



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture,  
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

# Report of the Night-Time Economy Taskforce



September 2021

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# Foreword from Katherine Licken & John McCarthy

As Co-Chairs, we are delighted to present the Report of the Taskforce on the Night-Time Economy. The report reflects a genuine and concerted effort, by all parties working together, to provide support and encouragement to a sector which has been so badly hit by COVID-19 and to present innovative solutions to some of the challenges and opportunities for the sector, many of which predate the pandemic.

We initially presented this Report to Minister Martin in June. However, given the uncertainties around reopening for the sector and the prevailing health advice at that time, the Minister decided it would be more beneficial to wait until we could situate the Report in this next phase of reopening and provide some clarity and certainty to a hard-hit sector. The advice published by Government on 31 August sets out Ireland's plan for the next and final phase of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic – *COVID-19: Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting*. We can now present this Report within a positive framework for recovery.

We know, however, that despite the positive signs of reopening in this plan, there remain a number of uncertainties for the sector in safely reopening and encouraging the public to come back to these venues and enjoy what the Night-Time Economy has to offer. We are cognisant of the fact that venue owners and promoters and artists want to reopen safely and stay open and we want to support them in this.

As a Taskforce, we have also been working through a number of these actions already and this revised Report reflects this ongoing work. For example, a series of later Night events will take place across the country as part of Culture Night this year with the aim of building this into the Programme on a longer-term basis. We have also kick-started a pilot initiative to establish Night-Time

Advisors in six areas led by our colleagues in Local Government.

We know that pubs, clubs and other businesses dependent on the Night-Time Economy have been among the hardest hit over the past number of months. Our cultural institutions and the many artists and performers that contribute so much to a thriving Night-time Economy have also been through an unprecedented period where the “pause” button has been pressed on their creative endeavours. While State supports have provided an essential lifeline for many of those involved in the Night-Time Economy, they are no substitute for an active, thriving, and sustainable sector. The sector has been active in voicing those concerns over the past weeks and months and we have heard them loud and clear. We look forward to the successful resumption of Night-Time Economy activity as we move through the different stages of recovery from this incredibly challenging period in our recent history. Of course, the context within which we undertook our work was not just influenced by the onset of COVID-19 – we heard, through our extensive consultation, that pre-pandemic, our cities and towns had already been witnessing an erosion of diverse night-life options, a direction of travel that needed to be reversed.

This report does not have all of the answers to all of the challenges and opportunities for the Night-Time Economy – it never could and we expect that this is the start of a process in which the Night-Time Economy is formally recognised and where policy is constantly evolving in response to societal and consumer trends. This report sets out an initial set of solutions to many issues and lays solid foundations for further work on others. How we view our city and town centres functioning in a post-COVID 19 environment, how we socialise, where we socialise, are all big questions which we will

need to examine collectively as a society in the months and years ahead. This report aims to find practical ways to help get the sector moving and will inform a large part of a longer-term discussion.

One of the benefits arising from the preparation of this report is the extent to which relationships have been built across the Taskforce between different sectors, between central and local policy and administration and indeed with colleagues operating in the Night-Time Economy. We consciously use the term “colleagues”, recognising that creating a vibrant, diverse and inclusive Night-Time Economy is not something that central Government alone can or indeed should direct – it requires broad and deep collaboration and should involve a ground-up, innovative approach, with responses to challenges being developed across the different sectors.

The consultation process the Taskforce engaged in was an enlightening experience, shining a light not just on the challenges for those operating in the Night-Time Economy but also the opportunities that are there to be grasped. We heard a wealth of creativity and optimism for what our Night-Time Economy could be and we believe that this report can be an important stepping stone toward realising that vision. We would like to thank all of those who submitted ideas and those who presented directly to the Taskforce – those inputs are reflected in many of the report's recommendations.

The recommendations in this report aim to encourage diversity and inclusivity in the Night-Time Economy; modernise antiquated licensing laws; make operating procedures easier and more accessible; improve our public realm and create a strong sense of safety for the Night-Time Economy; create new and dynamic structures to develop vibrant and tailor-made local Night-Time Economies; establish exciting new pilot initiatives and collaborations (particularly

between the owners of performance spaces and the range of artists wishing to perform); look at existing programmes and structures with a fresh eye to draw in and support our growing electronic and dance cultures; and, crucially, to maintain supports for the Night-Time Economy as the sector makes the journey out of COVID-19 restrictions.

There are still some significant complex policy issues which the Taskforce was unable to fully resolve in the timeframe for the preparation of this report. Planning and noise regulation are examples where further work is needed in order to try to ensure that our city and town centres can harmoniously support both a thriving Night-Time Economy and sustainable residential communities. We have suggested some practical actions in these areas but also a dedicated forum to look at how planning can positively impact on the Night-Time Economy in the longer-term, as well as a regulatory review in relation to noise.

We welcome the Department of Justice's plans to modernise the licensing regime which will help our cultural and hospitality sectors to flourish again and can also help to broaden and diversify the range of night-time and cultural offerings in the Night-Time Economy. We recognise that this work is complex and will take time to get right, however, necessary legislative changes should be brought forward as soon as possible and resources to achieve this should be prioritised.

Other areas of concern which were raised during the consultation process but which we felt were outside the immediate remit of the Taskforce included the rights of those working in the Night-Time Economy. We heard from stakeholders that many of those workers are in precarious employment situations, with suggestions of unfair practices in some areas. We also heard from those in the disability sector that there are many challenges to be overcome for people

with a disability to fully enjoy or work in the Night-Time Economy. The issue of costly insurance acting to prohibit new business start-ups or expansions was also raised. Some of these issues are already the subject of policy interventions across Government, while others need further examination. In parallel to the implementation of this report, the opportunity will be taken to raise these issues with the relevant authorities, where possible, and there will also be active collaboration with the implementation of other relevant initiatives, such as the Report of the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of our Taskforce and those who contributed to crafting the range of actions we are recommending; they all gave very significant time and effort to the preparation of this report.

As we indicated at the outset, there is a considerable distance to travel to reach a thriving, diverse and sustainable Night-Time Economy. The publication of this report is an important step on that journey but the ultimate litmus test of the Report's success will rest on the recommended actions being fully implemented. We look forward to effective implementation arrangements being put in place so that we can realise the Report's very real potential to support the resurgence of the Night-Time Economy that we have all missed so much over the past number of months.



## Background to the Night-Time Economy Taskforce

Catherine Martin T.D., Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media established the Night-Time Economy Taskforce on 30 July 2020 as one of the priority actions for the Department and on foot of a commitment in the Programme for Government (Appendix 1).

Its membership includes a range of Government Departments and agencies whose remit covers aspects of the Night-Time Economy and who had valuable input to contribute from a legislative and/or policy perspective. The Lord Mayor of Dublin and the Lord Mayor of Cork were also members of the Taskforce given the significant experience in developing the Night-Time Economy in our two largest cities. Give Us The Night, an independent volunteer group of professionals operating within the night-time industry, was also represented on the Taskforce, providing direct sectoral input to the Taskforce's work. The Taskforce was co-chaired by Ms. Katherine Licken, Secretary General of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and Mr. John McCarthy, former Secretary General at the then Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The Taskforce was established against the backdrop of COVID-19 restrictions which saw the temporary closure of pubs, clubs and many other businesses involved in the Night-Time Economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has utterly changed the operating landscape for the Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media sectors – most of which sustain the Night-Time Economy. These sectors are among the hardest hit by the pandemic with most essentially closed or with very low levels of activity. The bulk of businesses and individuals in these sectors have been wholly dependent on State supports for the majority of 2020 and to date in 2021.

As the economy opens up in line with the recently published *COVID-19: Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting, the next and final phase of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic*, the Night-Time Economy needs to have as few obstacles as possible to its growth and development. This Taskforce has approached its work in this context and has examined the challenges facing the development of a vibrant night time culture and economy, including issues such as regulation, licensing laws, transport, and diversity of cultural activities among other issues. It has also listened to the views of key stakeholders involved in this process.

