

AFTER DARK STRATEGY - KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE

Vision and Aims

1. The aim, through partnership working, is to promote Kingston's night time economy, as well as planning to minimise disorder, with the emphasis on 'managing success' as distinct from just focussing on problem solving. It wants to make Kingston a destination of first choice for evening entertainment for all age groups no matter the occasion, where shoppers want to stay longer and during the evenings with friends and family e.g. for a meal, where workers want to stay after work with colleagues and where people want to recommend Kingston for nights out and use it as a meeting place.
2. The ambition is to put in place the elements that will make Kingston town centre more hospitable and welcoming, safe and secure, easily accessible with good, affordable transport links home late at night, with a wider variety and choice of venues and activities on offer. The Strategy seeks to promote and expand the provision of non-alcohol-based entertainment and a diverse range of cultural experiences in the evening, including encouraging special events such as May Merrie and the river festival, as well as late night attractions which appeal to all age groups and interests and suit all pockets.
3. It seeks to create a smoother transition between the daytime and night time economy and to move away from its present focus on 18-25 year olds visiting pubs and clubs late into the night towards one that is oriented to a wider spread of age groups including families, young teenagers and older-age groups between 6:00pm – 10:30pm.
4. Recognising Kingston's status as a metropolitan centre, the Strategy seeks a sustainable balance between protecting the amenities and quality of life of residents living in the town centre who contribute to the life and security of the town centre and promoting an attractive, vibrant but safe night life that appeals to a wide spectrum of borough residents and as well as other visitors to the borough.
5. It seeks, through working in partnership, to ensure that the right elements are in place to support the theatre to enhance the centre's cultural appeal.

6. Initially it aims to focus on extending evening usage of the Market Place (including the Market House) and the Apple Market, including for 'al fresco' eating/drinking.
7. It will increase publicity about the improving availability of late night transport (including licensed safe private hire vehicles (more commonly known as minicabs) and the booking kiosks) and the opening hours of evening attractions, including shops.
8. It seeks, through partnership working, to address public concerns about anti-social behaviour associated with licensed premises and on the streets which have come to greater prominence with the easing of licensing restrictions, in particular the passage of the 2003 Licensing Act which came into force on 24 November 2005 and will, where considered appropriate, lobby Parliament to bring about changes to legislation so as to allow planning and licensing powers to operate in parallel.
9. The Strategy recognises that good management of the evening economy on its own is not enough – that whilst it may help those who presently use the town centre to feel safer, it is unlikely to attract those who are presently discouraged from using it through lack of attractions, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. It aims to address the disproportionately negative perception that Kingston is unsafe to visit at night particularly for the older age groups and seeks to encourage them back into the town centre for leisure and enjoyment.
10. The proposed action plans will be kept under review and updated in response to changing needs over time in order to meet the aims of the Strategy.

Introduction

11. The Strategy is intended to focus initially on Kingston Town Centre. It is intended to complement other borough strategies that deal with crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, including the Council's 2005-08 Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, and would complement the Kingston Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. It will help deliver one of the eight key objectives of the draft Area Action Plan, that is "To provide a clean, safe, friendly, well managed and well maintained town centre in the daytime and at night and assist in the implementation of Policy K21: Managing the Town Centre, a key element of which is the preparation, adoption and implementation of an After Dark Strategy. (Details of this and other relevant Strategies are included in Annex 2.) The Strategy also draws

on the findings of the Visitor Management Plan 2004-2007, which recognises that there is a growing market in evening tourists and that Kingston Theatre, once open, will add another dimension to the night time economy, bringing in a completely different market segment and new visitors. The Strategy seeks to address a range of issues from anti-social behaviour and crime prevention to adequate late-night transport provision to support evening and night-time activities. The Strategy sets out the Council's approach to the impact of the night time economy and looks ahead over the next three years. It reflects an integrated approach and has been developed with our major partners, including the Police and Kingston Town Centre Management.

Background

12. There has been a significant growth in the number of residents living in the town centre. 1800 homes have been built in the town centre in the last twenty years, with up to another 1,000 envisaged. There have also been some major capital investments in recent years in the leisure and entertainment industry in the town centre. These include: The Rotunda (Odeon, Megabowl, David Lloyd and restaurants); Oceana and The Works Night Clubs; Esporta and Holmes Place (now Virgin Leisure) Health and Fitness Centres. The Rose Theatre when open in 2007 will add to the cultural range of facilities in the town centre.
13. Kingston is a University town with around 20,000 university students, plus 3,600 full time and 9,000 part-time students attending Kingston College, so there is a ready source of visitors to support the evening economy. Across the town centre as a whole there are around 700 employers providing 17,500 jobs in the town centre, including jobs in catering, bars and entertainments.
14. There are 70 licensed premises in Kingston Town Centre, with capacity for around 15,500 people. Upwards of 10,000 people visit the town centre in the evenings to go to the three night clubs (which have capacity for 5,450 persons) and the other 25 or so clubs, pubs and bars (approximate capacity 6,000 persons). If the cinemas and other premises in the Rotunda (including the David Lloyd Leisure Centre and Megabowl) and the various health clubs are included, the capacity increases by a further 3,500-4,000. In addition, there are around 30 licensed restaurants, cafés and the Holmes Place and Esporta Health Clubs. The Rose Theatre, when opened, will have capacity for 1,300 people.

