

Night Time Enterprise Zones: Walthamstow Pilot Project

Findings and recommendations

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Waltham Forest

Foreword by the Night Czar

London's high streets are in the midst of sudden and radical change. A process of gradual adaptation has been accelerated by the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. New ideas are urgently needed to save businesses and ensure high streets remain at the heart of London life.

GLA research from 2018 showed that London had become a truly 24-hour city. 1.6 million people usually worked at night in a variety of industries and jobs from health to hospitality, transport to teaching and finance to fitness. 65% of us were active at night. Some gyms have estimated that a quarter of their members train between 10pm and 6am. In fact, GLA research showed you are more likely to be admitted to hospital at night with a sports injury than an alcohol related injury. Everything from doctors surgeries to museums were staying open later. The result was that, before the pandemic, London's economy was growing faster at night than in the day. However, many high streets were still planned for nine-to-five use, and were missing out on this economic growth.

I launched the Night Time Enterprise Zone pilot in Walthamstow last Autumn. The aim was to test whether extended opening hours could help the high street by boosting businesses and serving local people better.

The pilot increased footfall by 22% amongst the small and medium sized businesses that took part. It proved that night time activity can be as profitable as daytime activity and helped create a stronger and more enticing evening offer, with a wide range of shopping, eating, social and cultural activities taking place. It also attracted families and young people who had not used the high street at night before.

The pilot changed perceptions. Residents who had concerns about an increase in night time activity were consulted and involved in creating the project. As a result of the pilot activities, small businesses - previously concerned about additional staff costs - became enthusiastic champions for more high street activity after 6pm. The outmoded idea that night time activity is solely an alcohol-focused monoculture has been shown to be untrue.



Amy Lamé, Night Czar

1.0 Executive Summary



1.0 Executive Summary

This pilot has proven that Night Time Enterprise Zones could be a significant boost to economic activity on high streets in the capital. As London recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic there is an opportunity for recovery to be driven by more diverse and inclusive night time activity, in all parts of the city. This will provide for a population that is increasingly active into the evening. There is a need for a diverse range of services and activities to be available to residents and workers, alongside growing incentives for businesses to remain open after 6pm.

The evidence generated by this pilot indicates that Night Time Enterprise Zones are an exciting opportunity for Councils and the Greater London Authority to support. The success of the Walthamstow pilot activities suggests that Night Time Enterprise Zones could be a key tool to support high street recovery across the capital.

At Waltham Forest Council, we now have an action plan for Walthamstow High Street which we aim to make a reality over the coming months. We have been sharing our learning with other boroughs through the Mayor's Night Time Borough Champions Network. We have drawn up recommendations that we hope will help other high streets around London to grow sustainably at night.

The aim of the Night Time Enterprise Zone pilot

In September 2019, the London Borough of Waltham Forest was awarded £75,000 by the Mayor of London to run the first Night Time Enterprise Zone pilot. We worked with businesses and local people to test ways of activating Walthamstow High Street after 6pm. The aim was to find out if we could boost local businesses, give people better access to their high street and provide better support for night time workers.

Walthamstow is a major town centre. It has a vibrant outdoor street market, varied independent businesses, some large retailers, a growing culture and food scene, a library and other council services. The demographic make-up of business owners, workers and local people is incredibly rich. Walthamstow is a large transport hub with Night Tube services on a Friday and Saturday.

“By working together to encourage longer opening hours and host innovative events, this project will be a real opportunity to develop the ideas that can boost our high streets and help realise our vision for a 24-hour city.”

Sadiq Khan,
Mayor of London

1.0 Executive Summary

In 2019, Waltham Forest was the first London Borough of Culture, a programme that has radically changed the role that culture plays in the borough. The council is now 'culture-ready' with increased expertise, skills and networks of creative people and businesses. This has been embedded in council activity, with culture-friendly policies and funding programmes and spaces that are prioritised for cultural development.

From these foundations, a distinct and inclusive evening offer has been growing. The Night Time Enterprise Zone pilot allowed us to fast-track our partnerships with local people and businesses, test new activities and create an action plan for future growth at night.

The council were tasked with:

- Developing a detailed understanding of the challenges facing residents, businesses and workers at night
- Experimenting with ways to diversify the high street offer, encouraging extended opening times, increasing awareness of the night time offer and activating the high street at night
- Evaluating and learning from the activities, developing an action plan and making recommendations to help other London high streets thrive at night

Research and engagement

We launched an extensive research and engagement programme. We met with local residents, high street businesses and night time workers. Data and insights were collected through surveys, interviews, workshops and night time walkabouts.

There were some gaps in our evidence base. For example, we had no data on high street opening hours, so we commissioned a study to gather this information. This showed how quickly the High Street closed down after 6pm, with only a few businesses remaining open by 8pm.

1.0 Executive Summary

We knew that key groups were not getting what they wanted from the high street at night. We ran focus groups with young people, older people and disabled people to ensure their views informed our plans. Many said they felt unsafe in the High Street at night and some were wary of the young people who met up there. The young people told us how little there was on offer for them.

We compiled an economic and social evidence base and combined it with business and resident engagement data. The result was a valuable picture of Walthamstow High Street at night. This up-to-date evidence shaped the pilot.

What we learnt

Economic activity on the high street at night is dependent on businesses remaining open, which in turn increases footfall. The research underlined several challenges to achieving this. For example, there was a lack of footfall on the High Street after 6pm, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour dominated people's perceptions, and later opening hours incur staffing and other costs that are hard for small businesses to cover.

Personal safety concerns and fear of anti-social behaviour in the High Street at night were the biggest issues for local people, workers and businesses. This is a common issue for most high streets and a challenge for their economic success. Research by the Greater London Authority has shown that safety concerns are greatest amongst those who don't go out regularly at night. At the same time, crime data shows that overall crime levels are lower at night than in the day. This perception of danger is fuelled by a number of factors and poses a significant barrier to increasing footfall and participation after 6pm.

Improved lighting and public realm design will help reduce safety concerns. Residents and businesses say that good, well planned lighting is fundamental to creating a welcoming street environment at night. Businesses also see good lighting and public realm design as helping to create a strong night time brand for the High Street. It would also encourage more through traffic by using light to help people navigate their way through the town centre. Roller-shutters on shop fronts contribute to a negative perception of the high street at night.

1.0 Executive Summary

Young people told us they want better entertainment infrastructure and access to attractive, safe and free spaces after 6pm. The call for increased activity for young people was proposed by many stakeholders. The under-used town square was seen as a good location to test this idea. Activity could include construction of a temporary or permanent covered space to host night time events and a market that can operate all year round.

Local people would like more variety in the town centre at night. Greater diversity of cafes and spaces for older people and people of diverse backgrounds would be welcomed. Supermarkets and community spaces that stay open later are highly valued, but people would also like a broader entertainment and music offer.

The number of night workers in Waltham Forest doubled between 2001 and 2017, with around 1,000 extra workers every year. The majority of night workers were in entertainment and food businesses. They have one job and do it full-time. Unlike daytime workers, many night workers don't have fixed hours, instead following shift patterns that vary from late nights to early starts.

Night workers value the flexibility of their work and are good at arranging their lives to balance family commitments, study, leisure time and work. Many felt they were able to separate work from the rest of their lives and don't receive emails or phone calls out of hours. However, the disruption to sleep patterns was noted as a significant challenge. In addition, self-employed night workers often have no flexibility as they don't have colleagues to swap shifts with.

Limited transport options and walking routes that feel unsafe are a problem for night workers. The majority of night workers lived near to work and valued Walthamstow's transport hub which has several night services. Many drive or walk to work and a few use the tube or train. Lack of car parking for night workers is a common problem. Workers also avoid certain areas which are perceived to be unsafe, often due to social media reports rather than first-hand experience. They like areas with well-lit street art which had a positive welcoming effect.

1.0 Executive Summary

Running test events in partnership with businesses is the best way to get their support. At the start of the project, businesses were resistant to the idea of opening later. They face a number of barriers to extending their opening hours, including workforce fatigue, needing to get home to their family, and additional staffing costs. However, businesses valued working in partnership with each other and the council. They benefited from joint marketing campaigns and special events. After the pilot activities were carried out, businesses' were more keen to try later opening increased.

The market closes between 4pm and 5pm, leaving the High Street empty and unwelcoming. The sudden clearing of activity from the street means that footfall drops steeply. This important part of Walthamstow's daily rhythm marks a hard divide between day-life and night-life. It is a barrier to the gradual phasing of daytime into night time activity and makes it hard to bring people back to the street after the market has closed.

What we did

1. High Street ADVENTures

The High Street was successfully reclaimed for night time use through a curated event which encouraged businesses to stay open longer into the evening. 16 of the 25 participating businesses extended their normal hours of operation. 40 free activities were commissioned and hosted in 25 businesses and six venues on one night. This saw an increase in footfall of 22% and businesses reported an increase in economic activity. Night time workers said the animation of the street made them feel safer when walking to and from work.

Local creatives were paired with high street businesses. Workshops and performances took place in cafes, shops, bars and other unusual locations. As a result, 64% of businesses reported seeing new customers, 60% reported being busier than usual and 90% reported that they would participate in similar events again in the future.

1.0 Executive Summary

2. Marketing and promotion

The council worked in partnership with residents, businesses and local arts provider Artillery. They compiled listings of all existing events. They also put out an open call to artists to run new activities, during the extended hours, in shops, cafes and community spaces. A printed map and listings were published for the High Street ADVENTures event in order to promote all of the businesses and activities that were taking place. Promotional activity also took place through local websites and social media.

3. Stow Exchange

The Council took a council-owned space and turned it into a pop-up bar. This was run in partnership with East London Brewing Company and the Olde Rose and Crown pub, in order to support local producers.

Following consultation with young people, the Stow Exchange was set up as an alcohol-free, inclusive events space for young people. Working with partners, we developed an events programme to connect young people with local youth organisations. Each event featured music and performances by young artists.

The same space was also used for engagement, workshops and focus groups. The Safer Sounds Partnership also ran crime reduction training for local businesses.

4. Night Time Enterprise Toolkit

This clear, step-by-step guide aims to encourage more businesses to try operating after 6pm. It outlines the key considerations for businesses wanting to operate at night. It sets out the benefits of extended hours and development of special events. The toolkit also promotes partnership working, be it locating night time activity in a daytime space, or pairing cultural providers with established cafes, venues and night time spaces.

1.0 Executive Summary

5. Later Opening Hours Fund

The fund was designed to help businesses meet the extra costs of later opening. The aim was to make sure as many businesses as possible could extend their opening hours. In fact, many businesses participated without needing to access the fund. Therefore, following consultation with the businesses, the fund was re-purposed for outdoor activity later in the year.

What we found

The pilot has demonstrated the wealth of opportunities to re-imagine and animate high streets later into the evening.

The High Street ADVENTures event boosted footfall by 22% on the High Street at night. This showed that post-6pm activation can be as rewarding and profitable for businesses as daytime activity. There is clear demand from local people. Their enthusiasm was demonstrated through the research and engagement activity. They want a strong local offer as a compliment to travelling into central London at night. Many who attended High Street ADVENTures had not used the High Street at night before.

The Night Time Enterprise Zone pilot activities have shown that perceptions of the night have changed. The idea that the night is a monoculture, based only on alcohol, has been turned around. The High Street ADVENTures event showcased a wider night time offer to local residents. Cultural activity, events and workshops took place on the high street and inside shops, cafes and bars. It improved safety perceptions and created a more inclusive and welcoming environment. It encouraged families to extend their stay on the High Street and was the foundation of the promotional campaign which drew in a larger audience.

1.0 Executive Summary

Involving young people is a critical step. The night is a time of opportunity to provide young people with access to social networks, skills development, cultural activity and learning. The project has highlighted a lack of inclusive and affordable activity for young people on the high street. By using a council-owned asset to host youth nights, we have started to remove the stigma around young people's presence on the High Street at night.

Night time activities can re-imagine daytime spaces. The Jellied Eel bar, which takes over the iconic L Manze's pie and mash shop on Friday and Saturday nights, is a great example of a night time business 'nesting' in a daytime space. These innovative ways of using existing space were stated as one of reasons people came to Walthamstow High Street.