The full list of members of the Taskforce is set out below:

**Katherine Licken**, Secretary General of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (co-Chair)

**John McCarthy**, former Secretary General at the then Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (co-Chair)

**Hazel Chu**, Lord Mayor of Dublin

**Joe Kavanagh**, Lord Mayor of Cork

**Clare Brosnan**, Department of Justice

**Deaglán Ó Briain**, Department of Justice

**Colin O Hehir**, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

**Éanna Ó Conghaile**, Department of Transport

**Mary Byrne**, Department of Rural and Community Development

**Colin Ryan**, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

**Deborah Dignam**, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

**Anne Graham**, National Transport Authority

Chief Superintendent

**Michael McElgunn**, An Garda Síochána

**Paul Keeley**, Fáilte Ireland

**Sunil Sharpe & Robbie Kitt**, Give Us The Night

**Seán Rainbird**, Council of National Cultural Institutions (CNCI)

**Maureen Kennelly**, Arts Council

**Jenny Sherwin**, Local Authority Arts Officer

**AnnMarie Farrelly**, County and City Management Association (CCMA)

**Conor Falvey**, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

**Sinéad Copeland**, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

**Deirdre Currivan**, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Secretariat)

The **Terms of Reference** of the Taskforce were as follows:

1. **Explore and define a vision** for a vibrant Night-Time Economy in our cities and towns which is diverse and inclusive.
2. **Identify international models** of best practice.
3. **Conduct an intensive stakeholder engagement process** with all relevant sectors and interested parties who have a significant role in the Night-Time Economy to ensure that all views and ideas are considered in the work of the Taskforce. This process will also include meetings with key stakeholders, and a call for submissions from interested parties.
4. **Conduct a detailed venue mapping exercise** with local authorities and culture sector partners.
5. **Complete and seek information on current pilots** (DCC and CCC) and initiate further pilots in rural locations to determine any further challenges that rural communities may face.
6. Building on the experience of the pilots **examine the establishment of local committees** to advance and improve our night-time entertainment and creative offerings in other urban areas.
7. **Conduct a full review of the regulations and policy framework** governing our night-time culture at national and local level.
8. **Highlight other key challenges arising from pilot projects** and the current restrictions due to COVID-19 and identify priority solutions/actions including but not limited to:
  - Transport
  - Public Order
  - Diversity of Cultural Offering.
9. **Make recommendations to the Minister** for the development of a Policy on the Night-Time Economy.

The Taskforce met 6 times virtually and a number of sub-groups were also established. See below for further details.

# What do we mean by the Night-Time Economy?

The Night-Time Economy is multi-layered, covering a range of sectors and stakeholders with a diverse offering including cultural activity, entertainment, hospitality, festivals, sport and retail activity, with the aim of providing a safe and secure space to work and/or socialise. A vibrant Night-Time Economy is enabled by a well-designed public realm, effective transport solutions and different activities occurring at different stages of the 6pm to 6am Night-Time Economy timeframe. A good Night-Time Economy should include a range of activities to suit all ages and interests and be a welcoming and flexible environment to do business and be creative.

However, achieving harmonious co-existence between potentially conflicting uses, particularly in terms of protecting residential amenity while also supporting a vibrant Night-Time Economy sector, can be challenging. It is acknowledged by the Taskforce that any new initiatives which aim to enhance the Night-Time Economy will have to co-exist with the objective of increasing the number of people living in our town and city centres. Submissions received from Residents' Associations during the consultation process highlighted the areas of concern. New models of consultation, innovative solutions and support from the late-night hospitality sector, local authorities and An Garda Síochána will be key to achieving this balance.

The opportunities and visions for a thriving Night-Time Economy will vary across different settings, from large urban centres to suburbs to smaller towns and villages. The design of the most appropriate Night-Time Economy for a particular city, town or village will be a matter for consideration by the relevant stakeholders in that area. What is required for a thriving Night-Time Economy in Dublin will not be suitable for a rural town or even a large urban centre outside of Dublin. Stakeholders need to agree the desired character of their localities and their Night-Time Economy needs to be designed to support this ambition.

Notwithstanding the need for tailored approaches to individual areas, there is a common requirement for a co-ordinated approach across public services and a strong partnership with the various stakeholders who are involved – or want to be involved – in the Night-Time Economy. Whatever the location, the Night-Time Economy requires a consistent ethos of engagement and support and a willingness to try new things, assist partners who want to start something new and an openness to working together to achieve a greater outcome.

## The Night-Time Economy in Ireland - Definition and Vision

A sub-group of the Taskforce was tasked with developing a definition of the Night-Time Economy and a shared vision for it, to assist in the preparation of this report. Its work was informed heavily by the inputs to the stakeholder consultation and engagement processes which the Taskforce undertook. Following discussion of the outcome of the sub-group's work at the main Taskforce, the following is proposed as a definition of the Night-Time Economy:

*The Night-Time Economy refers to the diverse social, cultural and economic activity occurring during specified evening and night-time hours. It balances the needs of the inter-related communities that co-exist to bring it to life and create a special sense of shared place.*

In interpreting this definition:

- “Social” refers to residents and visitors engaging with friends and family - it can be simply enjoying free experiences like the park, or other elements of the public realm, or it can be monetised experiences such as café, restaurant, bar, cinema, gym, hobbies, etc.
- “Cultural” refers to access to cultural institutions, music, (including live music events and night-cubs) theatre, street performance, urban animation - it can be free or monetised.
- “Economic” refers to commercial/ monetised experiences including hospitality, entertainment, retail and education (evening education).

In shaping a vision for the sector, it was agreed that the Night-Time Economy should be as inclusive and accessible as possible and reflect the experiences and aspirations of the consumer, residents and those working and creating cultural experiences in our cities, towns and villages. The vision, which it is hoped that the recommendations in this report will help to realise, can be summarised as follows

## Vision for a Night-Time Economy in Ireland:

Ireland's cities and towns are uniquely engaging places to live, explore and work in at night; offering a wide range of experiences that appeal to all ages and interests; and are easy to access no matter the hour. They are vibrant, welcoming places that bring you back time and again. This vision is supported by a cohesive policy and legislative environment which enables the creation of vibrant and inclusive night-time experiences that are appropriate to their character and embraced by all local stakeholders.

## Our Guiding Principles

In approaching its work, the Taskforce considered that it should be guided by a number of key principles, as follows:

1. **Sustainability** – we are focussed on building a better future for the Night-Time Economy. To do this we will balance the needs of:
  - The communities that live within our towns and cities (quality of life)
  - The visitors to our cities and towns (consumer satisfaction)
  - The businesses within our cities and towns (financial sustainability & good jobs)
  - The environment within which the Night-Time economy operates (built & natural)
  - The creative practitioners that operate within our towns and cities.
2. **Insight** – development will be guided by data-driven decision making (we will value facts and measurement). However, it was also agreed that a historical data-driven approach should not become a barrier to innovation or creativity in response to emerging needs.
3. **Integrity** – transparent governance and strong communications.
4. **Inclusivity** – our cities and towns are built on a sense of community. We will help create the environment for new jobs for locals and create a better place to live. We will adopt universal accessibility principles to guide actions.
5. **Diversity** – our urban centres will serve the needs of their many stakeholders by offering a wide range of services and experiences.
6. **Vibrancy** – we will facilitate the use of urban planning to create streetscapes and public spaces and we will review licensing and regulation of venues to support an eclectic array of hospitality, retail and cultural venues in a welcoming and engaging environment.
7. **Dignity & Safety** – all participants in our Night-Time Economy will feel valued and safe as they go about their lives.

## Consultation process

As part of its work, the Taskforce conducted an intensive stakeholder engagement process with relevant sectors and interested parties who have a significant role in the Night-Time Economy to ensure that all relevant views and ideas were considered.

Well over 100 stakeholders from community organisations, business and industry, civic society, the cultural sector and sporting organisations were invited to submit their views. 58 submissions were received as part of this process and the responses were considered by the Taskforce and its various sub-groups (see Appendix 2 for list of respondents). The following questions were asked of each participant in the consultation process:

**1. What do you see as the key attributes of a positive Night-Time Economy? What does the best case scenario for you (as a group) look like?**

**2. What cultural, creative or other activities are currently missing from the Night-Time Economy?**

**3. What are the challenges for your particular group and others? Any suggested solutions?**

**4. What in your view is a best practice example of a successful Night-Time Economy internationally and/or are there international examples we can draw from?**

As part of its work, the Taskforce also invited a number of groups to direct engagements at dedicated consultation sessions over the course of December, January and February. The groups involved covered a wide range of interests in relation to the Night-Time Economy including culture and diversity, public health, hospitality, entertainment and other business, residents and community-based interests (see Appendix 3 for a list of stakeholders who presented to the Taskforce). All of these presentations helped to inform the Taskforce in its preparation of this report.

## Taskforce Sub-Groups

In order to maximise the output of the Group, the Taskforce decided to activate a sub-group structure to ensure the various issues surrounding the Night-Time Economy were reviewed and discussed in detail. The following groups were established and met regularly, feeding their findings into the main Taskforce at each meeting:

- 1. Vision sub-group (Chair: Paul Keeley, Fáilte Ireland).** This Group reviewed existing definitions and visions of the Night-Time Economy and developed a unique definition and vision for an Irish context, taking on board the feedback from the stakeholder consultation process and the collective experience from the various members. They also developed a set of guiding principles and outlined a set of issues arising within the Night-Time Economy.
- 2. The Pilot/Local Authority sub-group (Chair: AnnMarie Farrelly, CE Fingal County Council).** This group examined the experiences of both Dublin City and Cork City in developing the Night-Time Economy. They also looked at linkages with the Town Centre First Initiative in the Department of Rural and Community Development, they heard from the experiences of local authorities outside of Dublin and examined the benefits and challenges of the Purple Flag Initiative. They developed new ideas around potential pilots which have informed some of the recommendations of this report.
- 3. The Venue sub-group (Chair: Maureen Kennelly, Director, Arts Council).** This group looked at the availability of venues for cultural activity in the Night-Time Economy and potential challenges experienced by these venues. They also examined options for mapping cultural venues and discussed the development of multi-purpose venues.
- 4. The International Experience sub-group (Chair: Hazel Chu, Lord Mayor of Dublin).** This group invited a range of international speakers to discuss the experience of other jurisdictions in developing successful and sustainable Night-Time Economies. They then reflected on which lessons could be most useful in an Irish context. A list of those speakers who presented to this Sub-Group can be found at Appendix 4.
- 5. The Regulations sub-group (Chair: Clare Brosnan, Department of Justice).** This group undertook a mapping exercise across Government to capture the regulatory oversight of the Night-Time Economy. They identified key issues arising from the consultation process and developed potential solutions which have fed into this report particularly in the area of planning and licensing reform.