15. The “After Dark Economy” is extremely positive and important for Kingston in attracting businesses, providing employment, leisure and tourism. It provides a cultural and social outlet for residents and visitors. However, there are significant challenges arising from Kingston town centre being a “hub” for evening entertainment in southwest London. Over the past few years, there has been an expansion of bars, night clubs, restaurants and licensed premises with a publicised night time capacity of 15,500 persons. The main challenges being:
- reducing crime (and the fear of crime) and anti-social behaviour, particularly those incidents fuelled by alcohol misuse;
 - using Planning powers to create improved facilities and a broader diversity of uses, whilst at the same time easing the tensions that have arisen between those who live in the town centre and those who visit it;
 - maintaining retail diversity through the planning process and ensuring the balance of uses does not tip in favour of Class A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food take-ways) uses;
 - addressing traffic and transport issues: getting people home safely at night, e.g. synchronising late buses, taxi provision and car park opening hours with closing times of venues;
 - tackling environmental issues such as street washing, noise, vandalism, litter and graffiti;
 - promoting a partnership approach in which the licensees take on greater responsibilities for the actions and well-being of their customers; and
 - the need to ensure appropriate levels of funding are available to support new night-time initiatives.
16. The major challenge is to make Kingston Town Centre safe and clean with creatively designed public spaces, to significantly increase the focus on the ‘evening economy’ i.e. between 6:00 pm – 10:30/11:00 pm with a good balance of facilities for all age groups in order to create (a family atmosphere for a large part of the evening) and to disperse visitors quickly, quietly and safely when facilities close.

There are challenges in relation to evening tourism and visitor management. Visitors are influenced by the cleanliness of the streets, transport accessibility and quality of services and the range of cultural and entertainment provision.

Improving the perception of the town centre at night, i.e. crime and the fear of crime is important. There is less than one street crime/day in the whole of the Borough with fewer in Kingston Town Centre. Kingston has always been a regional night-time venue, yet there has been a 17% drop in violence/common assault in Kingston Town Centre in the first half of 2005 and violent crime went down by 11% in 2006. This makes Kingston one of the safest London boroughs. It is the third lowest of the London boroughs for violence against the person, robbery and street violence. Periodic visits by the Police Territorial Support Group have helped address short-term public disorder issues. Local Police have developed a 24/7 strategy for Kingston Town Centre, including a more visible Police presence. Nevertheless, it is recognised that crime and fear of crime is still a concern for many residents and visitors and the challenge is to reduce this and enhance their quality of life.

There are many examples, nationally and locally, of public service initiatives put forward by the Police, cleansing, accident and emergency services and transport providers to meet the challenges of a successful evening and late night economy. Essentially, the Strategy aims to acknowledge and promote examples of good practice and develop local solutions to local issues, responding to changing circumstances as they occur and to develop a common understanding between the stakeholders over the approach to be adopted, including developing joint initiatives.

In response to the challenges set out above, the strategy brings together a number of aims supported by key actions which are vital to the successful management of the night-time economy in Kingston Town Centre.

Aim 1 - To bring both Public and Private Sector Partners and Stakeholders together and develop a consensual and responsive approach to the management of the night-time economy

The Strategy depends on a partnership approach that involves pooling the resources and responsibilities of all the different interest groups with a stake in the town centre in order to develop collective action and initiatives. This includes all the different night-time operators in the food/drinks and entertainment industry (e.g. cinemas, cafés, amusement arcades, nightclubs and, in due course, the theatre and, it is hoped, a full

service hotel) , the Police, the emergency services, Kingston Town Centre Management, the Council's environmental and Cleansing Services etc.

The Strategy needs to be flexible and responsive to changes (i.e. changes in market conditions and the dynamics of the evening and night-time economies of the town centres and how this centre is being used (or not used) and by whom, and the availability of resources).

Action Plan

- To work with major partners and stakeholders and build on locally available information to target resources to greatest effect.
- To work with the Civic Trust in promoting the provision of appropriate facilities and venues complementary to the Theatre.
- Provide effective local leadership and commitment where responsibilities, priorities and linkages between the different partners are clear.
- To build on the work of successful partnerships. For example, Kingston Town Centre Management serves on the local Crime Reduction Partnership and their Business Plan focuses on the contribution that the wider business community can make to the feeling of safety and security when visiting Kingston Town Centre. It has achieved a number of notable successes to date, including the first BID in the UK, gaining "Park Mark status" for all nine car parks, securing the provision of more night buses, and as part of a partnership initiative, providing 3 minicab booking kiosks and contributing to the funding of 'Black Cab marshals and the appointment of a part-time Night Time Manager and night-time street pastors.
- Support the Kingston Police 24/7 Strategy for Kingston Town Centre and ensure that activities, programmes and investment undertaken by RBK are compatible with, and support that strategy.
- To incorporate Kingston Town Centre within Local Public Service Agreements and apply "pump priming" funds to resourcing the challenges faced by the "After Dark Economy".