We re-purposed a council space, giving people a place to experiment with new night time activities. This included the Welcome to the Forest bar which was run in partnership with a local pub and brewery. It also provided a much needed space for young people to meet and take a positive role in the life of Walthamstow at night.

Boosting innovation and entrepreneurial activity after 6pm drives up footfall on the high street. In turn this creates a more welcoming and safe high street environment for residents, workers and businesses.

None of these successes would have been possible without a trusting partnership between local people, businesses and the council. Where partnerships don't exist, one organisation must take a lead in setting them up. Local authorities and established business or residents' groups can come together to facilitate increased high street activity through encouraging effective and mutually-beneficial local partnerships.

2.0 Recommendations

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THIS WEEK AT CRATE

MON FOLLOW US @CRATE STJAMESSTRE
TUE THE UNTRADITIONAL PUB OU
WED BORROWED LIGHT XMAS WREATI
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FRI MAKE AND CREATE XMAS CRACKERS DJ
T BOOZY BRUNCH DJ 6PM
N LIVE MUSIC @SOLANA & GAB
EVENTS ARTILLERY 7TH DEC FI
TWE DAYS OF CRATEMAS

Vietnamese ★
Food & Drink

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2.0 Recommendations

Below are our five sets of recommendations for how future Night Time Enterprise Zones could help high streets across London. These recommendations are borne of the work in Walthamstow between September 2019 and March 2020 and provide a blueprint for other boroughs, businesses and the Greater London Authority. The recommendations should be implemented in the context of social distancing and other COVID-19 safety measures complying with government advice. We hope these practical steps will help the capital's high streets to thrive at night, especially in a time when public life is re-emerging.

RECOMMENDATION 1.

UNDERSTAND LOCAL NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Curate the night with the help of local people

Put local people and high street users of all ages at the heart of planning and developing night time activities. This will ensure gaps in the existing offer are addressed and new offers aligned with local needs, with potential issues identified early-on for a successful night.



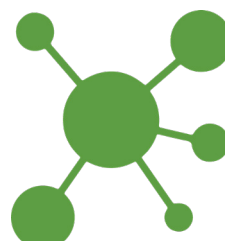
Make young people part of your night time plan

Include young people in planning for the night and give them a stage to perform. They can play an important part in a growing evening cultural offer, both as users and as creative individuals. Having an evening youth offer will strengthen a positive image of the high street as a sociable, affordable and inclusive place at night.



Identify clusters of businesses to grow night time activity

Focus on clusters of businesses that have developed naturally where opening hours can be extended and aligned. In Walthamstow this is at the St James Street and Hoe Street ends of the High Street. Both areas have new businesses that want to develop and work with established businesses.



2.0 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 2.

AGREE YOUR VISION AND RUN PILOT ACTIVITIES

Joint marketing and promotion

Encourage businesses to work in partnership to create marketing materials to better promote the range and quality of what is on offer locally. Council teams and local residents should be involved in creating this marketing campaign.



More visible 'Guardians of the Night'

The research has shown that safety is a concern shared by high street users, businesses and night workers. Night wardens, Police Community Support Officers, Street Pastors or local welcomers can be introduced to provide a visible welcome and reassurance on high streets and surrounding areas after dark.



Use council premises and 'nest' night time activity in existing spaces

Existing spaces could diversify and accommodate health and wellbeing, education and training, community support and business development into their night time offer. Businesses can partner with local artists to diversify their offer and attract a different crowd at night. Collaborations with daytime businesses can unlock opportunities for unique night time offers, such as the example of the Jellied Eel bar in Walthamstow.



2.0 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 3.

SUPPORT AND COORDINATE LOCAL BUSINESSES

Set up business partnerships and coordinate night time activity

Support the growth of partnerships between local night time businesses to encourage more creative service offerings, special events, extended hours and night hubs. Strengthening bonds between neighbours will help make the high street feel safer and more vibrant, and help generate additional spending.

The council and business partnerships play an important role in the curation of the high street at night. For example, they can align closing times on a jointly agreed night of the week to ensure that new activity has maximum impact.



Focus on events; make the most of what's already happening

Build on established events and share best practice. Identify daytime events that could be adapted to run after 6pm. Communicate and market these events effectively to safely attract local residents and visitors.

The London Borough of Culture and High Street ADVENTures programmes in Walthamstow showed that people will travel when there is something happening that interests them. A regular events programme, focusing on food, leisure, evening markets and culture would enhance the area's reputation as a night time destination. To accommodate these activities in Walthamstow, new outdoor venues should be considered, particularly during winter.



Direct businesses to support and training

Businesses would benefit from signposting to existing support and training. Many small high street businesses run on just three or four staff and are stretched for time and resources. They would welcome help with marketing activity and support to develop their marketing skills. By adding this capacity to small businesses, owners will be able to explore more innovative activity such as extending their activities and opening hours.



2.0 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 4.

INCLUDE THE NIGHT IN COUNCIL STRUCTURES, POLICIES AND PROCUREMENT

Consider a borough-wide Night Time Supplementary Planning Document

For example, The London Legacy Development Corporation has published a supplementary planning document for the night time economy in the Olympic Park. It includes planning guidance on the spatial location of residential and night time uses, proposals for opportunity sites, and agent of change principles, guidance on culture and leisure mix in new developments, as well as micro-scale interventions such as noisescapes planning, lighting and roller shutters.



Lighting and wayfinding should create a welcoming nightscape

Borough High Street and Town Centre Strategies should include a plan for the high street at night. The look and sound of the high street can make the difference between space people feel comfortable using and a space that excludes people. Strategies should inform procurement of new lighting, acoustic and public realm infrastructure. In Walthamstow, the length of the high street brings challenges, and wayfinding can be difficult. However, improvements to the public realm would make it easier to navigate. This could increase footfall, business opportunity and safety.



A simple lighting and soundscape strategy

Review the quality of high street lighting to make it feel like a more welcoming and safe place. Involve businesses so that shop front lighting is part of the plan. Involve acoustic experts to start developing a soundscape strategy for the high street.

Public spaces, feature lighting and artwork

Explore opportunities for feature lighting on civic buildings such as libraries and enhance streets, open spaces parks and squares. Develop a plan for reducing the number of roller shutters or bringing them to life at night. Shop windows and other frontages should be considered as an opportunity for public art and lighting commissions.

Signage

Clear, informative and consistent signage provide reassurance and a feeling of safety on the high street.

2.0 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 5.

PROVIDE LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH AND STRATEGIC SUPPORT FOR THE NIGHT

More boroughs should consider setting up Night Time Enterprise Zones

Running Night Time Enterprise Zones in multiple boroughs will allow boroughs to collaborate. The Greater London Authority can play an important role leading and coordinating this initiative and helping boroughs to learn from one another.



Promote London at night to Londoners and visitors

Boroughs and the Greater London Authority could work with London and Partners, Transport for London and others to develop a London nightlife map for Zones 3-6. It could be integrated with travel and transport to raise the profile of London's distinct and diverse high streets and neighbourhoods.



Resource boroughs to develop Night Time Strategies

Provide specialist external advice and case studies to inform and encourage a bigger and more varied night time offering. Advice on designing a safe and inclusive public realm at night should be included in the Greater London Authority's new Night Time Strategy Guidance for Boroughs. Ensure that the Greater London Authority's Night Time Observatory includes a database of night time economic activity and key metrics to measure the development of the economy between 6pm and 6am.



Help small businesses to adopt the Mayor's Good Work Standard

Many of Walthamstow's businesses, including those that trialled later opening hours during this project, are small and micro businesses. By adapting the Good Work Standard so that its requirements are within the means of small businesses, Greater London Authority would help ensure better conditions for night workers whilst boosting businesses and supporting local people. Local authorities could work with the Greater London Authority to produce guidance and resources for night time employers and night workers. They could also provide business support to implement the Good Work Standard locally.



3.0 Context of the research



3.1 Walthamstow High Street and Town Centre

Walthamstow Town Centre is a major centre in the borough of Waltham Forest and as such is an area of regional significance with potential for growth of evening and night time activities. It is the main shopping destination in the borough with particularly high levels of daytime visits for clothing, footwear and fashion goods, as well as an active street market. The centre has the largest demographic catchment of all the centres in the borough and commands the longest dwell time. Walthamstow has an established cultural life and evening offer including shopping, food and entertainment. This presents opportunities to build on this reputation to increase diversity and demographic reach.

Walthamstow High Street is a vibrant, eclectic place of trade and focus for the town centre. It is home to Europe's longest street market, with around 300 pitches stretching from Hoe Street to St James Street, and hundreds of shops and businesses. The Mall shopping centre hosts a suite of national stores and franchises, budget chains, a food and drink offer, and a 24hr gym. The retail diversity on the High Street is supported by a large number of independent shops on either side of the semi-pedestrianised street. The shops operate individual opening times depending on the type of businesses and offer. The overall vacancy rate in the town centre currently stands at 8% (Waltham Forest Council Retail Study, 2019), below the UK average of 11%.

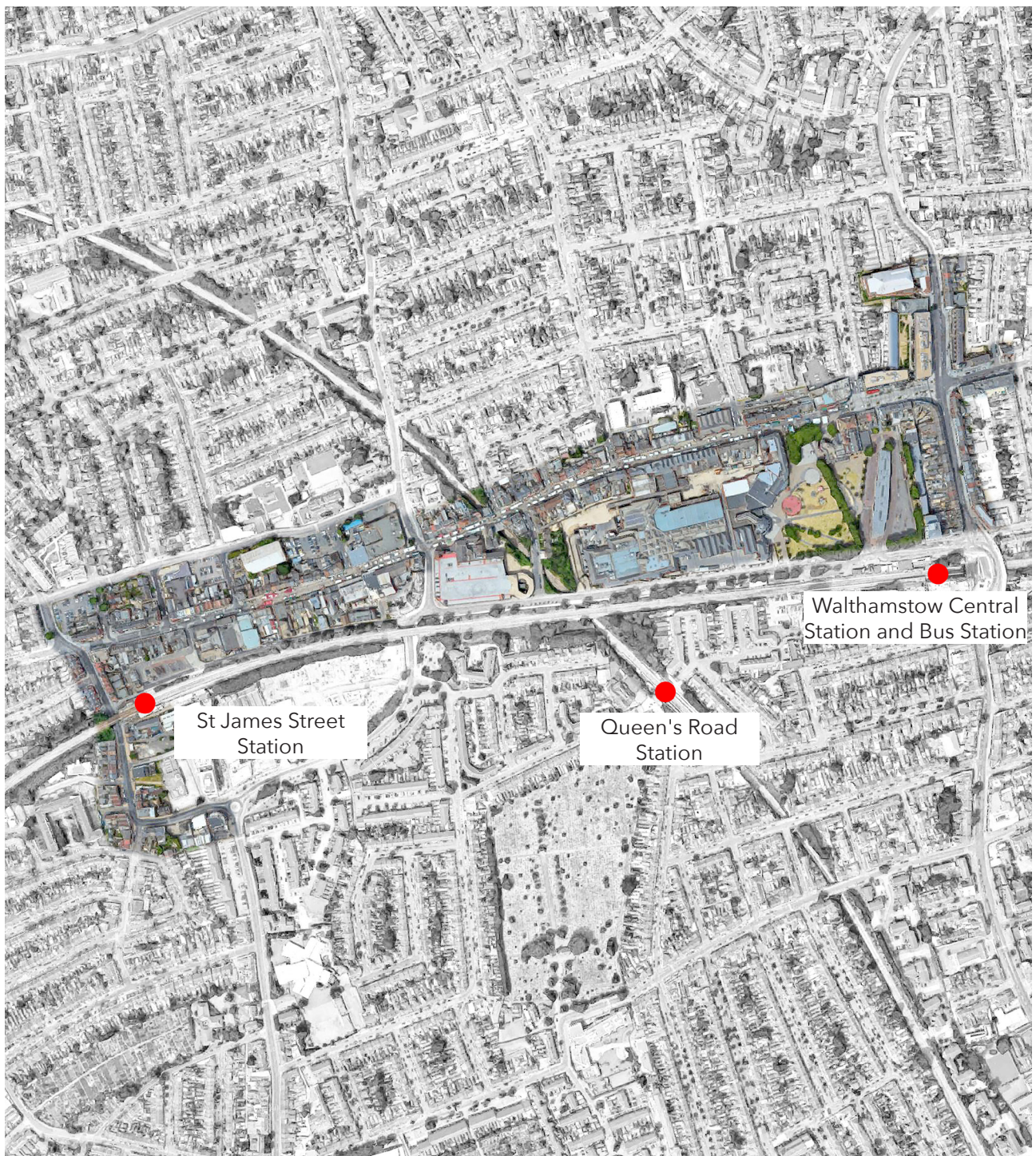
The development of night time activities in the town centre has been improved through the delivery of a mixed-use development at the junction with Hoe Street with its cinema and restaurant offer. Walthamstow also benefits from the Night Tube, which can facilitate an enhanced visitor offer, proven by the popularity of the Art Night delivered as part of London Borough of Culture in 2019. The council has recently purchased the former EMD Granada cinema with plans to re-open it as a 1,000-seater venue after major restoration works. This will further strengthen the cultural and leisure offer in the town centre and make a significant contribution to its attractiveness during the evening with added benefits to other parts of the evening economy such as food and beverage provision.