# Priority Challenges and Recommendations

A more diverse and inclusive Night-Time Economy sector

- **Increase the Night-Time Economy offering** through extended opening hours in the National Cultural Institutions
- **Bring more venues into late night use** by linking promoters and artists with existing spaces through a new annual exchange forum
- **New late-night pilot programme for Culture Night**
- **New pilot projects in the National Cultural Institutions** to trial night-time activities, including a pilot late-night event in the National Concert Hall, based on international models of best practice
- **Increased collaboration across Government** to deliver a high impact and well-functioning public realm to encourage more outdoor activities in the Night-Time Economy
- **New pilot project in Cork City** to encourage and support the night-time food scene

Diversity and inclusivity were two key concepts mentioned throughout the consultation process on the development of the Night-Time Economy in Ireland. Both terms are inter-connected and are integral to the work of this Taskforce, which is recognised in their inclusion in our Guiding Principles above. At the outset, it is useful to set out what we mean by these terms;

- When we talk about diversity we are talking about choice and offerings. As our society becomes more diverse so too must our cultural and Night-Time Economy offering. Our urban centres should serve the needs of their many stakeholders and communities by offering a wide range of services and experiences.
- Inclusivity is linked to this concept - we must try and create an operating environment whereby a truly diverse

Night-Time Economy has appeal for all sectors of society and where individual sectors of society have the opportunity to enjoy and access those aspects of the Night-Time Economy that appeal to them.

Traditionally, the Night-Time Economy sector in Ireland has been substantially comprised of activities and events located in venues where alcohol is available. These will continue to play an important role in the Night-Time Economy of the future, servicing the needs of locals and visitors alike. However, there is also a role for events and activities that do not involve or centre on the sale of alcohol and these are considered in more detail below.

The more streamlined licensing arrangements that we recommend elsewhere in this report will help businesses selling alcohol to grow and potentially diversify to include

more engagement with different cultural practitioners in need of performance space and audiences keen to have a more varied cultural experience on a night out. If they are to be in a position to fulfil this role fully as the economy continues to open up, it is essential that supports continue during the intervening period of business restrictions and, thereafter, additional supports should be provided to support them to diversify their cultural offering.

In this context, the Taskforce welcomes the offer from the LVA members to make their venues available for cultural activity free of charge and recommends supporting this offer with a new Scheme to provide local artists with paying gigs as the hospitality sector emerges from lockdown. This will make pubs and venues more attractive to consumers by providing entertainment and opportunities for local artists and will also serve to increase the vibrancy of our towns, villages and cities.

In addition, in the context of a 6pm – 6am span of Night-Time Economy activity, there is scope in certain locations for a more distinct night club sub-sector to develop in the latter part of that 12-hour period. This would respond to an identified need within certain demographics, particularly those who tend to go out later at night and wish to stay out later into the early hours of the morning and those employed in parts of the Night-Time Economy wishing to socialise after work. It could also help to address some of the current adverse impacts associated with the bulk of Night-Time Economy activity closing during a single hour 2am-3am window. The plans announced earlier this year by the Minister for Justice regarding licensing reform will go some way in meeting this need and this will be addressed in more detail in the section on regulatory reform later in this report.

Through the consultation process, the Taskforce heard about the importance of creating a more diverse Night-Time Economy sector, focusing on both the local community and tourists, and broadening the part of the Night-Time Economy offering that does not involve the sale of alcohol or is not centred on the sale of alcohol. Local arts organisations and arts practitioners have been active in this space for many years with support from the Arts Council, local authorities and the Creative Ireland Programme, led by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and

Media. There is scope here for later night offerings which would optimise the potential of these players and their facilities. There is also scope to expand the Scheme mentioned above to the Café sector.

Ireland's cultural institutions can also play an important role in this, both by extending their opening hours into the later evenings, supported by the necessary funding, and through making their infrastructure available to provide the space/facilities for appropriate other diverse types of Night-Time Economy activities. Increased opportunities can be developed through collaboration between Institutions and also with more diverse partners. Additionally, dedicated arts spaces and cultural venues could be facilitated to provide performances later into the night. There is also scope for the very successful annual "Culture Night" initiative to be run more frequently, perhaps on a smaller scale and focused around a series of individual cultural themes or expanding it to include a later night offering, with the aim of encouraging new activities. The Arts Council, who have assumed responsibility for the delivery of Culture Night since 2020, are currently reviewing the approach to future iterations of the programme and these recommendations will be actively considered as part of that process. Already this year, the Arts Council, working with the NTE sector, have developed an initial programme of later night events as part of the 2021 Culture Night Programme in response to this Report. We look forward to seeing the outcome of this initial pilot and hope to see even more ambitious programming in future years

This greater diversity should help in delivering a more seamless transition from day-time to night-time, with programmed events and activities, extended opening hours for cultural attractions and other experiences and food offerings, helping to create an inclusive environment for all demographics. It could also provide venues with opportunities to enhance their business and for young creatives, within dance and club culture in particular, to develop and showcase their talent.

There are opportunities to extract more value from the wider infrastructure of cultural and heritage buildings, existing arts and cultural centres, or other vacant or underutilised public buildings, in cities and towns across the country for events, often





### Meanwhile Use

The term 'meanwhile use' refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings such as shops until they can be brought back into commercial use. It takes a potential problem and turns it into an opportunity and helps keep an area vibrant.

smaller in scale, which may otherwise have difficulty finding a suitable venue. Data in relation to these venues and potential new venues needs to be made available to both stakeholders and consumers of culture to enable them to access new and interesting venues, enhancing the diverse offering in our cities and towns.

This will also encourage collaboration and provide support for these venues which may otherwise only be in use for part of the day/week. Further consideration needs to be given to the supports that may be needed for these venues to adapt in this manner. New partnerships need to be developed and encouraged and new thinking is required in this area. Obstacles and challenges to creating new and diverse activity in our Night-Time Economy need to be identified and addressed collaboratively and the necessary supports need to be put in place to take new ideas forward. In this context, the Taskforce recommends that work commence as soon as possible to examine the 'meanwhile use' legislation for buildings, including those vacant, with a view to its potential application in Ireland. This is a commitment in the Programme for Government and refers to the potential for temporarily empty buildings to be used in the short-term until they can be brought back into permanent use. This could potentially benefit those seeking suitable venues for events in the Night-Time Economy, while also finding alternative uses for these buildings by day.

It is important too that venues and activities in the Night-Time Economy are accessible to all. This is important from the view point of the artists with a disability as well as those wishing to enjoy the Night-Time Economy. Feedback from artists with disabilities at a series of Focus Group meetings held by the Arts Council in August 2020 reported a

tendency for venues to think predominantly of the public/audience aspect of accessibility, which is of course important, often leaving many of the artists themselves facing access challenges in the workspaces behind the scenes (e.g. flights of stairs with no lifts/inaccessible backstage facilities). In this context, the Taskforce recommends that any future (State) capital programmes need to ensure accessibility is considered in all aspects of design and that in any new public capital upgrade schemes emphasis should be given to supporting improved accessibility in working spaces for artists in venues.

The Taskforce believes the private sector could also show strong vision and leadership in putting accessibility to the fore of refurbishment or new developments. The Equal Status Acts require private and public providers not to discriminate in the provision of goods and services. The legislation also requires providers to make reasonable accommodation for staff and service users with disabilities. In upholding responsibilities conferred by the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, organisations in receipt of public funding could avail of the range of support and advice available from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission on this matter.

Arts & Disability Ireland (in conjunction with the Arts Council and the four local authorities) previously delivered Disability Equality training to arts venues and providers in a number of local authority areas and developed a resource called "Shift in Perspective" as well as developing a number of further initiatives in this area since then. A similar resource should be shared more widely with venues and centres operating in the Night-Time Economy to encourage new thinking and – more importantly – practical action in this area.