- Explore the scope for national funding of projects designed to reduce crime and fear of crime, improve public spaces through, e.g. the National Lottery, The Safer and Stronger Communities Fund and Local Area Agreements.
- Incorporate actions to reduce the fear of crime identified in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, e.g. assessing the impact of improved street lighting, continuing to carry out regular public surveys of levels of fear of crime.
- Work with licensees to set up a responsible licensees' accreditation scheme as part of the emerging Kingston Alcohol Strategy and encourage licensees to participate in it.

Aim 2 - To use planning powers to greater effect and to seek greater consistency between policies and decisions made under planning powers and those made under the Licensing Act so that they complement one another as far as is legally possible

Planning powers have a key role to play in creating well designed town and city centres. Whilst there is a clear distinction between the roles, responsibilities and powers of the Council in relation to its planning and licensing functions and approval or rejection under either does not imply or lead to a similar decision under the other, there is a recognition that there needs to be consistency as far as that is possible and the relevant procedures permit e.g. in any restrictive conditions placed by either planning or licensing on operating hours and the use of their outside areas. Planning Policies, Licensing Policies and the Local Implementation Plan (Transport) should as far as possible complement one another.

Action Plan

- Appraise planning applications for new leisure uses relating to the night-time economy in terms of their nature, scale and location, their relationship to existing facilities and their likely impact, individually and cumulatively, on the character and function of the centre and residential uses and amenities (cross reference with the draft Area Action Plan, Policy K6).
- Encourage, through the Kingston town centre Area Action Plan (K+20) and other Local Development Framework documents and policies, a diversity of evening leisure uses, including non-alcohol based uses throughout the town centre to attract a wide range of ages and social groups.

- Use S106 planning obligations more creatively to ensure that uses are appropriately controlled, through the use of measures, works or financial contributions (in accordance with ODPM Circular 5/2005 Planning Obligations or subsequent legislation) to mitigate the impact of new development including late night activities or through the provision of additional facilities. These can include ensuring that toilets (including e.g. mobile urinals), public transport infrastructure improvements (e.g. funding towards late night bus services, improved information and waiting environment for bus and rail passengers, safe car parks open at night) and public safety features (e.g. funding towards providing more uniformed personnel on the streets at night such as taxi marshals, Parking Attendants and wardens, CCTV cameras, minicab kiosks and improved lighting) are incorporated in proposals or otherwise secured.
- The Council will consider the use of planning obligations in the context of proposed developments involving evening/night time uses to secure commuted maintenance payments, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposal, which will be used towards the reasonable ongoing costs of securing a clean, safe, attractive and well managed night time environment. It will consider making specific provision for this in its LDF policies having regard to guidance set down in Circular 05/2005.
- Impose planning conditions which seek to protect residential amenity and promote safety and security e.g. staggered opening/closing hours (to more closely align with transport capacity and policing), adequate waste management arrangements and anti graffiti treatment to vulnerable facades. Where appropriate, secure operating plans on premises to e.g. control the use of outside eating/drinking areas and minimise/prevent noise and disturbance from patrons arriving and leaving premises, especially in residential areas.
- Support longer opening hours of shops and (subject to resources) public buildings like the library and Tourist Information Centre and support the expanded use of the Market House as part of encouraging evening activities throughout the town but particularly in the Market Place.
- Ensure, including through improvements to the design and lighting of public spaces, that the town centre, including riverside is a more welcoming and safe environment at night and encourage activities that appeal to all age groups

- Promote improved design and safety in the public and private realms, particularly points where they interact. Design out crime e.g. by avoiding the use of solid shutters covering shop fronts and by creating an improved pedestrian environment with a network of attractively designed and well lit public spaces and routes. Design for mixed use development but with effective separation of noise sensitive uses e.g. housing, using high standards of noise insulation etc and minimising nuisance by locating venues offering evening and night time entertainment close to transport hubs.
- Vigorously pursue appropriate enforcement action to ensure compliance with planning conditions relating to the operation of premises
- Ensure, so far as legally possible, that planning and licensing decisions where appropriate operate in tandem [for example in the hours of operation and the use of outside areas for smoking] and that as a consequence the licensing and planning conditions under which they operate are robust and effective.