Walthamstow High Street, Bus Station and Town Square at night

3.1 Walthamstow High Street and Town Centre

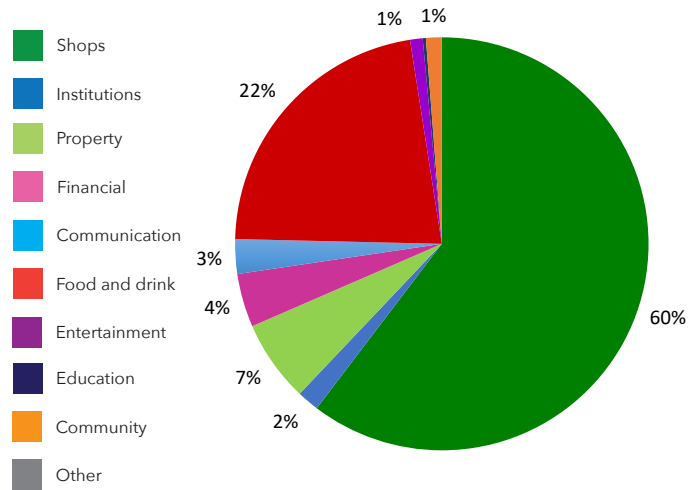
The area covered by the Night Time Enterprise Zone extends to the full length of Walthamstow High Street from St James Street Station to the West to the Eastern end of the High Street where Walthamstow Central and bus stations are located.



Aerial photo with Night Time Enterprise Zone highlighted

3.2 Existing businesses and facilities

The maps below show the existing businesses within the study area. Existing evening activity is clustered around the two ends of the High Street at its western and eastern ends; St James Street and Hoe Street respectively.



High Street uses



St James Street end of the High Street



Hoe Street end of the High Street

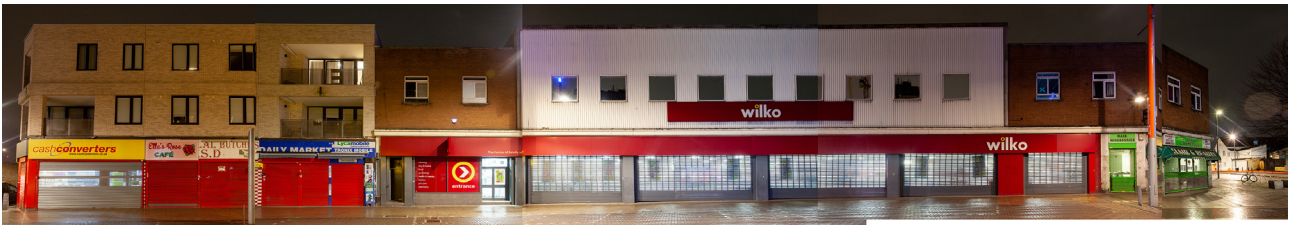


3.2 Existing businesses and facilities

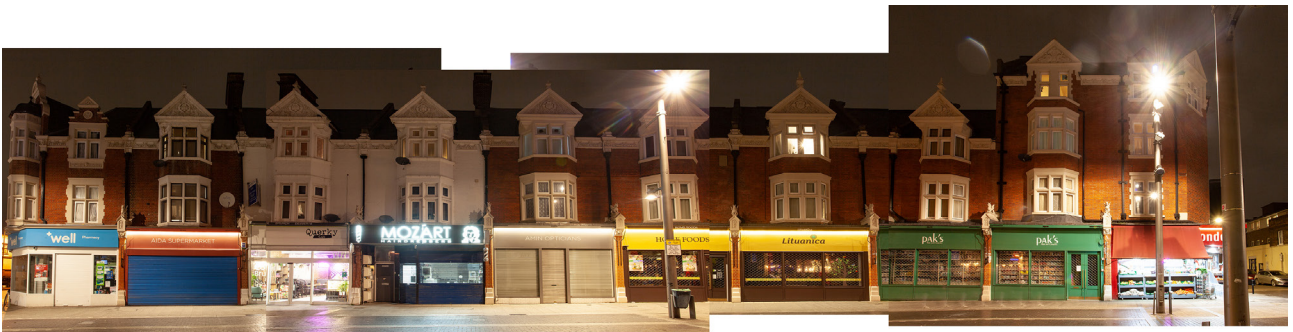
Selected elevations looking north down Walthamstow High Street



Hoe Street end of the High Street, including recent investment on public realm and a mixed-use development with restaurants and cinema on ground floor, bringing life and activity to this end of Walthamstow High Street in the evening.



Wilko located at centre of the high street, a large multiples' shop currently closing at 6pm, visibly impacting on footfall to the rest of the high street and influencing closing times for other nearby businesses.



St James Street end of the high street, including recent improvements to shopfronts where internal shutters have been implemented allowing light onto the street, visibly contributing positively to the look and feel, and animation of the high street in the evening (as opposed to fully shielded external shutters also visible on this elevation).



St James Street end of Walthamstow High Street, including recent shopfront improvements to heritage buildings. International Supermarket open until 9pm with generous lighting and internal shutters.

3.3 Existing challenges

The **challenges** that Walthamstow High Street is facing are linked to its hard-working nature:

- The high street is very actively used with footfall of around 40,000 people per day.
- Footfall is concentrated at the eastern end of the high street close to Walthamstow bus and tube services, The Mall and Empire Cinema. The western end of the High Street, from Palmerston Road towards St James Street station struggles with a lower footfall.
- There is lack of **accessible information** on the evening venues and activities taking place and available to people with different needs and requirements.
- Despite the relatively high footfall, perceptions of the high street might be dictated by observations at specific times of the day, e.g. residents with regular office working hours who see the high street in the morning when the market sets up and at their return the market is being taken down.
- The geography and long, thin nature of the high street is challenging in urban design and place-making terms.
- Perceptions and reality of crime and **anti-social behaviour**, youth gangs, knife and gang crime. Anti-social behaviour has been more of an issue at the western St James Street end of the high street.
- Market operation considerations including timing of market take-down: increased evening activity would demand an increase in spending for street cleansing.
- High number of independent businesses and individual traders, making it difficult to form a collective voice (in the form of a Business Forum).



Walthamstow High Street at night, including lower footfall near junction with Palmerston Road, market shut down and challenges with waste management

3.4 Opportunities

The **demands** on the high street are a result of the complex mix of stakeholders and visitors. There are a number of excellent **opportunities** for the area including:

- **Diversity of evening activities** alongside positive and pro-active prevention of nuisance.
- Promoting the evening economy offer to an increased resident population.
- Enabling community cohesion with incoming resident population.
- **Health and wellbeing** of evening and night time workers.
- Creating a **positive and vibrant** presentation of the area at night to visitors and residents.
- **Providing a variety of choice** and mix of entertainment, leisure and family activities.
- Supporting the **unique local character and affordability** of the high street and town centre.
- **Excellent transport connections**, including 24-hour tube at weekends on Victoria Line, attracting local residents as well as visitors from further afield.
- Building on existing well established relationships with existing anchors including **The Mall**, and other national chain stores.
- Support existing businesses and community organisations that operate locally, including the market traders and independents.
- Enable a **wider range of services** out of hours that people with regular day job cannot access during the day.
- Proactive **licensing and planning** to support existing businesses and encourage new businesses by creating user-friendly guides and drop-in events for businesses.
- Build on existing programme of **youth activities** to move towards a more preventative rather than reactive approaches to youth engagement.



Opportunities to diversify the offer and encourage extended opening hours for businesses and venues

4.0 Project process



4.1 Engagement and delivery of pilot activities

The pilot project delivered engagement activities, a programme of events, and incentives for businesses and local entrepreneurs to build on and further develop the evening cultural and leisure offer in the town centre. Stakeholders were from diverse groups with the local community, businesses, night time workers and local businesses engaged in a number of ways over the course of the project. Stakeholders from the council, as well as the GLA and the 24hr London team, were kept engaged throughout the process as the project developed.

Local Focus Groups

Including representatives from:

The Mill

Waltham Forest Young Advisors

Central Parade Creative Hub

St James Street Big Local

CRATE

The Mall

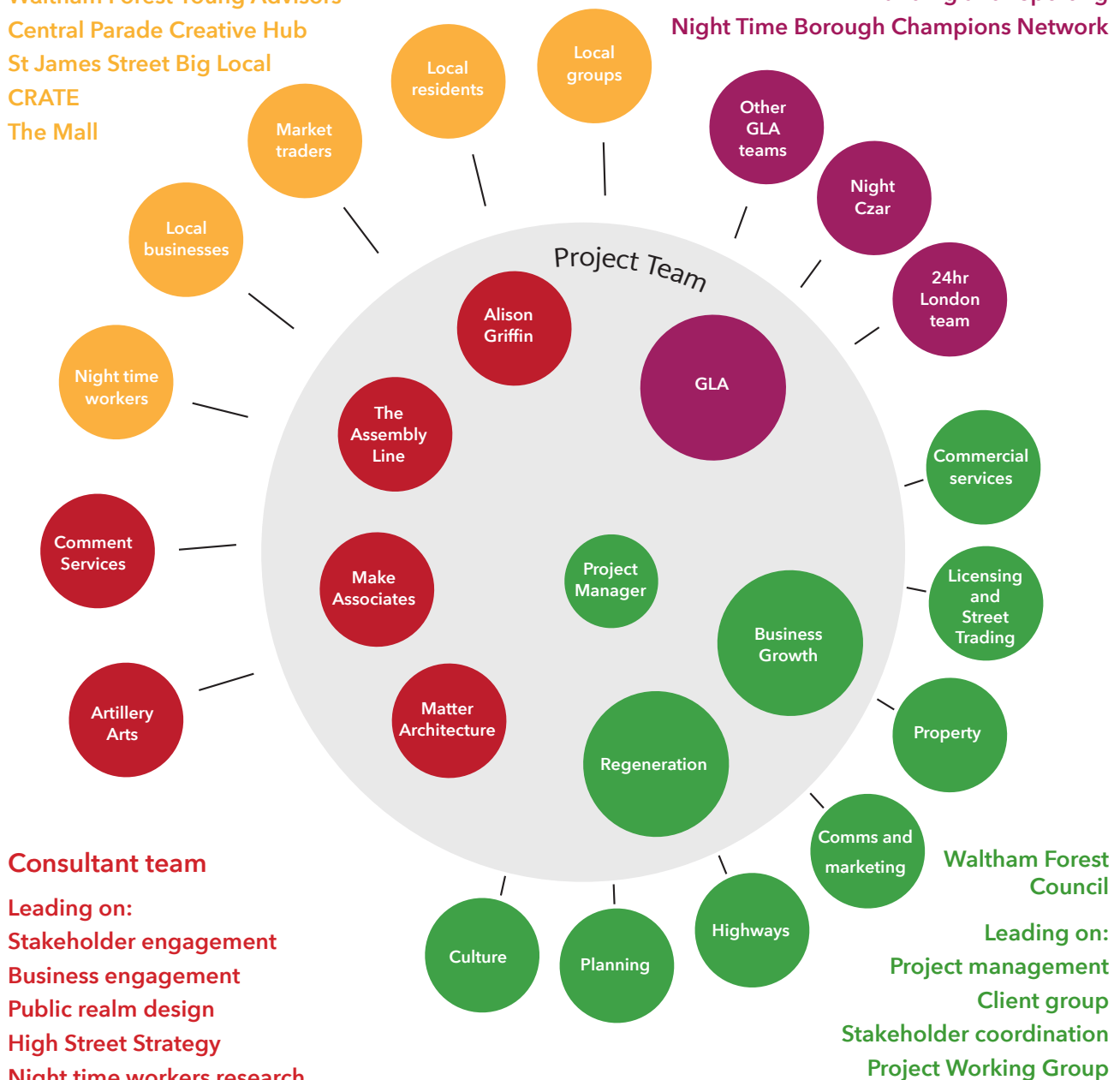
GLA and Mayor of London

Leading on:

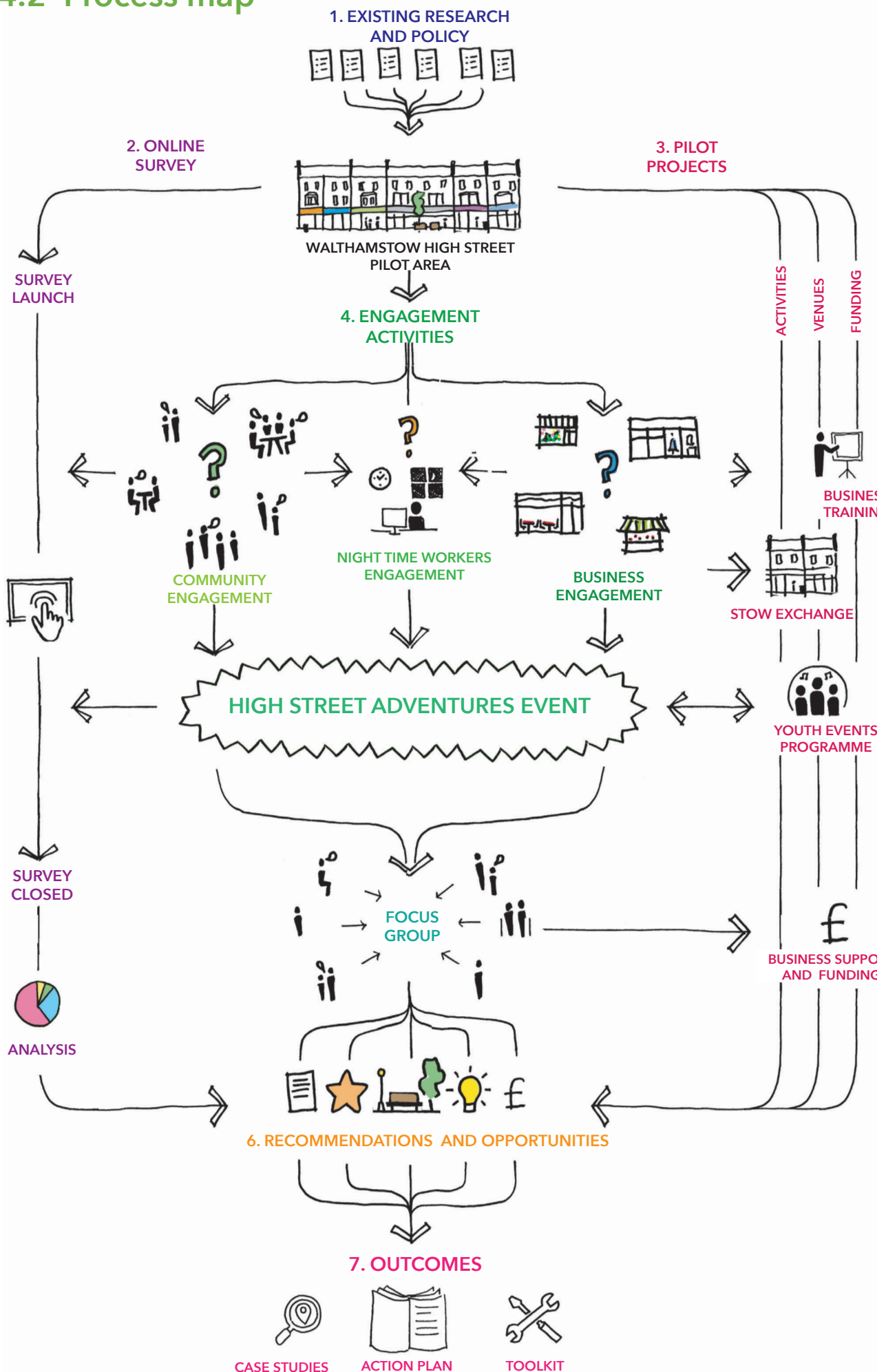
London-wide evidence base and research

Funding and reporting

Night Time Borough Champions Network



4.2 Process map



5.0 Engagement



5.1 Business engagement

Waltham Forest Council appointed The Assembly Line to engage with businesses on Walthamstow High Street, St James Street and Hoe Street, within the agreed Night Time Enterprise Zone, to understand the challenges for businesses to remain open later in the evening and what support may be needed to encourage them to do so.

The objectives of the business engagement were to:

- Develop a detailed understanding of the barriers for businesses on Walthamstow High Street to stay open later in the evening
- Understand the challenges for businesses that are currently part of the evening economy and what support could be made available to them
- Analyse the data collected and devise recommendations and an action plan for how to address the challenges with future programmes and activities
- Gauge and gather support from local businesses for a community event on Saturday 7 December (High Street ADVENTURES) working alongside event producer, Artillery and the wider project team.

Businesses were engaged in a number of different ways including:

- Door-to-door survey
- One-to-one interviews
- Participation with High Street ADVENTures event
- Post-event surveys
- Interviews with participants and customers
- A residents and businesses meeting.

In addition, time was spent in and around the high street at different times and on different days of the week to build up an understanding of how it functions. The following section describes the outcomes and findings of the engagement with local businesses.

5.2 Current closing times

The maps below show the current closing times for the businesses on the high street, St James Street and Hoe Street, within the agreed Night Time Enterprise Zone. The research showed there to be approximately 250 businesses within the area and of these 58 (23.2%) are food and beverage businesses. Where closing times are known, they confirm why the street is perceived as being quiet and closed early. The research showed that **more than half of the businesses closed by 7pm with the most common closing time being 6pm**. This was true even for national retailers represented on the high street, such as Wilko and Argos.



Walthamstow High Street shops open until 6pm



Walthamstow High Street shops open after 6pm



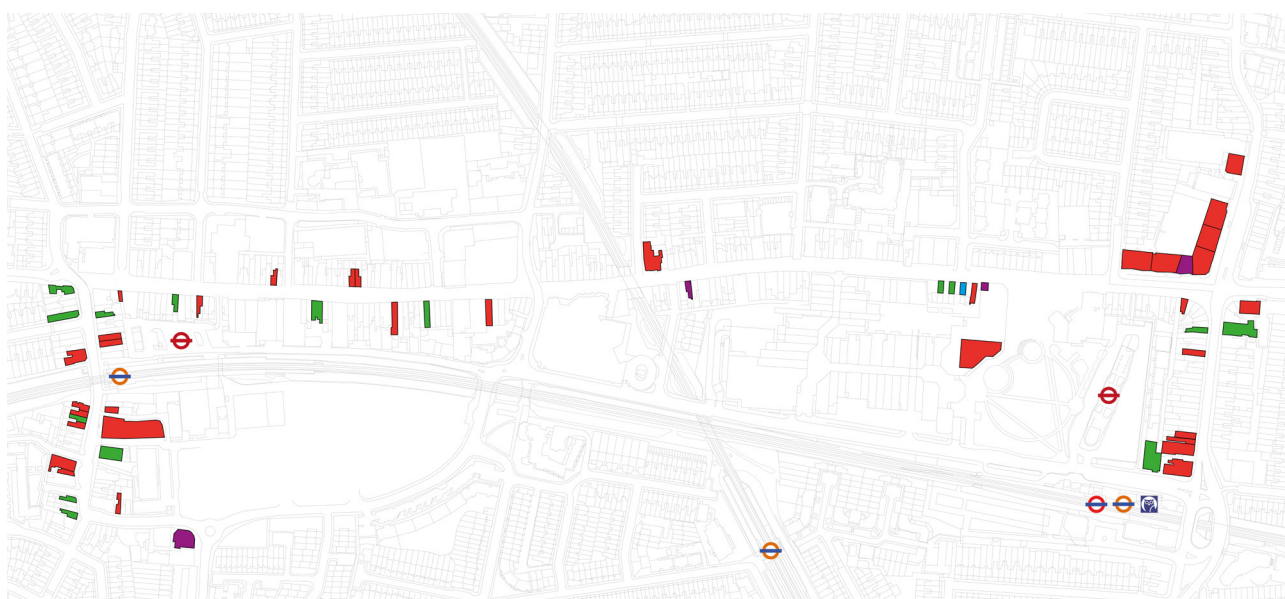
5.2 Current closing times

There is a significant drop in businesses that remain open between 8pm and 10pm, with the majority of these being a mix of takeaways, restaurants and bars plus one grocery/convenience store. Of those that are open later, there are 13 businesses opening past midnight and 4 that are 24hr businesses in the form of 2 amusement / gambling premises, a gym and McDonalds at weekends.

- Shops
- Institutions
- Property
- Financial
- Communications
- Food and drink
- Entertainment
- Education
- Community



Walthamstow High Street shops open after 8pm



Walthamstow High Street shops open after 10pm



5.3 Key findings of business engagement

Night work is increasing

Greater London Authority data shows that the number of night time workers in Waltham Forest has been growing. While numbers have almost doubled over 16 years (2001 – 2017), growth has been steady with approximately 1000 workers being added annually. The number of workplaces also mirrors the worker numbers, doubling in the same time period with a steady growth rate to 2013. From 2014 to 2017 new workplaces have been growing at a faster rate. The Victoria Line started running night services in August 2016 which may support the increase over the final year for which there is data.

Staff working after 6pm among the surveyed businesses are mostly fulfilling takeaway and delivery orders. Most businesses were employing 3-5 staff members to cover these hours. The cinema and McDonalds are the businesses with the most employees working at night.

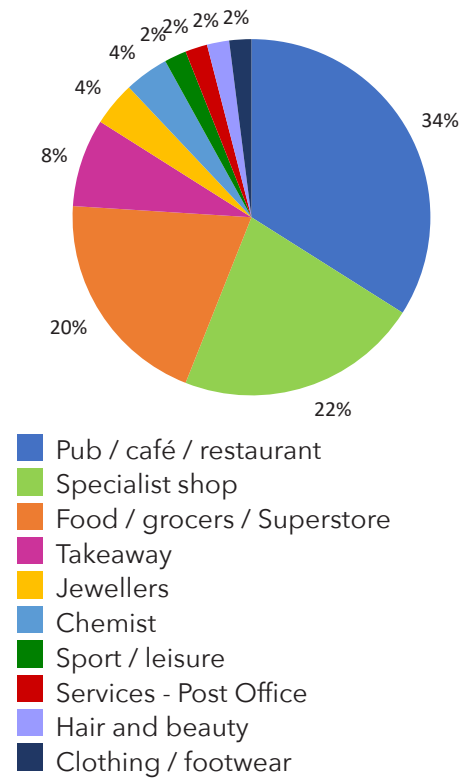
Most common closing time is 6pm

15 businesses surveyed closed after 8pm. The most common closing time of those closing earlier was 6pm. At the later stage of the evening, aside from bars or restaurants being open there is The Gym Group which is open 24 hours all week along with two amusement arcades. McDonalds are open 24 hours at weekends only closing at 2am on other days. The cinema also opens late for special screenings and Tesco at St James Street closes at midnight.