The Night-Time Economy can be seen, in part, as an incubation place for business, creativity, culture and innovation. A diverse and thriving nightlife (and access to spaces) can be beneficial for everyone, and to the identity of a location. It can also facilitate and encourage entrepreneurship. The Taskforce heard from a range of successful business owners, entrepreneurs and creative practitioners who began their creative journeys in the Night-Time Economy. While COVID-19 restrictions are currently limiting large gatherings, to some extent the Taskforce is of the view that work can and should begin now on a range of interventions in support of more “normal” levels of activity, where planning and consultation is required. The earlier recommendation on maximising the use of the resources and facilities available through local arts practitioners and to consider how existing venues/facilities and late-night event promoters/artists can be connected to develop innovative events should start as soon as possible. This could result in a “blueprint” being produced for new artists, promoters etc. who want to hold late-night innovative events but who, up until now, have not been able to access a suitable facility. The Taskforce recommends that a pilot project should be initiated using an existing venue – a cultural Institution – to trial a late night event, working through the various challenges and maximising the opportunities for learning.

The idea of Creative Co-operatives was also raised during the deliberations of the Taskforce and international examples such as L'usine in Geneva and Macao in Milan were mentioned as models of good practice. The development of a sustainable model for arts and music spaces (for creative co-operatives) could lead to the establishment of more independent community-based cultural centres or hubs. The model can be

#### L'usine in Geneva

A former gold refinery, this listed building is now an alternative arts venue with a theatre, cinema and several concert spaces presenting an eclectic mix of music including electro, punk, ska, rock, reggae, disco and metal.

operator, clothing store, dancefloor, design and crafts studios, event space, exhibition/gallery space, food and beverage operator, local crafts, office space, pop-up shop/market, recording studio, radio stations, record shop etc. This would also support the Programme for Government commitment to “support measures to increase the provision of affordable workspaces for artists and creative practitioners” as well as adding to the fabric of the Night-Time Economy.

Extending the timespan and offering of the Night-Time economy should not mean an increase in anti-social behaviour or misuse of alcohol and/or misuse of drugs. The enhanced diversity of the Night-Time Economy offering that the Taskforce is recommending includes having more venues and cultural activities that do not involve

the sale of alcohol. The importance of this non-alcohol based component of a more diverse Night-Time Economy was highlighted throughout the consultation process and the provision of interesting and enticing venues that can offer an alternative night out needs to be consciously encouraged and supported.

In seeking to develop a more diverse cultural offering, the Taskforce recognises that different age groups require different offerings from the Night-Time Economy. During the consultation process, a particular issue raised centred on the need to increase opportunities for young people to engage in the Night-Time Economy, specifically activities which are not alcohol-based. Café culture plays an important role in other European cities and is growing in popularity in Ireland. It is a growth trajectory which provides an opportunity to offer an alcohol-free later night option, potentially with space for cultural activities, if incentivised and supported to do so. Alcohol-free bars such as The Virgin Mary in Dublin and venues such as The Funky Seomra provide evidence of the potential for venues of this kind to operate successfully in the Night-Time Economy.

Before recommending specific actions in this area, the Taskforce considers that there is a need to understand more fully what the younger demographic want from the Night-Time Economy and more time is needed to get the views of this cohort. In addition, research conducted by Fáilte Ireland in relation to Dublin points to the fact that as citizens age, they see less relevance in the

city centre and tend not to visit or engage in activities there. Though we do not have similar research for areas outside of Dublin, it is clear that further consultation with different age-groups is required to develop more sustainable long-term options in the Night-Time Economy for the different age cohorts. In this context, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media are committed to leading and supporting a series of Night-Time Economy Activation Workshops, to include consultation with different age-groups, on foot of which a series of recommendations will be brought forward.

Inclusivity and diversity within the Night-Time Economy demand that we refresh our understanding of customer needs and demands more generally on a regular basis. Ensuring we have a full understanding of the continuous evolution in what the Irish public and tourists visiting our country want from the Night-Time Economy will be a critically important driver of innovation and diversity in the offering. The consultation planned by the Department will be built into the pilot structure for towns and cities which is addressed later in this report but should also be built into general planning practices for all relevant bodies and agencies.

#### Public Realm

Enhancing and using our public realm in more imaginative ways was a recurring theme emerging during our consultation process and is potentially an important ingredient in the effort to achieve a more diverse Night-Time Economy offering. With the onset of COVID-19, there is a recognition that our public spaces have become even more important to us as we socialise and meet outdoors. In this context, in response to a recommendation of the Report of the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media developed a new funding scheme earlier this year (the *Outdoor Public Space Scheme 2021*) to help local authorities to create and open up public spaces and facilities dedicated to the arts, culture and festivals. The support will allow each local authority to adapt, equip or otherwise improve public spaces for cultural activities and events and has considerable potential to support a wider range of Night-

Time Economy activities. Crucially, in the context of the reopening of the economy, the new scheme will take account of public health guidelines. The Accelerated Measure of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, introduced in 2020 by the Department of Rural & Community Development as an immediate response to COVID-19, is another example of funding for public realm works to enhance outdoor meeting, dining and entertainment spaces.

The Taskforce welcomes these Schemes and also considers that other capital funding schemes across Government, including the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, the Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds and Fáilte Ireland's Outdoor Dining and Urban Animation Scheme, should facilitate and encourage applications for projects designed to enhance and support the Night-Time Economy in terms of urban animation and other improvements to the public realm. A co-ordinated approach is recommended to planning and alignment of spend to fund high impact, best-in-class initiatives that have the potential to positively impact the Night-Time Economy. A re-imagining of urban spaces to focus on place-making is required, creating spaces where people can enjoy a wider range of cultural activities and hospitality offerings outdoors and it is important that new interventions in the public realm are accessible to all.

A Night-Time Economy with a broader range of activities of this kind has the potential also to support a wider late-night retail and broader business offering, adding further value to the Night-Time Economy as a whole. Supports to encourage retail operators and other businesses to open late should be examined and a communications plan put in place to assist in this regard.

The opportunity to create a more vibrant food scene as part of the Night-Time Economy was raised during the consultation process and the Taskforce is of the view that these opportunities should be explored further with all relevant stakeholders through the development of a coherent food activation plan that maximises local assets and local produce. This could be developed and trialled in a specific location and then rolled out to other locations if it

proves successful. Cork City has a vibrant and growing food scene with locations such as the English Market and other parts of the city offering potential opportunities for the development of new food initiatives as part of the Night-Time Economy. The Taskforce recommends that a pilot project be established in Cork City with a view to sharing the learning with other local authorities and possibly rolling out further.

The issue of safety at night was raised throughout the consultation process and it was recognised that we must look imaginatively at how we design and light our public spaces, as well as learning from proven international best practices. The Taskforce is of the view that best practice in this policy area needs to be examined within local authorities using examples in Ireland as well as international experience. This issue is addressed further in the section on Safety and Security.

As mentioned above, accessibility is a key consideration in the sustainable development of the Night-time Economy. Buildings and public spaces should be designed so that they are easy for people to use and to reflect the fact that all people experience changes in their abilities as they progress through the different stages of life. It is important for designers to take all of the users of buildings and outdoor spaces into account throughout the design process in order to avoid the creation of a built environment that excludes certain groups from participating in normal everyday activities.

Action 1	
	In line with “COVID-19: Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting”, work with LVA and VFI to develop a Scheme to provide artists with paying gigs and customers with entertainment with a focus on new and emerging acts. This will encourage vibrancy and activity in local NTE settings. <i>Community-based artists should be a particular focus of this Scheme.</i>
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/TCAGSM
<b>Supporting Role</b>	LVA, VFI, Fáilte Ireland, Give us the Night, Arts Council
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021 for development of Scheme

Action 2	
	Carry out a comprehensive audit of arts and cultural facilities, and event spaces nationwide which could potentially be used in the Night-Time Economy.  Building on the current Arts Council-held database (2016) to encompass event spaces nationwide, this new audit could expand the database to include workshops, artist’s studios, available venue space, underground/ subterranean spaces and pubs which have live music and/or other acts as well as key outdoor spaces. Government Departments should be included in this exercise to identify potential of some State-owned buildings.  Use the database details, produce and publish three tools:  (1) A searchable tool for use by all promoters, presenters and programmers of all venues and event spaces in the database  (2) An annual exchange forum between this cohort and venue “owners” and encourage new thinking and potential collaborations;  (3) A searchable tool for members of the public, based on geolocation which encourages experimentation based on venue/event space. The Dublin Culture Connects Culture Near You provides a city-based model where members of the public can access a list of all cultural spaces within a defined radius. Other good examples to build on include the London Cultural Map and the Jazz Ireland initiative that was launched this year. A model to sustain this tool should be developed as a part of this process.  Develop a self-assessment tool for venue “owners” to assess the potential of their space for diversification to Night-Time Economy activities across a small range of metrics. Establish pilot schemes to help spaces assess the viability of staying open late.”  In relation to the COVID-19 transition period and building on the potential of using outdoor spaces for cultural activity, identify with local authorities outdoor/public spaces with potential for use as arts/ events spaces and resource their adaptation for use. This could be supported through any future iterations of the Re-imagining of our Outdoor Spaces Scheme launched by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and also through collaboration with Fáilte Ireland, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
<b>Lead Role</b>	Arts Council
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/TCAGSM, Give us the Night, Fáilte Ireland, LAs, Relevant Depts.
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021