Aim 3 - To promote the four objectives of the new licensing system: prevention of crime and disorder, public safety the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm

The new system is designed to encourage greater consumer choice about how and where to spend their leisure time. Removing fixed closing times will prevent artificial peaks in demand for supporting infrastructure – such as transport home. These peaks can contribute to crime and disorder and act as a barrier to the development of a safe and thriving night-time economy. However, licensing law is not the primary mechanism for general control of nuisance and anti-social behaviour, but will be part of the holistic approach to the management of the night-time economy.

Action Plan

- Work with the night time business community, pub watch, Kingston Town Centre Management and other parties to better manage the Town Centre at night.
- Keep the Statement of Licensing Policy under regular scrutiny and review it annually, even though there is only a statutory requirement to do this every 3 years.

- Impose conditions on licensed premises where deemed appropriate and lawful (noting that this can only be done in response to applications where representations have been received).
- To implement the agreed protocol with the Police to enforce licensing conditions, in particular to investigate allegations that conditions have been breached.
- Continue to support youth discos (for under 17-year olds).

Aim 4 - To change attitudes to irresponsible drinking and reduce alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour

Alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour is perceived to be a problem in Kingston town centre, not only at weekends but also on some nights during the week. Anti-social behaviour and drinking in the streets can intimidate others and lead to disorder and public nuisance, which makes town centres less welcoming for others. The Council will work with local Police and partners in the Crime and Reduction Partnership to tackle alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour in the town centre.

Action Plan

- Adopt the principles of the "Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England".
- Co-ordinate action between RBK (Trading Standards) and local Police to reduce under-age drinking in the town centre.
- Encourage licensees, if appropriate by imposing conditions on licences (particularly of late night pubs), to behave more responsibly by providing plastic glasses and, where appropriate, plastic bottles after 10:00 pm and preventing customers leaving the premises with glasses and bottles.
- Make use of powers available under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, exclusions policy in civil law and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- Make better use of the CCTV coverage of the town centre and, as resources permit, extend coverage e.g. to Kingston Hospital which is affected by the activities of the night time economy.

Aim 5 - To encourage licensees to implement best practice

Businesses have a key role in preventing underage and binge drinking by trading lawfully so that their customers can enjoy a safe evening out in the town centre. This in turn can help attract a broader range of people. The findings of the British Crime Survey showed that a significantly high proportion of crime was linked to poorly managed licensed premises.

On 1 July 2007 the Health Act 2006 will also bring in to effect an outright ban on smoking in all enclosed or substantially enclosed public places [where the public are present] and all premises where people work. This will of course include all pubs, clubs and eating establishments. The effect of this will be that patrons wishing to smoke will be required to leave the premises whilst they do so and will congregate on the roadways outside of the premises or in open areas within the premises if this is permitted by licensing and/or planning conditions. This has the potential to increase noise and litter outside premises and the Council is unable to provide any exemptions from the law to prevent this happening.

Applications are likely to be received for planning permissions to erect shelters/canopies for smokers and for variations to licences under the Licensing Act 2003 where the existing conditions prevent them from using outside gardens. Such applications will have to be dealt with through due process having regard to the individual circumstances which, in the case of licences, will include the effect on residents.

Action Plan

- Work with owners and operators of premises in the town centre to encourage an industry-led code of practice focussing on key areas that will have a big impact, developing clear protocols for seeking proof of age and effective end-of-evening dispersal policies and a voluntary end of irresponsible drink promotions.

- Impose more restrictive operating conditions on premises where there is evidence of problems.

- Target premises known to have problems and help them to develop actions to trade more responsibly and reduce the burden on the majority of premises who meet their requirements.
- Consider an accreditation scheme to recognise and promote well run premises such as – Manchester City Safe Initiative and the Best Bar None - which have been adopted by a number of other Local Authorities.
- Encourage operators to sign up to any accreditation scheme adopted as part of the emerging Kingston Alcohol Strategy.
- Ensure as far as possible that managers of “smoke free” legislation are aware of the legal requirement not to allow smoking in them and that they make their customers aware of the need to behave responsibly whilst smoking outside [e.g. by not causing noise or obstruction or leaving cigarette litter]. The Licensing Committee should consider whether there can and should be changes to the Council’s licensing policy having regard to the effect that smoking in outside areas may have on residents living in the vicinity. This will be particularly relevant when considering variations to licences under the 2003 Act in order to permit the use of outside areas that are currently prevented from being used at times when premises are allowed to sell alcohol. Best Practice examples will be investigated.

Aim 6 - To ensure Kingston Town Centre is clean and attractive at night

Residents and visitors are entitled to expect a clean, safe, attractive and vibrant town centre. Part of the aim includes improving the tourist environment and encouraging a more “continental experience” of evening and late night cafés, restaurants and entertainments such as the Theatre.

Action Plan

- Improve lighting, particularly in locations that are dark and uninviting, but heavily used.
- Improve the visual environment at gateways into the town centre.