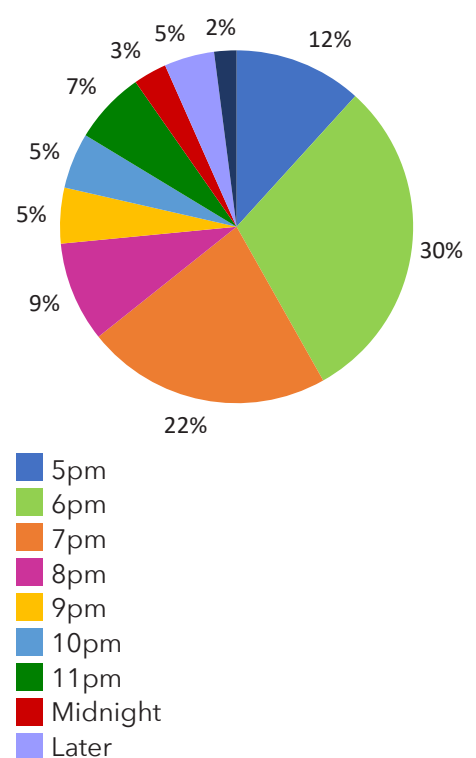
Large stores dictate closing times for others

For London, the closing times are early with even some of the large multiples, such as Argos closing at 6pm. There were many reasons given for why businesses don't open later but the main one was that the street goes quiet with the market closing down being the trigger for people heading home and businesses beginning to close. The market close down also makes access to the shops difficult and creates a challenging environment for pedestrians as they need to navigate vans and stalls to get into shops.

Types of businesses surveyed.



Closing times of businesses surveyed.



5.3 Key findings of business engagement

A frequent comment was also that if businesses don't close by 6pm they need to stay open until 8pm to make it worthwhile to catch commuters. This seems to be a risk factor given the cost of two hours staff time and getting home later when they may not see any customers.

Fear of crime and safety are key barriers

Crime (or fear of) and safety were also mentioned as a factor contributing to earlier closing times. 28% of those surveyed stated that they felt the High Street was a place to avoid after dark. Issues with gangs, drug dealing and shop lifting were frequently mentioned with personal examples from those surveyed. In winter, there is a feeling that people on the street can't be seen as well making it feel less safe. However, this also shows that 72% of businesses feel that the area is safe after dark, more so in the earlier parts of the evening when there are lots of commuters passing by.

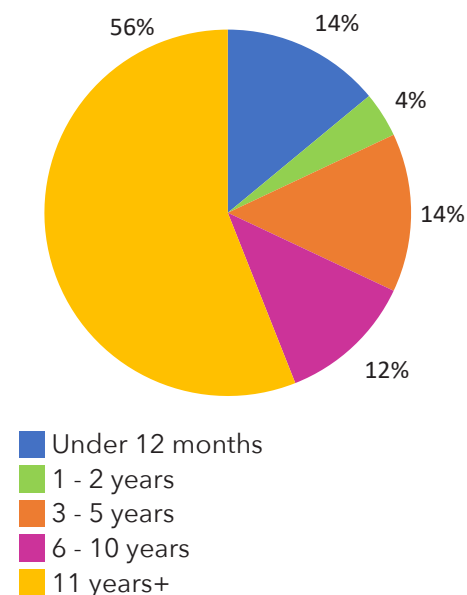
Businesses could open later under improved conditions

Businesses do not want to open later due to a multitude of reasons which included:

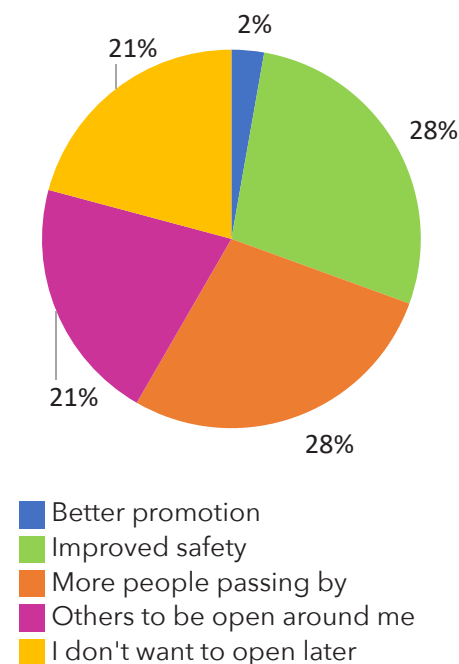
- opening early
- wanting to get home to family
- having sold out of products
- selling a product for which there is little or no evening demand eg. a bakery or a service such as an opticians.

This was the case for 30% of businesses surveyed. These shops often have only one member of staff (or the owner) and they do not want to spend any more time at work. Of those that would consider it, they would like to see business around them open as well contributing to increased street activity. Cumulatively this could encourage more people to be on the high street overall and for safety to be improved as a result. The importance of good lighting was also mentioned a few times as a key consideration for an environment conducive to evening economic activity. Lighting needs to be brighter and consistent to feel safer on the high street and to enhance perceptions even where businesses are not open.

How long has the business been on Walthamstow High Street for?



What changes would encourage you to extend your opening times into the evening?



5.4 Community engagement

Waltham Forest Council commissioned Alison Griffin to carry out engagement with local residents and community organisations within the Night Time Enterprise Zone.

The aim of the community engagement was to identify and consult with existing groups and individuals within the zone, as well as analyse the outcomes of the data gathered through the online survey and various engagement events.

This section describes the approach and methods, and sets out the key findings, identifying the barriers and challenges to accessing the high street at night.

Method

The method for the community engagement was based around an online survey promoted widely through the Council's communications channels, supplemented by invited engagement events with local residents and key community groups:

- Do you use the High Street at night (after 6pm)?
- How do you use the High Street at night?
- What are the attractions for you?
- What are the problems for you with the High Street at night?
- Recommendations and thoughts on what could improve the High Street at night and increase visitors.

Alongside the events, a public online survey was promoted through the Council's publicity and communications channels as well as via local networks:

- Council communications team, working with Walthamstow Town Centre regeneration, business and development stakeholders
- On a range of local facebook groups for residents
- St James Big Local newsletter
- Individual participants of the engagement events.

5.4 Community engagement

Online survey captured broad opinions

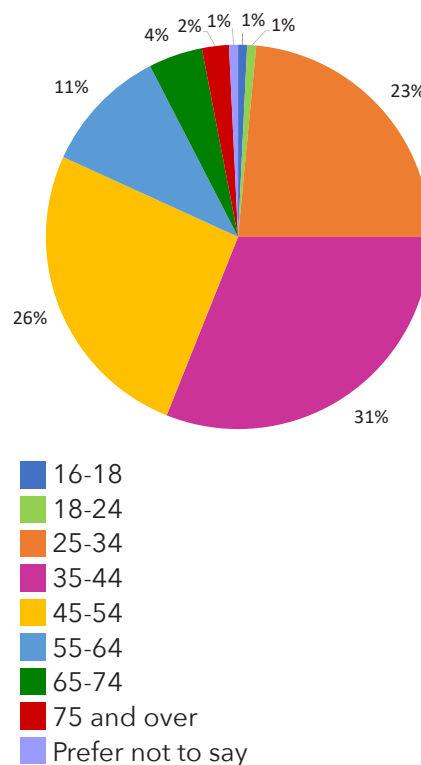
The online survey was open for 5 weeks at the start of the project and received a total of 132 responses. The survey was supplemented by dedicated engagement events to reach a wider spectrum of voices in terms of age, gender and ethnic background. The graphs on the side combine the audiences of the survey and engagement events to show the full profile of 199 respondents.

In-depth engagement offered additional insights

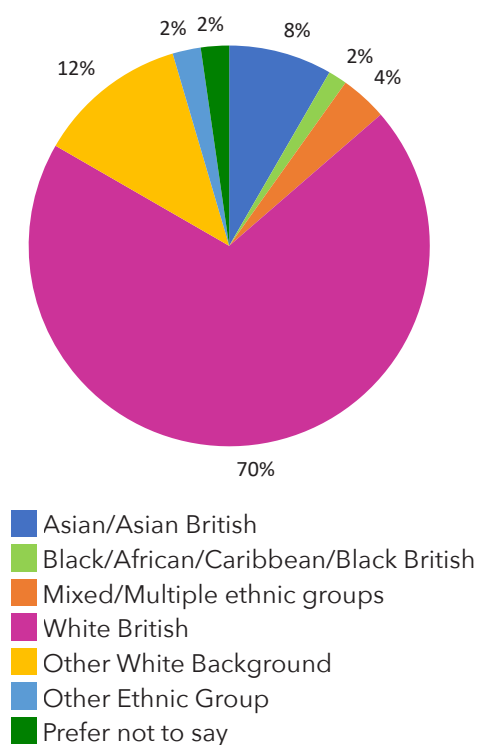
This targeted older and younger residents, those with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds. It engaged each group, through a dedicated consultation and, wherever possible, a subsequent evening walkabout on the high street to continue discussions on-site. This generated a great deal of rich, qualitative data and feedback, supplementing the data generated by the survey. Six groups were consulted:

- The Young Advisor focus group comprised 5 young adults aged 18-25, including 4 streetbase members and a young apprentice
- The young people at The Limes comprising around 16 individuals aged 15-25 accompanied by their support workers - this is an inclusive youth group and most or all of the young people have a range of physical and developmental disabilities and impairments, including autism, learning disabilities and sight impairment
- The focus group of older residents and those with disabilities at The Mill were 8 local residents, most or all of whom had health conditions (including mobility and hearing impairments), and 7 of whom were over the age of 65
- The Asian Seniors Group - all were Asian / Asian British males, 10 were aged 45-64 and 16 were aged 65+. This gave further insight into the perceptions of older men and especially those from an Asian / Asian British background
- The Sociable Sewing Group at The Mill were 6 women from diverse ethnic backgrounds, of whom 5 were aged 65+
- The Book Group at The Mill comprised 6 individuals, estimated age range 25-60, 5 women and 1 man.

Age split of community engagement and survey respondents.



Ethnic background of community engagement participants and survey respondents.



5.5 Engagement events

Walkabouts

Engagement events began with discussion around large format map of the pilot area, with subsequent walkabout on Walthamstow High Street to continue further discussions.

Participants were asked to identify positive and negative spaces, as well as their favourite places in the town centre. Debate and discussion between the attendees was encouraged to identify themes, and issues to be addressed.

Participants were asked to complete the online survey, following the event to gather their individual thoughts and feedback.



Young Advisor group

12th November
Welcome to the Forest bar
Young Advisor focus group



The Mill group

17th November
The Mill community centre
Older residents with wide range of mobility and health issues.

The Limes group

20th November
The Limes community centre

Young people with special education needs accompanied by their support workers.

Selection of photos from engagement events and evening walkabouts

5.5 Engagement events

Focus group

15th January
The Mill community centre

Following the initial invited consultation events and walkabouts carried out in November 2019, a focus group was formed with representatives of the various resident and community groups, as well as local businesses involved in the business engagement and High Street ADVENTures event.

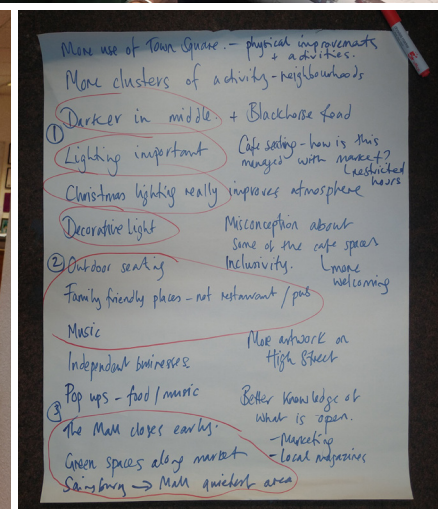
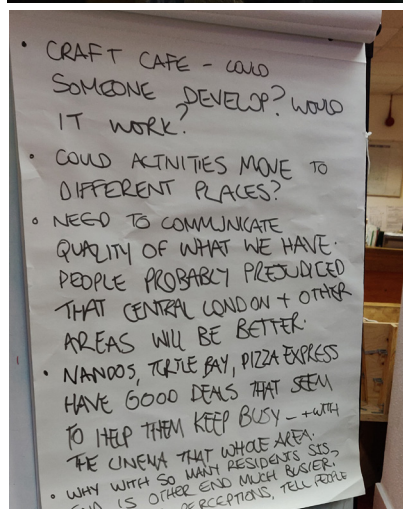
These included:

- Young advisors and Streetbase representatives
- Older people from The Mill focus group
- Local businesses
- Council representatives.