Action 3	
	<p>Facilitate arts and cultural/event spaces to work together and facilitate more use of publicly-owned cultural buildings and heritage sites for events.</p> <p>Host an annual forum to develop and encourage new initiatives and partnerships and new thinking which could include several specific initiatives arising from the sector to be held annually - models such as Museums and Galleries at Night UK provide successful examples of iconic cultural and heritage spaces being used in a structured way for new Night-Time Economy uses.</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	Arts Council
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/TCAGSM, NCIs, Give us the Night, Event Management groups, LAs, D/HLGH, Fáilte Ireland and other relevant stakeholders
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021

Action 4	
	Examine the practical implications of 'meanwhile use' for planning and other legislative codes to enable the potential for buildings to be used for Night-Time Economy activities.
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/Housing
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/ECCE, D/Justice and LAs
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021/Q1 2022

Action 5	
	Dedicated Night-Time Economy Activation Workshops will be held to determine what actions are required to support Night-Time Economy initiatives for different age-groups. A series of recommendations will be developed following this consultation process.
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/TCAGSM
<b>Supporting Role</b>	Arts Council, Give us the Night, D/CYA
<b>Timeline</b>	Q1 2022

Action 6	
	The National Concert Hall to develop a pilot late-night event, exploring the challenges involved and developing best-practice guidance for promoters, artists and venue operators.
<b>Lead Role</b>	NCH
<b>Supporting Role</b>	GUTN, LAs, An Garda Síochána, D/Justice, D/TCAGSM
<b>Timeline</b>	Q2 2022

Action 7	
	Those operating in the NTE sector or a representative body (e.g. Give Us the Night) to engage with Arts and Disability Ireland or another relevant agency to devise and roll out training and awareness raising.
<b>Lead Role</b>	GUTN, D/TCAGSM
<b>Supporting Role</b>	Arts Council
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021 - Q1 2022

Action 8	
	Create a viable model for the development of sustainable creative co-operatives looking at national and international best practice. Develop a pilot initiative.
<b>Lead Role</b>	Arts Council
<b>Supporting Role</b>	Creative Ireland Programme, D/TCAGSM, Give Us The Night
<b>Timeline</b>	Q1 2022

Action 9	
	Extend opening hours of the NCIs one day each per month during Spring 2022 as a pilot. Develop supportive programming/communications plan around this - potential collaborations between NCIs, businesses, and other cultural programming.
<b>Lead Role</b>	NCIs
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/TCAGSM
<b>Timeline</b>	Spring 2022

Action 10	
	<p>Develop pilot initiatives in collaboration with our National Cultural Institutions to try out new night-time events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Pilot the development of an innovative night-time programme at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), encouraging collaboration and partnership with other Cultural Institutions and new partners. Develop blueprint for other Cultural Institutions to adapt and roll out potential programmes.</li> <li>– Examine feasibility of using Turlough Park (National Museum of Ireland) in Mayo for Night-Time Economy events. This will provide a rural perspective and pilot what works in this type of setting.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Role</b>	IMMA + NMI
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/TCAGSM, NCIs, OPW
<b>Timeline</b>	Develop initiatives by Q 1 2022 with a view to delivery in Summer 2022

Action 11	
	<p>Examine the feasibility of extending and diversifying Culture Night. Issues to be considered include expanding the programme to include late night events, having Culture Night more than once a year, having more frequent smaller scale events and increasing events around the country.</p> <p>As part of this process, develop a late night Culture Night Programme in a specific area with potential roll out to other areas.</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	Arts Council
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/TCAGSM, NCIs, Give Us The Night
<b>Timeline</b>	Q3 2021

Action 12	
	<p>Develop more options for alcohol free activities as part of the Night-Time Economy. A Scheme similar to the first action above will be developed to support cafés who wish to open later by providing funding for entertainment.</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/TCAGSM & HSE
<b>Supporting Role</b>	Give us the Night, LA, relevant stakeholders
<b>Timeline</b>	Q1 2022

Action 13	
	<p>Build on learnings from the Outdoor Public Space Scheme 2021 and other relevant schemes to find best practice interventions for the NTE. Where possible, align existing &amp; new funding schemes for urban animation and improvements to public realm. Ensure that the Night-Time Economy is included as a target policy area for any relevant existing or new capital scheme interventions.</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/TCAGSM
<b>Supporting Role</b>	LAs, Arts Officers Network, Creative Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, D/Housing, D/RCD
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021

Action 14	
	<p>Develop a food activation plan to be integrated into the wider night-time offering in Cork City as a pilot initiative, with a focus on delivering an authentic local food experience, working with local producers, restaurants, food service providers, food markets, pop-up stands, street food and those operating food trails.</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	Cork City Council
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/TCAGSM, Fáilte Ireland, Industry Stakeholders, Bord Bia
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021/Q1 2022

Action 15	
	<p>Work with the Retail Forum to examine the types of interventions required for late retail opening. Establish a Retail Forum working group to discuss this along with the Town Centre First initiative.</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/ETE
<b>Supporting Role</b>	Retail Forum, D/RCD, D/Housing
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021

A more planned and integrated approach to the development and operation of the NTE

- **New pilot project** establishing Night-Time Economy Advisors and Night-Time Economy Committees in six cities/towns across Ireland
- **New guidance to be developed** to help local authorities plan for a more effective and vibrant Night-Time Economy
- **Review of Noise Regulations** to develop practical solutions for more effective noise management in the Night-Time Economy
- **Standardised event planning system** across Local Authorities for events of 5,000 and under with a view to migrating all applications on line



A fundamental objective of the National Planning Framework is to achieve more compact urban growth in our cities and towns, where a range of uses – including residential, retail, leisure, entertainment and cultural – co-exist side by side. Achieving harmonious co-existence between potentially conflicting uses, particularly in terms of protecting residential amenity while also supporting a vibrant Night-Time Economy sector, can be challenging, not least in the context of the “bringing the inside outside” phenomenon which has become a key element of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Development plans are already required to have policies that include *‘the integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population.’* (Section 10 (2) (d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000).

However there is a need to consider the implications of Night-Time Economy from a wider community, economic and local authority perspective, not all of which would be directly relevant to statutory planning. In this regard, the Taskforce is recommending the development of specific best practice guidance to assist local authorities in including appropriate, locally-tailored provisions to plan effectively for the Night-Time Economy. The development of best practice guidance in this area will provide a framework within which the development of the Night-Time Economy can be systematically considered, including tensions between uses such as residential and cultural or commercial developments. This approach will also assist in constructively supporting integrated public realm interventions and public safety initiatives that support the Night-Time Economy.

Emerging from this work would be a range of learnings a number of which will have direct implications for improved national policy to assist statutory planning through our local authorities. These policy developments will be integrated into wider statutory urban development guidance which in turn will inform statutory planning in all our urban centres, not just city centres. It is envisaged that this would reflect a holistic and integrated approach to developing our urban centres that takes account of a range of uses including those of the Night-Time Economy.

It is vital that accessibility issues are also taken into consideration in developing this guidance.

This guidance can support local authorities in developing more innovative approaches to providing space for cultural and Night-Time Economy activities within our cities and towns and will also provide encouragement for private developers to incorporate cultural space into the design of their projects.

As part of that process, consideration should be given to the potential role of Development Plans for the larger urban centres in encouraging the development of clusters/quarters/hubs of Night-Time Economy activities (or Night-Time hubs), an approach which many of those involved in the Night-Time Economy in other jurisdictions who engaged with the Taskforce highlighted as being of particular importance.

The Taskforce also supports the implementation of the Programme for Government commitment to examine ‘Agent of Change’ initiatives, whereby existing cultural spaces have to be taken into account when building is taking place. This is an important aspect of planning and development and can have a significant impact on the development of cultural life in our cities and towns.

Given the complexities involved in this process and the potential opportunity it presents to change the way we plan for the Night-Time Economy, the Taskforce is of the view that further consultation and discussion is required to maximise the opportunity this presents, through a dedicated workshop with key stakeholders involved.

#### Noise Regulation

Noise is an issue that needs serious consideration if the protection of residential amenity and the operation of the Night-Time Economy are to be managed in a balanced manner and if our cities and towns are to develop as genuinely vibrant places to live, socialise and work. It is critical to help achieve the “compact urban growth” planning objective for our urban centres that is at the core of the Government’s National Planning Framework.