- Improve visitor safety along the Riverside Walk, particularly those areas in close proximity to bars and night clubs. In this respect the Council will, in Spring 2007, be installing safety railings along the section of the Riverside Walk between Kingston Bridge and the Gazebo Public House.
- To improve the quality of the Riverside Walk referred to above, the Council in association with Canadian and Portland, the owners of Bishop's Palace House will implement an environmental enhancement scheme in Spring 2007, which involves improved lighting, surfacing, seating and planting.
- Progress proposals to make other riverside areas within the town centre safer in the evenings and at night. Spaces such as Eagle Wharf (the public space next to the Ram Pubic House) and Thames Side are known 'problem' areas at night, and funding from Transport for London has been secured to improve the quality of these spaces and make them desirable places to visit. Creating places that attract a broad cross-section of visitors will improve surveillance and help to make these riverside spaces self-policing.
- Promote, and support Kingston Town Centre Management initiatives to clean private alleys off the main streets, including Castle Street and Eden Street, and the introduction of pavement washing on an appropriate basis.
- Explore options for the provision of additional toilet facilities, including disabled facilities, in appropriate locations. This could be achieved through S106 legal obligations on the back of significant developments, or through the use of a LPSA reward grant. There may be other funding opportunities that could also be beneficial.
- Encourage the Police to take enforcement action against perpetrators of street fouling. Offenders can be prosecuted under Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 and on the spot fines can be levied for disorderly behaviour under Section 1 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.
- Review the street cleansing regime in the town centre and revise as appropriate when future contracts are renegotiated. This may include wet washing of streets in 'hot spot' areas before people arrive in the mornings, e.g. around transport interchanges, including bus stops in Eden Street.

- Seeking the agreement of late night take-away premises (including trailers and kiosks) to provide bins outside their premises which are regularly emptied and cleansed at their expense and provide or pay for street washing outside their premises on a weekly basis.
- Encourage businesses to better manage and reduce their commercial waste. Ensure that businesses package their waste in suitable containers.

Aim 7 - To provide more uniformed personnel on the streets at night

The need for high visibility policing was highlighted as one of the residents' key priorities in connection with the Borough's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy. People should expect to be able to walk through town centres safely, both in the day and at night, without fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. With premises around the borough seeking later licensing hours, police resources will be increasingly stretched.

However, this is not considered to be just about uniformed Police, but a whole range of people who provide an extended presence on the street, including Community Support Officers (CSOs), Neighbourhood Wardens, traffic wardens, private security staff and door supervisors etc. Deploying a uniformed presence, especially in hotspot areas and at peak times after dark, including at transport interchanges, i.e. bus stops, stations and taxi ranks and where there is a high concentration of night-time premises, can help avoid trouble and provide reassurance. The Council has a role to play in this through cleansing, licensing and support of young people.

Communication systems, co-ordinated management between venues and CCTV controlled radio links increases effectiveness.

Action Plan

- To support the local police and their 24/7 Strategy for Kingston Town Centre.
- To continue to support the funding of street pastors
- To consider supporting police resources by the employment of evening wardens/ambassadors and taxi marshals.

Aim 8 - To further improve bus and rail services, increase the provision of night-time taxi and minicab and car parking facilities and provide enhanced passenger information to help people get home safely at night.

The challenge is to provide regular, safe and reliable transport at night, to disperse people in order to avoid groups congregating and causing anti-social behaviour. Later running buses, trains, taxis and minicabs play an important part in getting people home safely. Although transport crime rates are low, people (especially women, young people and minority ethnic communities) have personal security concerns when travelling after dark, particularly the waiting and walking parts of the journey.

There is a need to work with the Police and both the leisure (pub and club owners etc) and transport industries to ensure safe environments surrounding public transport, taxi ranks and car parks and ensure the wider availability of public transport, taxis and minicabs when and where required for getting people home at night. Kingston University can also play an important partnership role in helping to achieve this aim.

Action Plan

- To lobby for improved late night public transport through more train services after midnight, and later opening and staffing of the station ticketing hall, the extension of all night bus services by making a sound business case for such provision. It is acknowledged that it may be unrealistic to seek a 24-hour rail service in view of the need to undertake rail maintenance. However, through discussion with SW Trains, it may be possible to negotiate later rail services on busy nights, including the weekends.
- To continue to impress upon the Mayor for London Kingston town centre's importance as a metropolitan entertainment centre and to work with the Mayor to build on the success of existing initiatives, extending and improving the quality and availability of late night bus and rail transport to and from Kingston. Late night buses over the borough boundary into Surrey e.g. to Epsom and Esher, are also needed as significant numbers of night time visitors to Kingston live there.
- Encourage the increased availability of both black cab and minicab services, particularly at night club closing times by facilitating a taxi marshalling service,

kiosks and locations from which taxis and minicabs can be ordered and appropriate safe waiting places for taxis and minicabs.

