoing reform to business rates delivers for London's businesses.¹⁵

The Committee also heard that meanwhile use of vacant premises could be pivoted more towards the night-time economy to drive footfall. Meanwhile use of vacant units has grown in popularity in recent years, but this tends to be focused on the daytime economy in sectors such as arts and culture. Rowena Howie noted that meanwhile use 'is as valid in the night-time economy as it is in the daytime', and the Night Czar highlighted how meanwhile space can be particularly valuable in providing venues for groups such as London's LGBT+ community.

Clarity of messaging

Recommendation 11

There needs to be clear and consistent messaging from the Mayor and the Government going forwards about the safety of London's night-time industries in relation to COVID-19, in order to help rebuild confidence in the sector.

The Committee heard that clarity of messaging from both the Government and the Mayor will be critical going forwards for building consumer confidence. Businesses have found mixed messaging about potential restrictions very unhelpful, for example, the Government's messaging around vaccine passports.

In July 2021, the Prime Minister announced that 'by the end of September, when all over-18s have had their chance to be double-jabbed we're planning to make full vaccination the condition of entry to nightclubs and other venues where large crowds gather.'¹⁶ On 12 September, the Health Secretary announced that plans for vaccine passports in England would not go ahead.¹⁷

¹⁵ [High hopes: Supporting London's high streets in the economic recovery from COVID-19](#), London Assembly Economy Committee, March 2021

¹⁶ [Covid: Two jabs needed to enter nightclubs from September](#), BBC News, 19 July 2021

¹⁷ [England vaccine passport plans ditched, Sajid Javid says](#), BBC News, 12 September 2021

Businesses would particularly benefit from unified messaging from national and local government about the safety of London's night-time economy in relation to COVID-19. Elaine Bedell, Chief Executive Officer at the Southbank Centre, told the Committee that she would like to see 'some very clear messages and also, specifically from London, that London is safe and it is safe to come back.'¹⁸

"When it comes to customer confidence... it is not helping at all to keep hearing that there might be a plan B and plan B might involve these things, which seem to change day by day. We could do with some consistent and clear messaging. We could also do with some slightly controlled messaging, frankly."

**Mark Davyd, Chief Executive Officer
London Music Venue Trust**

Reputation and marketing of the night-time economy

Recommendation 12

The Mayor and Central Government should do more to celebrate and promote London's night-time economy. The night-time economy should be seen as central to future domestic and international tourism campaigns. This should include the Mayor's future promotional activity once the Let's Do London campaign has concluded.

"On communications, the one thing we have all learned is that very clear communications from anybody in authority is absolutely essential."

**Julian Bird, Chief Executive
Society of London Theatre**

¹⁸ Please note that the evidence for this report was taken over September and October 2021, before the identification of the Omicron variant. At the time of publication in early December 2021, the impact of the Omicron variant is still emerging.

London's night-time businesses are key drivers of growth and employment, contributing £17bn-£26bn to the UK economy before the pandemic¹⁹ and employing 594,200 workers in the cultural and leisure segment of the night-time economy alone.²⁰

These measures of economic output do not capture the enormous social and cultural value of London's night-time economy. London's nightlife is one of the most vibrant in the world, integral to the lifestyles of many Londoners, and drawing in millions of domestic and international tourists every year. This tourism has been heavily impacted by the pandemic. Let's Do London, the £6m tourism recovery campaign led by the Mayor and London & Partners, is designed to encourage Londoners and visitors back into Central London, and bring together 'the capital's world-leading hospitality, culture, nightlife and retail venues to promote all London has to offer'.

The Committee heard that the pull factor of London's night-time industries, and the cultural and economic value they generate, are not always appreciated. Several representatives in the sector said that they would like to see more done to promote and celebrate London's night-time economy. As Michael Kill, CEO of the Night Time Industries Association, told the Committee:

"If I was going to ask one thing, and believe that there is something the London Mayor can do to push forward, [it] is to start considering that counter-culture, the youth culture that resonates around it, the export value that it brings in terms of nightlife tourism and the impetus for people to travel domestically and potentially look to start to deliver and celebrate something that London does fantastically above all else across the world."

This was echoed by Julien Bird, the Chief Executive of the Society of London Theatre, who said:

"It is about the messaging internationally that London is a safe place and it is a vibrant place. Most of us believe in terms of culture and the night-time economy, we are one of the world leaders in that and let us celebrate that in terms of bringing people back to our city."

London's night-time economy should form a key of the city's offer to domestic and international tourism in marketing campaigns from the Mayor and Central Government.

¹⁹ [The clubbing map: What has happened to London nightlife?](#), NESTA, 4 September 2017

²⁰ [The Night Time Economy in London and Manchester, 2001 to 2017](#), ONS, 23 March 2018

About the investigation

The Economy Committee held two evidence gathering sessions with expert guests and industry stakeholders: a Committee meeting in September 2021 and a roundtable in October 2021. We would like to extend our thanks to all those who took part:

Matt Arnold, Director of External Relations, Heart of London BID

Elaine Bedell, Chief Executive Officer, Southbank Centre

Julian Bird, Chair, Society of London Theatre

Mark Davyd, Chair, London Music Venue Trust

Cllr Matthew Green, Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning, Westminster City Council

Geoff Hobbs, Director of Public Transport Planning, Transport for London

Rowena Howie, London Policy Representative, Federation of Small Businesses

Michael Kill, Chief Executive Officer, Night Time Industries Association

Paul Kohler, Owner, CellarDoor Nightclub

Amy Lamé, Night Czar

James Lindsay, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Vauxhall Tavern

Carolyn ML Forsyth, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, Talawa Theatre Company

Simon Thomas, Chief Executive Officer, Hippodrome Casino

Other formats and languages

If you, or someone you know needs this report in large print or braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on: 020 7983 4100 or email assembly.translations@london.gov.uk

Chinese

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Email 与我们联系。

Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

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Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

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العنوان البريدي العادي أو عنوان البريدي
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

Gujarati

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