A certain level of noise is inevitably associated with the functioning of the Night-Time Economy in city and town centres and what is considered an acceptable level of

noise is obviously different at different stages of the evening, night and early morning. At the same time, it is important that reasonable steps are taken to ensure that music and other noise generated by Night-Time Economy activities is contained indoors as much as possible (particularly where it has potential to impact on residential developments), whether through improved sound-proofing, enhanced operational management or a stronger system of regulatory controls. **This is also important in the context of an increased focus on outdoor activities including outdoor dining in response to COVID-19 restrictions.**

The Taskforce discussed the various issues involved and a complex picture emerged. While aspects relating to noise can be addressed through the Development Planning process, the Environmental Noise Regulations and the alcohol licensing process, the Taskforce believes that an overall integrated approach to noise regulation in relation to Night-Time Economy activities is lacking. This needs to be addressed, particularly against the background of the potential development of the Night-Time Economy into the later hours of the 6pm - 6am window. An effective set of arrangements need to be in place in areas with a high concentration of Night-Time Economy activities so that the ground rules are clear and breaches can be addressed in an agile and responsive manner. While the planning process can play a role in this, some establishments will not need planning permission and, in reality, the planning process can never provide a complete solution to regulate operational noise parameters. Its complex enforcement processes seem particularly unsuited to providing a timely response to noise breaches when they arise.

The Taskforce recommends that a noise regulatory review should be undertaken urgently to consider the most effective approach to addressing this issue, particularly in terms of how noise management requirements should be set for relevant venues and, crucially, how breaches arising can be responded to in a timely manner. The approaches to be considered could range all the way from locally tailored approaches under which a code of practice could be agreed with the operators of Night-Time Economy premises (an approach which could be explored

further as part of the more co-ordinated approach to the Night-Time Economy to be tested through the pilot projects referred to later in this report all the way through to a more formal regulatory approach – the key priority should be to develop a shared understanding of permissible noise levels and the mechanisms for addressing breaches arising in a responsive and timely manner.

#### Planning Events

The issue of planning for events and event management was raised throughout the consultation process by promoters and those working in event management.

Events which cater for 5,000+ people are subject to planning legislation and the approach is set out in the Planning Acts. However, there is no standardised approach at local authority level to planning for events involving less than 5,000 people which can present difficulties for organisers, promoters and community organisations. Fingal County Council have developed guidance and templates to assist event organisers which have been in operation since 2017 and have also been introduced in three other Local Authority areas.

The purpose of these tools is to assist the event organiser in providing a safe event and thus ensuring it can be repeated, smoothing the path with other statutory agencies and stakeholders such as Principal Response Agencies (PRAs), business representatives' associations (such as Chambers of Commerce, vintners' groups, etc.) other stakeholders such as Residents' Associations, Tidy Towns, Volunteer Centres etc. as appropriate. The Taskforce is of the view that a standardised public event permit application process should be introduced nationwide to cater for events that fall outside the scope of the event licensing legislation. This new system should incorporate the guidance and templates developed by Fingal County Council, it should be an online solution that supports all stakeholders throughout the process, and should offer a consistent and standardised approach to event planning nationwide. The aim should be to simplify the process for end users and not to over regulate the system. The process should be kept under review over time to ensure that it is fit for purpose and remains relevant and helpful for stakeholders.

#### New Structures and Collaborations

It was also recognised by the Taskforce that there is potential for focussed collaboration between those looking to develop opportunities for a more diverse Night-Time Economy and those working to develop Ireland's tourism offering. An effective collaboration between these sectors could help to grow the demand for this more diverse offering and market the late-night music scene, in particular, attracting younger weekend visitors to our cities and towns. This could be explored in the context of the Dublin brand development effort in the first instance and then widened to encompass other cities and towns.

The successful functioning of the Night-Time Economy sector at local level (which involves a wide range of public and private players), would also benefit from considerably enhanced co-ordination. While there are well established co-ordination arrangements for one-off large events, usually led by the relevant local authority, there is a need for the ongoing management of the Night-Time Economy at local level to be the subject of more focused leadership and co-ordination.

The opportunities and visions for a thriving Night-Time Economy will vary across different settings, from large urban centres to suburbs to smaller towns and villages. The design of the most appropriate Night-Time Economy for a particular setting will be a matter for consideration by the relevant stakeholders in that area. However, what they all need is a supportive structure to help them develop a co-ordinated approach across public services and partnership with the various stakeholders who are involved – or want to be involved in – the Night-Time Economy. What is required for a thriving Night-Time Economy in Dublin will not be suitable for a rural town or even a large urban centre outside of Dublin. However, it does require a consistent ethos of engagement and support and a willingness to try new things, assist new partners who want to start something new and an openness to working together to achieve greater outcomes.

Each city, town and village need their own vision, informed by residents (of all ages), businesses, elected representatives, cultural institutions/spaces, artists and creative practitioners, promoters and relevant public bodies, and a plan to achieve this with achievable milestones and a structure that works for them. Local authorities are best positioned to lead this process, through the appointment of Night-Time Economy Advisors (something akin to "Night Mayors" in other jurisdictions) who can act as a central point of expertise/information on the Night-Time Economy in their areas, helping to pull all the pieces of the jigsaw together coherently. The resulting strong alliance between local authorities and stakeholders will play a central role in achieving a healthy Night-Time Economy. The Local Authorities have already kick-started this process and work is underway to appoint these Advisors

A single Night-Time Economy Advisor will not, however be sufficient to drive change. The Taskforce recommends that Local Authorities wishing to drive Night-Time Economy initiatives should establish supporting structures, including a diverse and inclusive Night-Time Economy Committee. The Committee's work should include a detailed and far-reaching consultation processes for the area from which a planned set of interventions would be identified to help develop the areas Night-Time Economy in a sustainable manner. While a more centralised, focus on town/city centres is favoured when it comes to the development of the Night-Time Economy, should a venue outside of a town/city centre be identified during the consultation process as a potential site for multi-purpose/cultural use (the potential in this regard was highlighted in some of the Taskforce's discussions), this should be considered by local authorities as part of the overall plan for the Night-Time Economy.

The Taskforce considered how best to achieve this more planned and co-ordinated approach at a local level and identified a range of structures and mechanisms which could play a part. Examples include:

- Town Teams – these teams are made up of local stakeholders in towns across Ireland who aim to work collaboratively with local and national Government to maximise the business, tourism and social potential of the area and to capitalise fully on the unique selling points of the location.
- The Town Centre First Initiative – this is a collaborative revitalisation programme for Irish towns jointly led by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Department of Rural and Community Development, and
- Purple Flag Committees - the Purple Flag is an initiative similar to the Blue Flags for beaches and is awarded to town and city centres that offer an entertaining, diverse, safe and enjoyable night out.

While each of these initiatives may provide elements of co-ordination in supporting the delivery of an enhanced, higher quality and better managed Night-Time Economy, the Taskforce considers that a non-prescriptive, flexible approach should be tested through a number of pilot projects, where there would be freedom to draw from the initiatives outlined above to the extent considered appropriate while having the freedom to tailor the arrangements to local circumstances. The approach of tailoring to local circumstances would also provide an opportunity to ensure the necessary diversity and inclusion, providing representation for artists, cultural facilities, event promoters, festival organisers, hospitality interests, local champions, public bodies, retailers and other businesses, venue owners/operators, etc. The learning from the pilot projects will inform the approach to be taken in rolling out enhanced co-ordination and leadership arrangements for the Night-Time Economy across our cities and towns more generally.

In developing the pilot projects, the Taskforce is of the view that available data should be optimised to develop insights and inform decision making - e.g. event planning, footfall, planning of services. However, it was also agreed that a historical data-driven approach should not curb innovation or creativity and steps should be taken to mitigate this perhaps through mechanisms such as public surveys, to ensure that emerging preferences for Night-Time Economy activity are understood and can be responded to.

A Communications Plan to enable all key stakeholders develop, agree and share messaging for the Night-Time Economy should form part of the pilot projects to encourage venues and promoters to communicate the safe and responsible use of the Night-Time Economy with their audience. It is vital also that residents' groups are included in this process and that all reasonable measures to mitigate adverse effects of the Night-Time Economy on residents are explored.

There will also be clear synergies with the output from the Town Centre First Initiative which is currently in development. This initiative will yield a framework and support structures to underpin the regeneration of towns and villages as vibrant and attractive places to live, work and socialise. Given that the Night-Time Economy has a central role to play in realising this ambition, the work of the Taskforce and the Town Centre First Initiative will be mutually supportive.