- Work closely with the Police and the Public Carriage Office to consider and implement appropriate initiatives to reduce illegal minicab touting, including considering whether, and how, CCTV might effectively be used to clamp down on touts.
- Seek the provision of adequate and safe car parking facilities for night time users.
- Improve public transport connections and interchanges at the bus and train stations.
- To set up a website or link to a website that informs people planning an evening out in Kingston town centre of things to do and how to get home safely by providing information on e.g. opening/closing times of venues, night time bus routes, the availability of minicab booking kiosks and how to pre-book journeys home, how to recognise licensed cabs and minicabs etc.
- Utilise, publicise and extend the existing on-street Information Points to provide 24-hour information on the different available transport opportunities i.e. bus and rail stops, routing and timetable information; taxi and minicab pick up points and booking offices; car park location and opening hours; and public safety information.
- Work with Kingston University to expand their role in contributing to the provision of late night transport.

Aim 9 - To reduce noise at night

Complaints about noise nuisance late at night and the perception of noise nuisance as a problem have increased from residents living within and on the fringes of the town centre. Environmental Health and Licensing Act powers and controls may only be used to deal with noise from premises, whereas the Police are responsible for dealing with the noise and disorder that occurs generally in the street. One of the main sources of noise nuisance is people gathering at closing times in search of transport home. (Nuisance also arises from gatherings of people who do not wish to go home

at that time). The challenge for RBK and its Partners, therefore, has to be finding ways of reducing this.

Action Plan

- Improve the provision of late night transport, so that crowds do not congregate after night clubs close.
- Use uniformed and security staff to keep order in queues for those waiting for transport home, including keeping noise levels down, reporting any problems to the police and helping people find the right transport home. Night club, pub and bar employees are seen as having primary responsibility for this.
- Continue to investigate complaints about noise from premises under Section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act and issue abatement notices where a statutory noise nuisance is judged to have occurred.
- Tackle noise from licensed premises through the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Licensing Act 2003. This includes the power to issue a 24 hour closure order for any licensed premises causing a public nuisance.

Available Legislative Tools

There is a whole raft of legislative powers available to the Council to tackle anti-social behaviour, including the following:

1. The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, which:
 - Enables local authorities to prohibit drinking in named areas where there has been a history of alcohol-fuelled anti-social behaviour through the creation of a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) and to provide the police and CSOs with powers to enforce this restriction. Police powers currently include confiscating open cans and bottles of drinks. Under the Licensing Act 2003, the police and CSOs can remove unopened alcoholic drinks from underage drinkers or people causing or likely to cause a public nuisance.

- Allows Local Authority Trading Standards Officers to conduct test purchases at licensed premises, including supermarkets, based on intelligence of sales to persons under 18.
 - Gives the police the power to close noisy or rowdy establishments for up to 24 hours.
 - Imposes a duty on the owners and staff of licensed premises not to sell alcohol to persons under 18.
 - Enables the police to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for a range of alcohol-related offences of disorder. These include:
 - disorderly behaviour while drunk in a public place;
 - being drunk in the highway, buying or attempting to buy alcohol for consumption in a licensed premises by a person under 18;
 - consumption of alcohol in a 'no alcohol designated public place';
 - causing harassment, harm and distress;
 - purchase alcohol on licensed premises for a person under 18;
 - consumption of alcohol in a licensed premises by a person under 18;
 - delivery of alcohol to persons under 18 or allowing such delivery.
2. Use of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (i.e. "Dispersal of Groups" powers) by police, working with the Council, to target action in problem areas, by issuing Dispersal Orders to help remove intimidation and anti-social behaviour from the streets. Dispersal Order can also be used to take juveniles home after 9pm.
 3. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) that are voluntarily agreed between an individual and one or more local agencies, e.g. the police. These can be linked to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) which can also be issued and have legal sanctions if breached.
 4. Individual Support Orders (ISOs) can be issued under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 for 10 - 17 year olds with ASBOs, together with Parenting Orders.

5. Powers are available in the Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons) Act 1980 to issue Exclusion Orders to ban trouble-makers from pubs and clubs and/or entire town centres.
6. The Criminal Damage Act 1971 (England and Wales) makes vandalism and damage of town-centre property an arrestable offence, triable on indictment.
7. Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Use Classes Order (Amendment) (England) Order 2005, which changes how premises are classified by use so that it is now possible to differentiate between restaurants, hot food take-aways, bars, pubs and night clubs in planning and licensing applications. This will enable tighter controls over the use of town centre premises.
8. Licensing Act 2003, which gives the police extra powers to close disorderly premises and toughen the law on selling alcohol to minors.
 - Enhancement of the quality of the operating environment of Kingston Town Centre as a result of its creation as a Business Improvement District under the Local Government Act 2004.
9. Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill which will strengthen the Council's powers to act on a range of local environmental quality issues such as litter and graffiti.
10. Revised Local Transport Plans that focus on improved access opportunities and services.
11. Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England (published March 2004) which sets out a new cross-Government approach to tackling alcohol misuse.
12. Tackling Violent Crime Programme.

