

## **Discussion paper about the Night-time Economy in Birmingham**

### **Nurturing and supporting the Night-time Economy**

The UK night-time economy generates an average of sixty-six billion pounds per year and supports 1.3 million jobs, accounting for 10 per cent of GDP. The night-time economy makes up around 8 per cent of UK businesses and a third of town centre turnover is generated in the evenings<sup>1</sup>.

There is an increasingly global movement taking place to better support and provide a more structured approach to developing and understanding the night-time economy of cities in order to maximize the economic, social and cultural opportunities the night time economy provides.

Initiatives have been created in Amsterdam and Vilnius who have Night-time Mayors, London has a Night Tzar and only last month, Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham announced Sacha Lord as the region's first ever Night-time economy advisor.

Birmingham has yet to grasp the opportunity to do likewise.

As a recent report by Sound Diplomacy and Andreina Seijas highlights<sup>2</sup> cities were designed for the day but not planned for the night. The perception is often that the day-time is a safe, ordered environment whereas the night-time is unsafe and disorganised. This is then reflected in how the night-time is managed which becomes overly concerned with prevention, whether that be crime, noise or behavior. Whilst these issues are extremely important it fails to recognise the wide array of people, businesses and key stakeholders who contribute to the night-time economy and what the night-time economy actually is.

The authors categorise it thus:

#### **Enjoy the night**

Concert-goers, clubbers, those who eat out, cinema-goers, night time sports and gym participants/users, cultural audiences (dance, theatre etc)

#### **Work in the night**

Licensed premises owners, bartenders, security guards, creative industries workers, public and private transport workers, hospitality sector workers, late night workers (fast food, convenience stores etc)

#### **Manage the night**

Police, Fire and Health workers, Security industries, Environmental Health, Social Service professionals, city councils, BID teams

Although Birmingham is increasingly becoming a 24hr city as more public and private transport, convenience and fast food stores and some businesses operate

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Nicholls: Death of clubbing? Why that's bad news for the UK's night time economy

<sup>2</sup> Sound Diplomacy & Andreina Seijas: A Guide To Managing Your Night Time Economy. 2018.

around the clock, we might more readily see ourselves as operating as a 22hr city.

This can be defined as:

Day time economy 6am – 6pm,

Evening economy 6pm – 12am

Late-night economy 12 – 4am

In Birmingham it appears that the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership has responsibility for the night-time and its associated economy. Whilst the work BCSP do is obviously important, it reinforces that in Birmingham, safety and prevention are the main concerns. A quick search of West Midlands Growth Authority documents also fails to uncover any information about the night-time economy or how city agencies strategically support and understand what it is. Yet WMGA provide numerous statistics and references to visitor numbers to the Balti Triangle (20,000 per year) or Birmingham Hippodrome (some 520,000 per year) for example, all of which are part of night-time activity.

There is a huge gap in our knowledge of the night-time economy in Birmingham which in turn has a huge impact on the lack of policies or strategic approach to how we might support those who contribute to it.

With the city expecting something in the region of 1.5 million visitors for the Commonwealth Games in 2022 and visitor numbers and hotel occupancy rates growing year-on-year, it is important that some research is undertaken into Birmingham's night-time economy in order to inform city or regional policies and strategies that will help nurture and grow the city's night-time economy for the benefit of all those who live, work and play in Birmingham.

The purpose of this paper is to propose the BID teams commission some initial research in order to produce a written report on the city's night-time economy that could be used to lever further support for this vital, but neglected, area of activity.

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