**Action 16**

	<p>(1) Develop specific best practice guidance to assist local authorities in including appropriate, locally-tailored provisions to plan effectively for the Night-Time Economy in a multi-use urban context. The guidance will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify how local authorities can be innovative in their approach to supporting and encouraging the Night-Time Economy to be an active element in the revitalisation of urban centres, including the appropriate use of outdoor spaces.</li> <li>– Consider practical steps to encourage Night-time Economy uses to be incorporated into the building structure of new offices, hotels, apartments or student accommodation developments.</li> <li>– Develop practical definition/s of cultural spaces as part of this process</li> </ul> <p>(2) Arising from learnings from the development of best practice guidance, include Night-Time Economy considerations as part of statutory Urban Development guidelines which will be reflected in the statutory planning process.</p> <p>To inform this initiative a dedicated Night-Time Economy Activation Workshop will be held to understand and determine the range and practical scope of planning and development-related actions that can support the Night-Time Economy sector.</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/Housing
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/TCAGSM, Give Us the Night and other NTE stakeholders, Arts Officers Network, Fáilte Ireland, Creative Ireland Culture Team Co-ordinators, Fáilte Ireland
<b>Timeline</b>	(1). Q1 2022 / (2). Q4 2021

**Action 17**

	<p>A noise regulatory review should be undertaken urgently to consider the most effective approach to addressing noise management within the Night-Time Economy. Current research and best practice should be included in this review and innovative noise management solutions put forward. Outputs could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Shared understanding of permissible noise levels</li> <li>– The development of a Code of Practice for venues</li> <li>– Potential grant scheme for soundproofing of venues.</li> <li>– Development of mechanisms for addressing breaches in a timely manner</li> <li>– Mitigation measures with residents</li> <li>– Guidance/protocol for outdoor socialising to assist businesses and venues which includes consultation with resident's associations</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/ECC + D/Housing
<b>Supporting Role</b>	LAs, Give us the Night, An Garda Síochána, Fáilte Ireland, D/Justice
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021



Action 18	
	Examine 'Agent of Change' initiatives, whereby existing cultural spaces have to be taken into account when building is taking place.
<b>Lead Role</b>	D/TCAGSM
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/Housing, D/ECC
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021

Action 19	
	<p>Pilot projects will be established in 6 towns/cities in two categories - towns between 5,000 and 10,000 and town/cities above 10,000 under which Night-Time Economy Committees will be established and Night-Time Economy advisors will be appointed, supported by funding. A consultation process will be undertaken leading to the development of an action plan setting out a range of interventions to support the co-ordinated development of the area's Night-Time Economy.</p> <p>These interventions may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identification &amp; adaptation of venues for multi-purpose use</li> <li>– Improvements to public realm including safety features</li> <li>– Develop effective urban animation</li> <li>– Cultural event management</li> <li>– Partnership with Creative Ireland Culture Teams to activate NTE activities</li> <li>– Incentives for late night retail and other businesses</li> <li>– Safety and security measures</li> </ul> <p>The learning from these pilot projects will be rolled out across other local authority areas in due course.</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	LAs
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/TCAGSM NTE Pilot sub-group CCMA D/RCD, Give Us The Night
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021 - establish advisors, committees, consultation started

Action 20	
	<p>(1) Roll out clear processes and procedures consistently across local authorities to assist festival and event organisers and community groups in the organisation of safe events (attendance of less than 5,000).</p> <p>(2) Consult with CCMA to examine ways to standardise approach looking at the Fingal approach to event planning</p> <p>(3) Develop pilot on-line system in selected LAs, in consultation with service users, with a view to rolling out to other LAs if it proves effective</p>
<b>Lead Role</b>	CCMA/LGMA
<b>Supporting Role</b>	D/Housing
<b>Timeline</b>	(1) Q2 2022 / (2) Q4 2021 / (3) Q1 2022

Action 21	
	Fáilte Ireland will partner with local stakeholders to build a sustainable NTE offering that appeals to locals and visitors as part of its ongoing destination development work in Dublin and other urban centres. Fáilte Ireland will work to identify, partner and promote music/performance venues (incl. the late night music sector) as part of an urban experience where its appeal to visitors is clear and in line with their commercial potential for the tourism sector.
<b>Lead Role</b>	Fáilte Ireland
<b>Supporting Role</b>	Give Us The Night and other NTE stakeholders, Arts Council
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021

#### A modernised regulatory regime for the NTE

- **Major reform of the licensing laws** to support the culture and hospitality sectors and modernise and diversify the Night-time Economy offering
- **Introduction of interim measures** to be examined to ease pressure on businesses
- Including the **reduction of SEO fees**
- **Increase the capacity for outdoor dining and entertainment**

### Liquor Licensing

In the course of the Taskforce's work, a range of regulatory issues were raised consistently by stakeholders involved in Night-Time Economy activities as inhibiting economic activity, creativity and diversity of cultural offering. A dedicated sub-group was established to examine the regulatory framework with a view to suggesting review and reform where appropriate.

Liquor licensing reform was the subject of many submissions and presentations received by the Taskforce. While Ireland's licensing law are underpinned by a 19<sup>th</sup> century model – there is a commitment in the Programme for Government to 'modernising our licensing laws and application processes'.

A broader range of licences and greater flexibility in other countries contribute to varied Night-Time economies in international cities. The Taskforce believes that a modernised licensing system would play an important role in revitalising existing Night-Time Economy businesses such as pubs, clubs, hotels and restaurants. This is particularly relevant in a post-COVID-19 context, when it is hoped that a more flexible, agile and modern system will help our cultural and hospitality sectors to flourish again. In addition, by making it easier for cultural venues such as theatres, galleries and exhibition spaces to get licences, the range of night-time and cultural offerings can be broadened and diversified.

Statutory provisions governing the sale, supply and consumption of intoxicating liquor in licensed premises are set out in the Licensing Acts 1833 to 2018 and in the Registration of Clubs Acts 1904 to 2008. The licensing code is fragmented, complex and out of date in many respects. Arising from its work, the Taskforce is of the view that legislative reforms are required in order to facilitate a fairer, more open, dynamic, innovative and diverse Night-Time Economy, while still ensuring that the sale of alcohol can continue to be controlled appropriately.

In the course of our work, the Minister for Justice, has indicated that a revised Bill will be published this year to modernise and update Ireland's licensing laws to support our hospitality and cultural sectors and the Night-Time Economy. The objective of the proposed Sale of Alcohol Bill is to repeal the Licensing Acts and the Registration of Clubs

Acts in their entirety and to replace them with updated and streamlined provisions more suited to the 21st century. It is also the intention to repeal the Public Dance Halls Act 1935, however, this will have implications for the application of building and fire safety standards and will require careful review.

Key reforms will include:

- New licences – The creation of new categories of intoxicating liquor licences is planned in order to meet the needs of new areas of activity in the culture and hospitality sectors. The 19th century model underpinning licensing law is not sufficiently flexible in these areas, with the result that licensing provisions are being stretched beyond their original purpose, leading to legal uncertainties and confusion. The Department of Justice will work with all relevant stakeholders to develop these but new proposed licences to be developed include arrangements for catering, guest houses and nightclubs.
- Nightclubs and late bars – It is well established that nightclub licensing is an area in need of change. Currently, nightclubs and late bars operate on the basis of a legal fiction, i.e. a special exemption order is obtained from the District Court for premises to which an on-licence (a full licence) is attached for on the pretence that a 'special occasion' is taking place on the premises. It is proposed to create an annual nightclub permit, which may be applied for by nightclub operators, this will remove the current process of applying for special exemption orders.
- Trading Hours – the trading hours for alcohol sales for consumption on premises but also in off-licences are in need of reform, for both businesses and consumers, to reflect modern life - streamlining of the relevant processes and provision for more appropriate extensions will be part of this reformed licensing package. Permitted trading hours vary during the week but in particular on Sunday. Special rules for Sunday also apply in the case of special exemption orders: at present special exemption orders granted for Sunday night expire at 1.00 a.m. rather than 2.30 a.m. (unless the Monday is a public holiday in which case 2.30 a.m. applies). Trading hours, particularly on a Sunday, will also be examined.



- Modernising application systems –  
It will be crucial that licensing applications and processes are brought in line with technological advancements. The Revenue Commissioners and the Courts Service have updated and streamlined their IT systems and working methods. In particular, the Courts Service introduced a new nationwide Courts Service Online (CSOL) system in July 2020. This relatively new system will yield significant benefits and reduce costs for businesses and should be better communicated to the industry. While it has been it is considered that a court is best placed to balance the competing rights of licence applicants and local communities, continued improvements to this process will help to reduce the costs involved and reduce pressure on our courts system and it is the intention of this legislative reform to significantly reduce court appearances. This will ensure a system, which would be accessible, transparent and reflective of local conditions for all those involved.

The Taskforce welcomes this announcement and recommends that the proposed legislative reform process is used as an opportunity for innovation in the licensing framework to encourage diversity and new economic opportunities in the Night-Time Economy, that also incentivises new investment into the industry.

While it is acknowledged that addressing the range of issues involved here is a complex exercise, and it will take time to consult with relevant stakeholders and move through the various processes associated with primary legislative change, the Taskforce is of the view that the necessary legislative changes should be brought forward as soon as possible and that the resources necessary to achieve this should be prioritised. COVID-19 has had a catastrophic impact on licensed premises and on those involved in the broader Night-Time Economy and licensing reform is considered to be of critical importance in supporting the viability of existing businesses and providing avenues for new entrants to enter the Night-Time Economy space.