Supporting Documents

The 2005-08 Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy

This strategy is based on a comprehensive audit of crime, drug misuse, disorder and anti-social behaviour in the Borough and the views of residents and other groups and agencies. It, therefore, provides an authoritative base in support of the After Dark Strategy. The key findings of residents' surveys and the most recent Crime, Drug Misuse and Anti-Social Behaviour audit have confirmed that anti-social behaviour, in various forms, remains a significant problem for many residents throughout the borough, particularly in Kingston Town Centre. The top four issues identified by residents, in priority order, were:

- the need for higher visibility policing;
- criminal damage: concerns about graffiti and vandalism (particularly to telephone boxes and bus stops);
- anti-social behaviour;
- alcohol abuse, in particular measures to address the late night binge drinking and under-age drinking.

The audit showed that 30% of all the Borough's crimes take place in Kingston Town Centre, coinciding with the main centre for evening entertainment. The Strategy intends to target measures, including embracing those in other relevant plans and strategies, that will reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the town centre, so that people feel more reassured about using it at night. This includes giving high priority to the integration of the After Dark Strategy.

Some of the proposed actions in the Strategy are equally relevant to the After Dark Strategy. These include:

- high visibility policing;
- street wardens and others who patrol the streets;
- using powers available under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003;

- continuing to target anti-social behaviour on a multi-agency basis;
- investigating allegations of persistent noise nuisance problems from commercial premises and operating noise patrols on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings during the summer;
- monitoring the impact of the new Licensing act provisions and promoting the 'good management' of licensed premises and a sensible drinking culture amongst customers;
- appointment of a Waste Management Enforcement Officer whose role will increase Litter Enforcement;
- building on the existing Anti-Graffiti Strategy;
- reducing the incidence of anti-social behaviour on public transport;
- raise awareness among young people of the negative effects on anti-social behaviour;
- improving the quality of the local environment, e.g. at local rail and bus stations, improving street lighting;
- reducing under age drinking in the borough through implementing new 'Proof of Age' identify cards, Test Purchasing operations;
- reduce levels of alcohol related noise and nuisance, including use of legislative provisions such as Penalty Notices for Disorder and Designated Public Place Orders;
- achieving the 'Safer Shopping' award;
- seeking to maintain 'Park Mark' (Safer Parking Accreditation) for town centre car parks already accredited and helping other operators achieve accreditation;
- work on a multi-agency basis to target locations where assaults occur most frequently;
- identify means of enhancing joint working and liaison between the CCTV Control Centre and the business communities in street crime/violent crime 'hot spots'; and
- enhanced publicity campaigns.

'How to Manage Town Centres'

Guidance provided by the ODPM on 'How to Manage Town Centres', has also been used as a framework in the preparation of the After Dark Strategy. The ODPM guidance explores current challenges associated with the town centres and the night economy (e.g. noise, litter, street fouling, getting home safely and drinking safely) and highlights the powers and tools available to address these challenges.

Kingston town centre Area Action Plan: draft Submission Version

The draft Area Action Plan provides valuable background information for the Strategy. Issues associated with the evening economy were identified at the outset of the AAP process as one of the town centre's main weaknesses that needed to be addressed. The draft AAP is due to be considered by the Council in April 2007 and approved for submission to the Secretary of State in May 2007. Issues associated with the night time economy and the need to broaden the range of attractions in the town centre, especially in the early evenings, to attract a wider spread of visitors and reduce anti-social behaviour have featured prominently throughout all the consultation stages. One of the eight key objectives of the draft Area Action Plan, is "To provide a clean, safe, friendly, well managed and well maintained town centre in the daytime and at night ". A key element of Policy K21: Managing the Town Centre, is the preparation, adoption and implementation of an After Dark Strategy. Policy K6: Provision of Facilities for Arts, Culture, Tourism, Entertainment, Leisure, Recreation, the Community, Faith and Voluntary Sectors and Hotel Accommodation also aims to address the issue.

Licensing Policy document (prepared by BEHO)

Full Council approved the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy on 14 December 2004.

RBK Cultural Strategy 2002 - 2006

This refers to changing community perceptions in the borough. Surveys reveal that, whilst the centre of Kingston was once primarily associated with shopping, more recently it is being associated with a perceptively threatening 'night life' culture, dominated by young people using its bars and night clubs and fast food outlets. The Strategy suggests the addition of new cultural facilities, particularly the Theatre, new style street restaurants and cafés, late opening libraries and cinemas offer the prospect of a better mix of cultural facilities for a wider range of people of all generations whether they are living in or visiting the centre. This

opens up the prospect of re-integrating the community and a growth of 'community identity'. At the same time, the increase in numbers of visitors poses management challenges. The Strategy seeks to develop a strong cultural base and increase access to cultural activities. It also seeks to improve the range and quality of venues (e.g. a new Central Library and Learning Centre, greater use of streets and markets as venues for performance events/street entertainment). Working with partners like the Theatre Trust, Kingston University and the Asian Arts Forum, it seeks to raise the quality of events and activities by bringing more high calibre events to Kingston. Opportunities for more effective use of cafés and pubs for staging events are identified.