The group were asked the overarching question: *How can we get Walthamstow High Street and Town Centre thriving at night?*

Discussions were divided between small groups looking at the following:

- Outside - What are the issues with the existing public realm? What improvements are needed to encourage more people at night?
- Inside - How can venues attract more people using the town centre at night - activities/events etc? What support is needed for this?



Focus group event

5.6 Findings of community engagement

Respondents were asked what are the main barriers or reasons for not using the town centre in the evenings. The most common responses were: insufficient things that people wanted to do on the high street at night (78%), finding the high street unsafe (70%) and/or unappealing (67%).

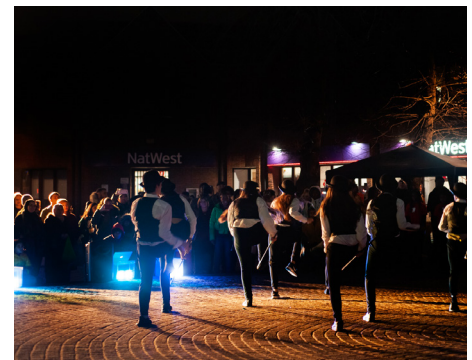
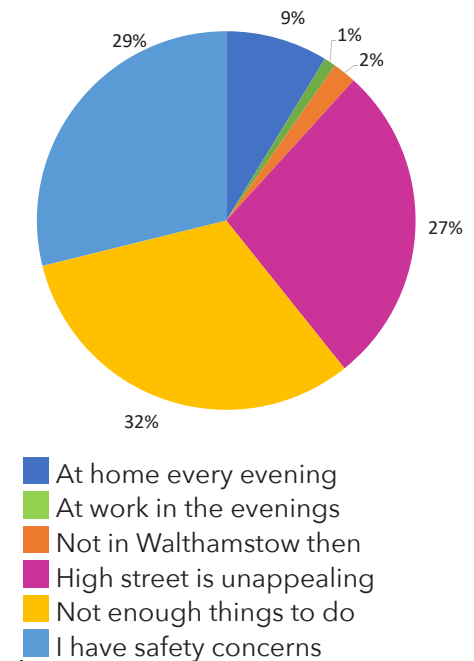
Safety is a key concern

Safety and addressing anti-social behaviour was a key concern. There was specific mention of gang behaviour and crime, in particular at the St James Street end of the High Street. More police presence, as well as providing more opportunities for young people to be engaged in activities were raised as ways of tackling this issue. Alongside this feedback, it was suggested that improved quality and quantity of street lighting would make the High Street feel both safer and more attractive to walk through at night.

Town Square can host more activities at night

The Town Square is considered as an area of unrealised potential and recommendations for the future of this space were repeatedly raised and discussed, in the survey as well as with the focus groups. Suggestions included enhancing the existing open space to provide a well-lit and all-year-round functional entertainment space, or development of a night market offering, which could be weather-proofed, perhaps with some covering. Young people would similarly welcome entertainment infrastructure here and developing the square as an attractive, free, safe space for people of all ages.

Reasons not to spend time on Walthamstow High Street in evening, after 6pm.



Performance on Walthamstow Town Square as part of High Street ADVENTURES.

5.6 Findings of community engagement

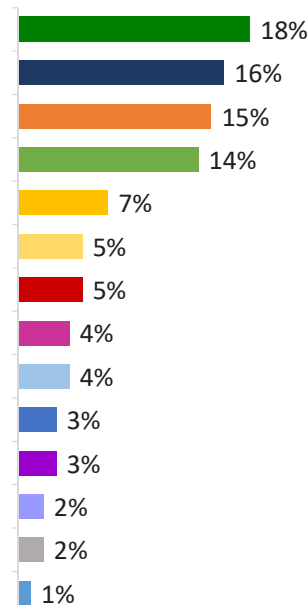
Existing activity should be promoted more

Most respondents who indicated they use the high street regularly in the evening (40% responding that they attend at least once a week or more), were positive about the businesses that are open then. They noted they would like to see more variety and diversity in the town centre. People expressed desire for more entertainment and particularly musical events and activities. The cinema is a successful leisure development and other projects in the pipeline, including the Council's plans for re-opening the former EMD Cinema as a theatre and comedy venue, are welcomed. Additionally, respondents acknowledged that supporting small businesses with affordable space, like at Central Parade and CRATE hubs at each end of Walthamstow High Street, provide opportunities for further diversification of the local entertainment and leisure offer and should be encouraged and promoted further.

Inclusive local facilities are needed

Participants reported they would like to see more cafes and places catering for people from diverse backgrounds and different age groups. Similarly, supermarkets that are open in the evening add to local facilities and contribute to increased footfall and much-welcome light to the high street at night. Existing community venues are highly valued for their facilities, craft groups and events. Youth venues are lacking on the high street, and reflected in the fact that young people congregate on the street, or at businesses such as McDonalds and Creams on Hoe Street. This in turn can lead to potential anti-social behaviour, along with a negative perception for those young people who have nowhere else to go.

Reasons to spend time on Walthamstow High Street in evening, after 6pm.



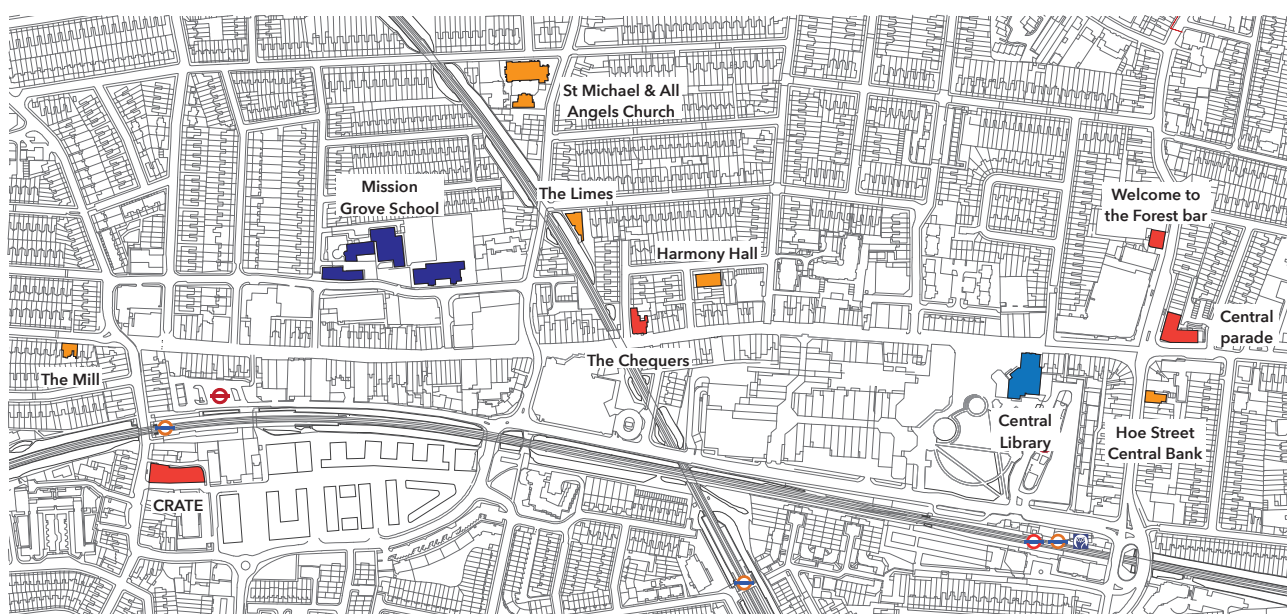
5.7 Community spaces

In addition to the profiling of businesses on the high street, it is recognised that there are community venues in central Walthamstow that are hosting and providing night time activities for residents. Four key venues were visited and interviewed as part of the project. This could help inform development of community provision and space for new and expanded evening activities in the future. The venues are:

- The Mill, Coppermill Lane E17 7HA
- The Limes, Somers Road E17 6RX
- Harmony Hall, Truro Road E17 7BY
- Hoe Street Central Bank, Hoe Street E17 3AN (since closed)

A fifth venue was identified in St Michael and All Angels Church and Hall on Northcote Road. The church is currently recruiting a new priest and there is an opportunity to engage with them once they are in post, to see whether the church and its hall could continue to be a venue for evening activities.

Further venues that currently provide spaces for community use and host activities, include CRATE, The Chequers Inn, Welcome to the Forest Bar, Today Bread and Central Parade. In addition Mission Grove School and the Central Library could also provide good opportunities for improved use in the evenings.



Map of community venues in the pilot zone

5.8 Night workers engagement

As part of the Mayor's 24hr London programme, one main outcome of the Night Time Enterprise Zone is to ensure a better understanding of the experiences of night workers, both in Walthamstow High Street and in general, in order to make recommendations that could improve conditions for those working "after dark", wherever possible. It is worth noting that the night-workers in the pilot zone are represented mainly by people working in retail, personal services, some leisure and transport sectors.

Objectives

There were four objectives of the research. These were to understand:

1. The concerns and challenges of a diverse range of night-workers in accessing Walthamstow High Street in the evening and at night
2. The conditions of night-workers within the context of Walthamstow High Street and Town Centre
3. The barriers for night-workers in accessing local services and what support could help facilitate that, and
4. The challenges experienced in using Walthamstow High Street in the evening and what could improve those conditions.

Method

Alongside a thorough literature review on working at night in Walthamstow, as well as in the London wide context, a series of night audits and 19 in-depth interviews with a range of night-workers from a cross-section of different industries, ages, ethnicities and genders were conducted.

The interviews covered feelings of safety, getting to and from place of employment, Walthamstow High Street as a place to work and their experience of other similar town centres and high streets in London. It also examined the type of work interviewees do, their contract conditions and how working in the evening and / or night impacts on their personal life. The interviewees were selected using Council contacts with businesses in the Night Time Enterprise Zone and with larger London organisations such as TfL.

5.9 Findings of night workers engagement

The key findings of the research fall into three categories: transport, personal and perceived safety, and the life of night time workers in Walthamstow town centre.

Night working offers flexibility

The majority of night workers only have one job and do it full-time. Rather than being the same set of fixed hours, night workers' shifts are varied and flexible, encompassing different start and finish times across 'lates', 'nights', 'overnights' and 'earlies'. Night workers value a flexible approach to work amongst their employers and the managers we spoke to are more than happy to accommodate night workers requests to move shifts. Night workers are good at planning and arranging their lives around their shifts, balancing family commitments, study and leisure time in parallel to their shift work.

Positive aspects of night work cited are that the type of work tends to allow people to separate work from the rest of their lives as when the shift is done, they can walk away and do not have emails or phone calls to do after hours. Negative aspects of night work centre around disruption to normal sleep patterns amongst the majority of night workers, even those who are not working all night, but finishing around midnight. An important and perhaps previously under-reported element of night-time working is that those who are self-employed often have no flexibility or colleagues to swap shifts with, which could lead to burn out.

Walking and driving are preferred travel methods

The majority of interviewed night workers live within walking distance of their place of work. Night buses, taxis and driving are the preferred methods of getting home after dark. Interviewees reported that, at times, waiting for the night bus could feel unsafe. However, night workers value the close proximity of the central bus station to Walthamstow High Street which means they do not have to walk far in the later hours of the night.

Only one of the workers interviewed uses the tube and only a minority of respondents who live out of town use the Overground. Lack of parking was reported as an issue for some night workers who drive their car to and from work in order to feel safer, highlighting that potentially car parking is more important to night workers than daytime workers.

5.9 Findings of night workers engagement

Anti-social behaviour at night is a concern for workers

All interviewees reported being aware of the presence of drug-dealing and gangs on the streets at night. They reported managing their concerns around it, but it does contribute to feeling less safe. Drunk people on the street and also within places of work can create problems for night workers, due to their unpredictability. Many night workers referenced the number of homeless and rough sleepers on the streets at night can be an unpleasant experience.

