



Report to: Licensing Committee Meeting – 1 December 2022
Director Lead: Matthew Finch, Director – Communities & Environment
Lead Officer: Alan Batty, Business Manager – Public Protection, Extn. 5467

Report Summary	
Report Title	Feedback from Licensing Committee Night-Time Economy Visits
Purpose of Report	To provide Members with feedback from the Night-Time Economy visits made by Members of the Licensing Committee
Recommendations	That Members note the feedback from licensed premises on the town.
Reason for Recommendations	To ensure Members are aware of the findings.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 A 'night of action' allowing Members of the Licensing Committee to join Police and licensing staff during visits to a range of premises took place on Friday, 14 October 2022.
- 1.2 The visits took place from 9.30pm onwards Those present were able to speak to the managers of a number of different premises across the town centre seeking views on a wide spectrum of subjects.
- 1.3 The first issue of note was the reduction in numbers that were out and about in the town centre compared to similar visits made pre pandemic. Part of the discussion between bar staff and Licensing Committee Members was centred on whether there was any role for the Council, or Licensing Committee specifically, to play in improving the night -time economy offer and increasing the footfall within the town centre licensed premises.
- 1.4 The use of drugs in licensed premises was raised at several of the premise visited. The premises confirmed that all had drug policies in place but that despite that, recreational drugs such as cocaine was more prevalent than in the past. It was stated that on occasions the mix of drugs and alcohol had led to the breakout of violence.
- 1.5 Some premises highlighted parking charges imposed at night as a deterrent to people coming into the town. The Council car parks impose an evening charge of £1.00 after 6.00pm.

- 1.6 The visibility of the Police during the evening was highlighted as a concern. The feeling was that patrons seeing a police presence in the town was a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and that it added to the feelings of safety within the town.
- 1.7 A number of premises commented on the availability of taxis and the long waits that were sometimes experienced by drinkers wanting to get home. During the visit to the town, it was noted that the taxi rank on Castle Gate was free of parked cars but also free of taxis. Taxi drivers will work if they feel that there is an opportunity to make money with a reasonable chance of gaining some custom over the evening, however, the lack of people using the night-time economy means less taxis feel that they can attract customers and therefore it becomes a vicious circle.
- 1.8 The final comment made was that of events and events promotion in the town. Some premises felt that a more joined up approach to events and more notification of what was taking place would allow for premises to decide whether they could support with complementary events or promotions

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

- 2.1 Many of the things discussed during the 'night of action' are outside the direct control of the Council. There was no suggestion from any of the premises visited that the Council's approach to licensing was not appropriate for the town.

3.0 Implications

- 3.1 In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered a range of potential implications. There are no implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None