Visitor Management Plan 2004-2007

This identifies the key issues that need to be addressed to develop tourism and meet the needs and ever increasing expectations of tourists and sets out an Action Plan to develop and strengthen Kingston's tourism infrastructure. It considers that the management of the night-time economy requires review to respond to its changing needs and points to the difficulties with the provision of late night transport. Surveys undertaken in 2003, including a visitor satisfaction survey, identified that 17% of visitors came to Kingston for eating, drinking and socialising (with 33% of total expenditure in Kingston spent on food and drink) and 17% stayed for over seven hours. Street cleanliness, lack of public toilets and overcrowding featured among the worst aspects. Also criticised were the run down appearance of Kingston Station, poor frequency of trains, poor signage and the need to extend car parking opening hours. The opportunities and challenges for developing the visitor economy resulting from the 2012 Olympic bid are highlighted, as are the threats of terrorism.

Mayor of London's draft best practice guidance 'Managing the Night Time Economy', June 2006

Suggests, with case study examples, how LAs and the private/voluntary sectors can work in partnership to support the development of the evening economy in appropriate locations and improve the way they manage its impacts where there are concentrations of clubs, pubs, bars and restaurants.

Civic Trust good practice guidance 'Nightvision Town Centres for All' October 2006

Based on research findings, it highlights some of the essential elements needed to provide variety, choice and greater accessibility in evening and late-night economies in order to make

town centres more inclusive for all sections of the community and how to achieve a sustainable balance between them.

Local Area Agreement

As part of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), a Local Area Agreement with Government Office for London (GOL) has been signed. This includes an agreement to reduce wounding and common assault in the town centre and surrounding Grove Ward to a figure not exceeding 2,528 by the end of 2008/09. It also includes a commitment to ensure that each year the borough-wide figure does not exceed the baseline set in 2004/5 at 2451 offences per year. Should Kingston achieve the annual target, the Crime and Disorder Partnership will receive a reward grant of £300,000.

Under this Local Area Agreement, the partnership has been given £25,000 per year in pump prime funding and this has been used to fund a Night-time Manager who works three nights per week. Her role is to liaise with the night-time businesses (i.e. licensed premises) and the police, to be the Council's eyes and ears throughout the night. Part of her role is to oversee the minicab booking kiosk project intended to help people make their way home safely after enjoying a night out in Kingston.

Surface car parks open 24 hours include:

1. Ashdown Road/Lady Booth Road: 96 + 77 spaces (£1.00 charge after 6.30pm Monday – Saturday and 5pm – Sunday).
2. Canbury Place: 100 spaces (£1.00 charge after 6.30pm Monday – Saturday; 5pm – Sunday).
3. Thameside: 32 spaces (£1.00 charge after 6.30pm Monday – Saturday and after 5pm – Sunday).
4. Sury Basin: 320 spaces (free of charge after 6.30pm Monday to Saturday, 5.30pm - Sunday).
5. Cattle Market: 113 spaces (£1.00 charge after 6.30pm Monday – Saturday; 5pm – Sunday). Closed midnight Sunday until 5pm Monday for Monday Market).
6. Bittoms: 72 spaces (free of charge after 7pm).
7. Ashdown Road 2: 92 spaces – charges at all hours.
8. Bishops Hall: 70 spaces under building (£2 flat rate charge between 6.30pm - 6.30am).
9. Brook Street NCP: 100 spaces (available but not advertised; free after 6.30pm).
10. Neville House: 30 spaces (£1.00 charge after 6.30pm Monday – Saturday; and after 5pm Sunday) – available but not advertised.

Total: 972spaces (392 free) excludes 130 non-advertised spaces in Brook Street and Neville House).

Multi-Storey car parks open until midnight

1. Cattle Market: 497 spaces underground ((£1.00 charge after 6.30pm Monday – Saturday and after 5pm – Sunday).
2. Drapers: 432 spaces (£1.00 charge after 6.30pm Monday – Saturday and after 5pm – Sunday).

3. Bentalls 'A': 585 spaces (free after 6pm Monday – Saturday and after 5pm Sunday).

Multi-Storey car parks open until 1 – 2am

1. Bentalls 'A': 585 spaces (free after 6pm Monday – Saturday and after 5pm Sunday).
Note: closes midnight Monday – Thursday and Sunday, but exit remains open until 1am. Exit closes at 2am Friday and Saturday only.

Total: 1,514 spaces (585 Free)

Multi-Storey car parks open 24 hours

1. Fairfield NCP: 301 spaces (£1.50 between 7pm and 8am).
2. St James NCP: 381 spaces. £4.00 overnight charge.

Total: 682 spaces

Total All Night Spaces 1654

Total Space until Midnight 3168

DRAFT