There is a widely held opinion that the St James Street area is to be avoided on the grounds of personal safety, due to the number of reported incidences of violent crime as well as the presence of drug-dealers and gangs. However, this may be predominantly based on social media and a potentially outdated perception, as most interviewees had not visited the area in a long time and were unaware of recent shopfront improvements and CRATE development.

Workers feel that the lighting in the town is adequate in most areas of Walthamstow High Street except for some problematic alleyways off the high street and the area around St James Bus Station. A number of night-workers felt that well-lit street art had a positive effect on how safe and welcoming they felt Walthamstow was as a place to work. The distinct lack of places which are open later in the evening, combined with the large number of external roller-shutters on shops after they have closed, contributes to night-workers negative perception of the high street.

The prevalence of reported incidences of violent crime on social media and lack of visible police presence on the streets at night is a highly cited concern and contributes to night-workers negative perception of their personal safety on the high street at night. Younger female night-workers cited fewer concerns about their personal safety at night compared to older male night workers and tended to show more of a pragmatic approach to this. Even though most night-workers had concerns around safety, most workers like Walthamstow as a place to live and to do their job - it is well connected, diverse, has everything you need.

Many reported the town centre and Walthamstow High Street changingly positively with investment coming in and new people living and visiting the area. Despite its relatively limited evening offer, Walthamstow is already dependent on night working. As its leisure economy expands this will only increase the number of night workers in town.

6.0 Pilot projects



6.1 Stow Exchange

Key objective

To find premises where new evening enterprises can be tested out in a low-cost and flexible environment. This will complement the existing night time offer and act as a stepping stone for entrepreneurs to larger venues in the borough, in the context of growing resident population and demand for variety.

Summary of pilot activity

The project partnered with an existing council initiative using council-owned premises to set up a temporary experimental taproom for one of the brewing companies in the borough, supporting local producers. The space is operating as *Welcome to the Forest Bar* under a partnership between the Council, East London Brewing Company (local brewery) and The Olde Rose and Crown Pub (local pub operator). The space hosted all the engagement activities and workshops as part of the pilot project. Safety and crime reduction training for High Street businesses was delivered with support from the Safer Business Network London.

A clear gap identified through the research and engagement activities was the lack of inclusive spaces for young people on the High Street in the evening. The project tested a concept of a recurring alcohol-free weekly night for young people aged 14 to 19 years, to come together and celebrate their passion for music and performance and develop skills in this area.

Through the support of the council-owned space and a network of local partners, the project delivered a series of dedicated youth events on seven consecutive Wednesdays during term time within the timeline of the pilot project. Each evening was hosted by a different partnering youth organisation bringing their network of young people, inviting them to shape the programme for the evening and showcase their songwriting and music talents to their peers. The evenings were co-produced between young people and the organisations hosting, featuring youth-led entertainment and offering safe and inclusive space where young people can develop and learn new skills.



Engagement event and youth nights at the Welcome to the Forest Bar

6.1 Stow Exchange

Key outcomes

- Linking with an existing initiative has helped maximise outcomes and minimise resources within the timeframe of the project
- Council-owned space meant that it is low-risk with opportunities to test and experiment
- Addressing a clear gap identified through the engagement process
- Enabling a sustainable model to be continued post-pilot
- Developing skills and encouraging young performers and talent
- Linking young performers with evening venues (such as the Vortex Jazz Club in Hackney)
- Building on relationships with businesses to find sponsorship opportunities and promote the youth night more widely.

Lessons learnt

- Linking with local partners with similar objectives can unlock match-funding for projects
- Small investments into pilot activities can nurture and build up the potential of an idea, to tease out the details and make a stronger case when applying for long-term funding
- A clear gap exists in positive activities for young people at night - high streets are key places where this can be provided through strong local partnerships
- The evening is a time of opportunity for discovering talent, learning and development, especially for young people.



Youth nights hosted at the Welcome to the Forest Bar

CASE STUDY

Programming Youth Nights

Venue

Using Council-owned premises offered flexibility. A venue that is already operating in the evening could see this as an opportunity to expand their customer base on a quieter evening of the week.

Partners

The initiative built a working partnership with stakeholders at the very start to help shape the project together and have a shared responsibility. The partners included: the Borough's Music Service, Project Zero, Leytonstone 6th Form College, Welcome to the Forest bar.

Programme

Events were set to take place every Wednesday for two consecutive months as an initial test, in order to provide consistency and build up the knowledge about the initiative further among young people. The curation of each evening was the responsibility of the hosting organisation.

Promotion

A flyer layout was initially developed to be easily updated through small additions for each event night. Events were co-promoted by all the project partners, Council social media and newsletters. Young people had the opportunity to publicise the night by producing a short video.

Budget

A set budget of up to £500 was identified to help cover event related costs including paying the entertainers. Essential items included: venue, staff, promotion, security. The budget also covered a small subsidy for refreshments at the bar allowing the price for a soft drink to be limited to £1.

Security

Safety for the event was a major consideration and varying opportunities were discussed to identify a youth-friendly solution, while also ensuring a safe environment for the young people. A local security company with a friendly manner and experience with young people was approached and hired.



Outcome

The pilot testing of the event has enabled refinements to the concept, which has now successfully received additional funding to continue beyond the timescales of the pilot project and cover the full school year.

6.2 Night Time Enterprise Toolkit

Key objective

Support evening events and activities through a simple, guide on how to positively plan for the night. Easy to navigate with key considerations and regulations for businesses looking to offer evening or night-time activities, community organisations seeking to expand on their offer of evening events and individuals wanting to set up a dedicated evening enterprise.

Summary of activity

The project funded the production of a simple and clear step-by-step guide aimed at advising small businesses and entrepreneurs on how to facilitate night time offers. The Toolkit focuses on the details of planning for the night, licensing, lease arrangements, food and drink hygiene and standards, safety and security, promotion and marketing, and specific financial considerations. The Toolkit signposts businesses to further support that is available freely to enterprises of all sizes. The document was produced to offer advice on the key considerations for businesses across London, however specific requirements for different Local Authorities may still apply.

Key outcome

The Toolkit is a stand-alone document that is available to download and view online on the Waltham Forest website.

Lessons learnt

- Offering free and targeted advice and signposting could help tackle some of the barriers businesses are facing if to open later into the evening
- Promoting case studies of successful and beneficial local business partnerships can serve as a powerful and practical example that others could follow
- The council has acknowledged there is an opportunity to build on the Night Time Enterprise Toolkit and create a daytime version.

Understand the need and demand

- Who would buy or use your offer?
- Is there a need in the market?

Tip: Create a customer profile and survey potential customers for feedback. Do research on databases like Mintel for consumer insights, which can be accessed for free at the British Library's Business & IP Centre (list of resources in Appendix B).



Images illustrating the Night Time Enterprise Toolkit

CASE STUDY

How to set up a night enterprise in daytime space?

The Jellied Eel - Walthamstow High Street

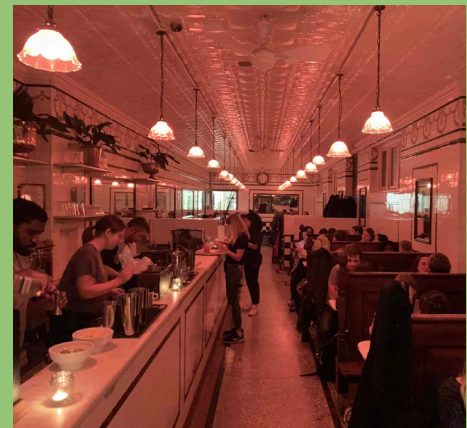
Planning

The Jellied Eel collaborated with an existing daytime business - L Manze's pie and mash shop on Walthamstow High Street. The shop remains open as normal during the day, with the cocktail bar taking over on Friday and Saturday nights. The Grade II listed historic interior lends itself well to a reimagining of its use and provides a unique characteristic that is the bar's biggest selling point. The location was identified as a potential risk for the business, with low evening footfall and a slightly inhospitable environment after dark. It was felt that this could be overcome by providing a high-quality, unique concept.



Licensing

The Jellied Eel had three pop up periods where Temporary Event Notices were used to cover each individual weekend. Before opening permanently, a Premises License was secured to allow for year-round alcohol sales, late night refreshments, and the playing of recorded music.



Insurance and lease arrangements

A nightly fee is paid to the pie and mash shop whenever the cocktail bar opens, as well as a weekly contribution towards refuse collection. The Jellied Eel has an independent insurance policy to cover Public and Employers Liability.

Safety and security

Clear directions to the bar are posted on the website, with the nearest stations listed. Local Police were consulted before first opening, who recommended hiring a security guard for the first few weeks and to monitor whether one was needed. After having no incidents for four weeks, it was felt it was an unnecessary precaution.

Promotion and marketing

Targeted spend on social media marketing and learning how and where to spend money on digital advertising has been crucial. A website was also developed ahead of launching permanently which allows for a further projection of the brand and a sense of what a customer's experience will be.

Outcome

The unique nature of the concept has meant significant interest from the trade press and more widely, leading to a high volume of articles and coverage including BBC Radio 4.

6.3 High Street ADVENTures

Key objective

To reintroduce the evening experience on the High Street through a curated programme of activities. The event was aimed at people from a diverse range of backgrounds and age groups. Activities on the night were mapped out and promoted to emphasise the inclusivity and rich offer already available and re-enforce a positive look of Walthamstow High Street at night.

Summary of activity

Arts organisation Artillery, was commissioned to produce and deliver the High Street ADVENTures event which took place on 7th December coinciding with the national initiative Small Business Saturday. The event was organised, promoted and delivered within a tight timescale of 9 weeks, demonstrating the strength of creative networks locally to achieve a widely successful event in the time available. Activities ranged from buskers to digital deer, choirs and marzipan carving. Co-inciding with Small Business Saturday this was an opportunity to show residents what was happening on the high street and for them to discover the businesses there.

A dedicated map and calendar were produced specifically for the event, encouraging local shopping and reviving and uplifting the high street at night shifting the perception of it to a safe, accessible, welcoming and inclusive place.

Local artists, creatives, performers, community groups and workshop leaders were commissioned to run workshops, deliver performances and involve people of all ages to enjoy the High Street and venture into the many cafes, shops and restaurants throwing open their doors throughout the evening. In programming the event the aim was to create exciting free activities to encourage families to extend their stay on the High Street in the early evening and events aimed at the crowd who want to stay out later or those looking to head out to socialise for the night.



Images from the High Street ADVENTures event

6.3 High Street ADVENTures

Key outcomes

Many of the businesses were sceptical about the event being a success at the outset, particularly regarding people coming out to see something new and the event bringing more customers. On returning to speak to those businesses after the event, their opinions had changed and there is now a growing appetite to open later if it was through a planned event or activity. Follow-up conversations with businesses show that the event was a resounding success, particularly given the short timescale for its production.

In terms of the visitors, feedback demonstrated that people were keen to come out in the evening and experience something different. **80% of surveyed visitors on the night said that similar events will encourage them to visit the High Street more often in the evening.** 40% of people purchased food on the night and 26% purchased drinks.



More than 40 proposals were received from local artists



More than 1,000 people visited the event



40 free activities were hosted on the night



31 high street businesses paired with artists



25 businesses and 3 venues participated



16 businesses extended their opening times for the event



Businesses were positive about participating again



Footfall increased on average by 22% on the High Street



16 businesses reported seeing new customers visiting

6.3 High Street ADVENTures

Lessons learnt

The event was a great opportunity to bring people from all ages and backgrounds together, and proved successful in demonstrating the benefits of late opening to businesses. There is a misconception that night time activity is focused on pubs, clubs and late drinking. Artist participation and the varied cultural events held during the evening, reflected the diversity of the High Street businesses and demonstrated that culture and arts have a key role to play in what Walthamstow High Street has to offer at night.

Creating new customer relationships and new working partnerships locally was a key lesson. Pairing of businesses with local artists was very successful in creating opportunities for both parties. Co-curation gave everyone the confidence to participate.

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'We have been overwhelmed by the response from our local creative community ... in creating events which encourage people to explore the full length of the street and celebrate the many cultures which make Walthamstow the vibrant and exciting place it is.'

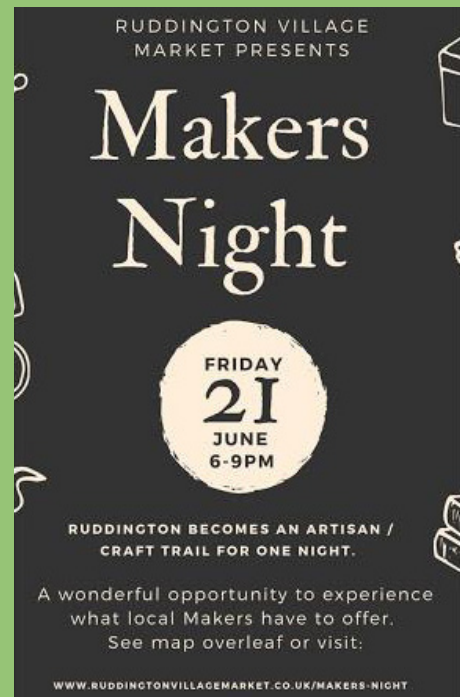
- Laura Kerry
Co-director of Artillery

[Click here to watch video of the event](#)

CASE STUDY

How to run monthly themed events? Makers Night - Ruddington, Derbyshire

In 2018, Ruddington lost its second generation greengrocers and the butcher was struggling to stay open with footfall in decline. Despite there being 10-12 pubs and restaurants in the village there is little evening activity amongst the shops or on the street. The community started a monthly market in February 2019 and in the same year organised Makers Night. Taking place on the longest day then again in December preceding the monthly market, there were up to 40 makers selling their wares and giving demonstrations to encourage people to visit the village in the evening. The evenings were hosted across three venues with other businesses in the village encouraged to open later that evening and host events of their own. The Bottle Top, a new business, hosted a 'meet the brewer' event and opened until 11pm. They now extend their opening hours monthly to host similar events and there are plans to repeat Makers Night in 2020.



CASE STUDY

How to encourage a mix of activities at night? Purple Flag - Salisbury, Wiltshire

Purple Flag is an award by the Association of Town & City Management (ATCM) for towns and cities that offer a welcoming, safe, night time experience with a mix of activities on offer to visitors. Salisbury has held a Purple Flag since 2012 when it was commended for its arts and culture offer. The process is led by Salisbury Business Improvement District and a night time economy expert who manages licenced venues. In recent years there has been a shift to more venues offering activities so it is not just about pubs and clubs. This has included game nights, workshops and spoken word events as regular activities, not just one offs. The cathedral are also programming more activities and running them later into the evening, using the grounds too. During Purple Flag week in October the city promoted a week of evening events. They were activities that were already happening but by promoting them together it showed that there was lots on offer in the evening.



7.0 Lessons learnt



7.1 Lessons for other boroughs

The project highlights a number of areas which other boroughs could replicate when starting to consider their evening economy.

1. Start with the data

Create baseline data on closing times and types of businesses in the area. This information can be updated from on street checks and conversations with businesses. Creating this data at the start can allow the impact to be tracked over a period of time in which you are activating the night time offer or looking to create long-term change on the high street. Collate details on events already taking place after 6pm. You may be surprised at how much is already happening. Map data on new developments to forecast impact on the existing businesses or the area. For example, in Walthamstow there is a new theatre being developed, CRATE has recently opened and there is a significant amount of housing being built, all of which may impact who uses the town centre at night.

2. Engagement is key

Take the time to speak to businesses and use different methods of engagement. Invest additional time to meet with existing venues to understand concerns or barriers to opening later. Avoid using a single approach - interview or survey - as this would not provide enough detail to develop an action plan. If footfall is limited or a large proportion of businesses are unable to employ additional staff to help them open later, evening activities need to be carefully focused and developed over a longer period. Imposing change without this understanding is likely to fail. Consider all businesses that are open in the evening, not just those traditionally associated with evening offer. During this project we spoke to The Gym Group (open 24hrs) and Tesco Express (midnight close) as two examples of businesses that often are not associated with an evening economy.

3. The first answer isn't always the end result

Do not write-off the initial research feedback. On completion of the business surveys, businesses were pessimistic about opening later, taking part in the event and the future of the high street. Post event (and having opened later for it), all except one were keen to repeat a similar evening and consider working with other businesses to open later longer-term.

'We want to ensure that London celebrates diversity, strives for equality and is known as a friendly and welcoming city at night.'

- Amy Lamé,
Night Czar

7.2 Lessons for the GLA

1. Funding for night time enterprise is crucial

Without the funding for the pilot project, time and money may have been wasted by creating High Street ADVENTures as a standalone event. By positioning this as the centre piece of the study it allowed for extended engagement and to understand views pre and post event.

2. Demand and supply sides are equally important for a successful night time enterprise

Organising a focus group that involved residents and businesses together was challenging on paper but as the research developed it became clear that both groups shared many of the same views. It would be less successful if a night time economy was created without the input of residents in terms of the businesses shaping their offer and that the additional activity does not become a nuisance to those living around the high street.

3. Further guidance and advice is needed

There is a lack of marketing skills amongst small businesses and support that boroughs can provide (via business or enterprise teams) is limited. At Greater London Authority level, it would be useful to explore if a toolkit could be created for high street businesses to access a basic guide to marketing their businesses and the organisations that may be able to support them or where they can apply for funding. This would support a partnership approach going forward rather than businesses looking to the council to lead on activities.

4. Timing is key

The delivery of the project was within a tight timeframe and spanned the Christmas period. The challenges this created were that some post-event interviews took place in January and High Street ADVENTures took place in December, a month when there is a lot of competition in attracting people to events. A spring or summer event would work, or as late as September.

8.0 Action plan



8.1 Action plan for Walthamstow High Street

A headline action plan has been prepared which builds on the findings of the Night Time Enterprise Zone pilot. It sets out short, medium and long term priorities for coordination, intervention and investment which will help establish the legacy for the pilot and the principles for a step-change in night time enterprise activity in Walthamstow town centre. Waltham Forest Council has a leading role in delivering the objectives of the Action Plan; however, its full potential can only be realised through continued close partnership working with the local business community, as well as key stakeholders such as community groups and the police.

The actions are classified under three key intervention workstreams:

- Support for business and diversification of the town centre's offer
- Promotion and marketing
- Improvements and investment in the public realm.

This action plan is particularly important for building the economic resilience and confidence of Walthamstow High Street and town centre in the post-COVID-19 context and reflects the aspirations of Waltham Forest Council's High Streets Action Plan focused on recovery, re-opening and re-imagination of the high street.



8.2 Support for businesses and diversification

Action / Activity	Purpose and impact	Measures of success	Lead	Timescale
Consistent promotion of existing night time offer through Waltham Forest Connected	Develop messaging to demonstrate that Walthamstow is open in the evening to encourage higher footfall, especially from commuters	20% increase in High Street footfall Develop marketing messaging with identified business clusters by July 2020	Council and businesses	Short Term
Facilitate increased hospitality and leisure offer	Identify empty buildings or underused premises and support discussions to encourage activation and change of use, where appropriate, to encourage non-retail use	A tracker of premises on the high street by September 2020	Council	Short Term
Support increased youth provision and programming in line with COVID-19 Government guidance and social distancing measures	Continue developing and improving Youth Nights through facilitating an informal working group of young adults to programme events in the future, including in other Borough locations	Track progress in line with COVID-19 guidance	Council, Youth Organisations and Police	Medium Term
Cluster businesses and enhance the offer to create an extended pilot project, including extended outdoor hospitality and trading space	Facilitate an active cluster of businesses at each end of the High Street (St James Street and Hoe Street) and encourage enhanced local business networks to formulate and communicate a joined-up offer	Business working together to promote each other Two business meetings to be held by December 2020	Council and businesses	Medium Term
Build a comprehensive list of opening hours and keep it up to date to aid discussions on opening later, with support from the GLA Night Time Data Observatory	Complete the data for opening hours for all businesses in the pilot zone and continue to update that using maps developed as part of the pilot project	90% completion of data on business hours and agreed approach to maintaining this by September 2020	Council and businesses, GLA	Medium to Long Term
Review opening hours with multi-tenanted premises as spacing footfall throughout the day and evening becomes important to support COVID-19 measures	Open discussions with local stakeholders from The Mall, CRATE and Central Parade, to align opening hours at first and consider gradually opening later	Change in opening hours of three businesses linked to clustering by December 2020	Council and businesses	Long Term
Offer training and signpost businesses to opportunities for skills development and building resilience in relation to their post-Covid response and the Council's High Street Action Plan	Ensure Council website, libraries and other existing platform can signpost to training available locally, particularly on marketing, events and social media	Establish what the best platform might be, update and relaunch by January 2021	Council and businesses	Long Term

8.3 Promotion and marketing

Action / Activity	Purpose and impact	Measures of success	Lead	Timescale
Online map and calendar of existing events and activities	Collate details of what is already available and encourage businesses to share details of their planned events, through Waltham Forest Connected	Comprehensive list of events and activities by September 2021	Council and businesses	Medium Term
Yearly cultural calendar/ programme featuring night time activities & offers	Set dates for an event similar to High Street ADVENTures to happen once or twice a year to build its profile	Planning internally to address feasibility of a summer event in 2021, depending on COVID-19 guidance and social distancing	Council, businesses and art organisations	Short to Medium Term
Engage with developers locally for opportunities to promote the High Street	Speak to large scale housing developers about including local High Street businesses in welcome packs for new residents, with a focus on evening economy	Contact with developers by Dec 2020	Council, businesses and developers	Short to Medium Term
Publicity/ communications, initially through borough-wide Shop Local Campaign to support post-COVID-19 reopening	<p>Improve knowledge of activities and events in local area</p> <p>Promote evening uses of the town centre and encourage local business involvement</p> <p>Base for activities and events</p>	<p>More people using the High Street in the evenings</p> <p>Frequency and success of community / independent events in the evenings</p> <p>Better/improved use of the town square</p>	Council and businesses	Medium Term

8.4 Public realm improvements

Action / Activity	Purpose and impact	Measures of success	Lead	Timescale
Lighting	<p>Improve perception and safety along the high street to address problem areas associated with anti-social behaviour/criminal activities</p> <p>Be aspirational and contribute to positive placemaking - consider as public artwork approach</p>	<p>More people using the High Street in the evenings</p> <p>Reduction in anti-social behaviour and criminal activities</p> <p>More activities taking place on the high street in the evening</p>	Council	Medium Term
Wayfinding, with social distancing measures in mind, initially through street markings - to help visitors observe social distancing at night	<p>Consider developing a wayfinding strategy featuring a strong element on night time directions as part of the High Street Strategy project</p>	<p>Increased footfall at night</p>	Council	Medium Term
Cleanliness / maintenance and hygiene standards in relation to COVID-19	<p>Improve perception of high street as positive public realm</p> <p>Improve user experience during commuting times</p> <p>Reduce quantity of rubbish and improve cleanliness generally</p> <p>Avoid conflict with shops at market closing hours</p>	<p>More people using the High Street in the evenings</p> <p>Reduction in amount of litter</p> <p>Improve pollution and environmental quality</p> <p>Increased recycling</p>	Council, market traders and businesses	Medium Term
Review market close down arrangements	<p>Review current process of market close down and work with traders to adopt an improved daily operation</p>	<p>Independent businesses on the high street report enhanced business environment</p>	Council and market traders	Medium Term
Street activation and trading/ hospitality in extended outdoor areas as part of COVID-19 response	<p>Facilitate businesses to have tables and chairs outside to add life to the street and allow for additional space for trade</p>	<p>Increased footfall in the evening</p> <p>Higher number of controlled outdoor seating</p>	Businesses	Medium to Long Term
Future evening and night time programming of the improved Town Square, as part of increased food and beverage offer in the extended Mall	<p>Consider design principles, activities and programming of the Town Square to support night time economy as part of longer term plans linked to The Mall redevelopment</p>	<p>Increased footfall in the evening</p> <p>Increased number of evening events</p>	Council and The Mall	Long Term

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