Given the importance of licensing reform to both post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery and to the longer term development of the Night-Time Economy, the Taskforce recommends that the Department of Justice explores opportunities to introduce interim reform measures, whether through Regulations or otherwise. In particular, the Taskforce recommends an immediate review of the Special Exemption Orders (SEO) process and cost structure to make early and significant reductions in the fees applicable for SEOs. These processes and costs have been criticised as adding to the costs and bureaucratic burden for sustaining businesses. The strategic objective here should be to remove the SEO process.

#### **Regulating the use of outdoor spaces**

In the current COVID-19 and potentially post COVID-19 environment, outdoor spaces associated with hospitality can play a vital role in helping businesses to function safely. Enabling more terraced seating outside hospitality outlets would encourage a more vibrant night-time culture, a feature cited frequently during the consultation process with international experts. Princes Street in Cork is an example of where this has worked well with the street being closed to vehicular traffic and turned into an outdoor dining area.

While local authorities have responded to these needs in a positive, proactive manner, stakeholders who engaged with the Taskforce indicated that obstacles still remain in terms of the use of outdoor spaces for hospitality and wider events. These include:

- Accessing clear and comprehensive information on the range of regulatory provisions associated with the operation of outdoor Night-Time Economy activities;
- Difficulty in accessing/provision of approval to use public space at night.

The Taskforce is of the view that, where possible, every effort should be made to maximise opportunities to increase the capacity for outdoor spaces to be used for on-street dining zones and other events, and for a more uniform regulatory approach to be followed across the country.

The Taskforce also recommend that Departments and Agencies involved in the provision of funding for outdoor activity should work more closely together to develop a co-ordinated approach to outdoor dining, outdoor entertainment and general public realm development. However, there is also a need to balance the needs of the business and cultural sectors with the needs and rights of residents who should be consulted appropriately.

Finally, the Taskforce is of the view that any reforms to regulatory frameworks, including planning or alcohol licensing, should include a review of language used with a focus on enhancing accessibility for users. Guidance on key areas should be communicated clearly and be readily available to stakeholders.

Action 22	
	<p>(1) Review and reform the Licensing Acts 1833 to 2018 and the Registration of Clubs Acts 1904 to 2008 with a view to publication of a revised Sale of Alcohol Bill. It is the intention to also repeal the Public Dance Halls Act 1935.</p> <p>(2) Establish a targeted inter-departmental/agency Steering Group to progress the finalisation of this piece of legislation, including any shorter term actions that can be taken.</p> <p>(3) Progress immediate public stakeholder engagement on this legislative reform, building on the engagement of the Taskforce.</p> <p>(4) Undertake an immediate review of existing fees and costs associated with alcohol licensing, including Special Exemption Orders, to significantly reduce the costs in light of the current COVID-19 context, recognising that other reforms are a longer-term project as they are tied to primary legislation.</p> <p>(5) Waive relevant court fees, excise and stamp duty relating to the renewal of specified pub and other liquor licences in 2021 as was done in 2020.</p>
Lead Responsibility	D/Justice
Supporting Responsibility	D/PER
Timeline	(1) Q4 2021 / (2) Q2 2021 / (3) Q3 2021 / (4) Q2 2021 / (5) Q3 2021

Action 23	
	Support the continued development and use of on-street dining zones; this could be through a complementary programme of urban realm improvements or by the use of licences under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Daily hours of operation could be examined with a view to extending, where appropriate
Lead Responsibility	D/Housing, LAs
Supporting Responsibility	
Timeline	Q3/Q4 2021

Action 24	
	Bring forward recommendations which allow for limited event licensing including the granting of Music and Singing and Theatre licences or “Entertainment licences” to event spaces for limited periods of time, rather than the current regime of annual licensing only. Examine how the Theatre licence can enable dedicated arts spaces and cultural venues to host late night performances. Bringing forward recommendations for the holders of existing Music and Singing, and Theatre licences to expand their licence to other spaces a limited number of times per year.
Lead Role	CCMA D/Housing, Arts Council
Supporting Role	D/Justice and other relevant stakeholders
Timeline	Q4 2021

Action 25	
	<p>Develop guidance for the development of outdoor seating areas to assist a structured urban realm response and to achieve consistency in approach. Matters such as height, enclosure, advertising/ promotion, seating layout, lighting and appropriateness or not of amplified music should be considered.</p> <p>Recent Fáilte Ireland Guidance developed with local authorities should be taken into consideration here.</p> <p><a href="http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/6_Funding/Web-version-Best-Practice-Guidelines-Outdoor-Dining-and-Urban-Animation.pdf">www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/6_Funding/Web-version-Best-Practice-Guidelines-Outdoor-Dining-and-Urban-Animation.pdf</a></p>
Lead Responsibility	LAs
Supporting Responsibility	Fáilte Ireland
Timeline	Q3/Q4 2021

  

Action 26	
	Publish a consolidated FAQ on licensing and regulations for events and licensing for start-ups seeking to operate in the Night-Time Economy
Lead Responsibility	Implementation Group
Supporting Responsibility	All relevant Departments
Timeline	Q2 2022

### Public transport as an essential support for the NTE

- 8 new 24 hour routes in Dublin city
- Additional Night-Time Economy services in rural areas

In the submissions and presentations received by the Taskforce, the importance of more extensive late-night public transport as an essential support for the further development of the Night-Time Economy was consistently raised. This was raised as much in the context of supporting those working in the Night-Time Economy sector as it was for patrons.

The issues arising will vary considerably between the cities and larger urban centres, on the one hand, and the smaller rural towns and villages, on the other. There are already significant developments taking place in certain areas, including the introduction of 24-hour bus services on a number of routes in both Dublin and Cork cities, partly in recognition of the linkage between such services and the Night-Time Economy. There has also been significant improvements in the LocalLink services in rural areas. The Taskforce encourages the further expansion of these and similar services in other city areas and rural areas.

The following were specifically mentioned in the context of the consultation process.

- Integrated transport system
- More 24 hour options
- Safe cycling at night
- Ride-hailing option for rural areas

#### Integrated transport system

While the National Transport Authority (NTA) recognises that there are many gaps in the transport system, they believe that the structure of the transport system is an integrated one, with the NTA acting as the integrator. However, the Taskforce acknowledges that this can be improved in the context of the Night-Time Economy. A key part of planning new or improved services is to ensure that services are integrated in terms of timetables both between modes and within the mode and that they operate to support social activity in the evening and at weekends where feasible.

### More 24 hour options

Transport demand is a derived demand i.e. the demand for travel results from other social and economic activity. As a result, transport services are planned to support other economic activity. The Taskforce believes that and this should extend to the Evening and Night-Time Economy where it can not only respond to demand, but serve to stimulate activity by providing access to and from cities or towns. Depending on the size of Irish cities and larger towns, and the range of amenities and services on offer, there is activity at all hours of the day and night. However, the NTA acknowledges that there are many gaps in the provision of public transport services particularly in rural Ireland. The coverage of services into the evening or night is usually limited to our cities and even then they tend to terminate at 11:30pm/12am. In some towns and rural areas they terminate at 6pm or 8pm which doesn't adequately support an evening or night-time economy in those areas unless there is sufficient coverage of taxis/ hackneys.

In many cases, enhanced services should also be available earlier in the morning. There are instances typically in the larger conurbations where the pattern and scale of demand on certain corridors is high enough to warrant a 24/7 level of service. The Taskforce supports the development of 8 new 24 - hour routes in Dublin and the enhancement of services in other urban and rural areas. Shift workers living in or close to town centres and those working in employment zones and living in areas served would also benefit from the provision of later/earlier/round the clock public transport services. In addition, it would be beneficial if new routes could also service areas with high hotel density.

The Taskforce supports the development and roll out of more 24 hour services to support the Night-Time Economy for both consumers and those working in the sector.

The NTA's planning of public transport services in rural Ireland is continuing. A major assessment is underway across every county in Ireland where the Authority aims to identify the additional services that are required to allow access to local centres and regional centres for work, educational and social purposes in a reasonable time period i.e. within a journey time of 30 minutes to local services and 60 minutes

to county towns. This programme is called Connecting Ireland and will be published for public consultation later this year. The services that will be delivered under the Connecting Ireland programme, if approved by Government, will result in a major extension of the services operated under the Transport for Ireland (TFI) LocalLink brand, managed by LocalLink offices across Ireland on behalf of the NTA. The Taskforce is of the view that any services that are identified to support the Night-Time Economy should be considered as part of this Connecting Ireland Programme.

#### Ride-hailing option for rural areas

The provision of transport services for reward in a private car is governed by the Taxi Regulation Act 2013 and the Taxi Regulations 2015 and 2016. Any changes to the regulatory model that currently operates in Ireland would require a change in legislation. A ride-hailing App can be provided by any dispatch operator such as FreeNow or Uber as long as they use licensed vehicles and licensed drivers that operate in accordance with the existing legislation.

While there are licensed small public service vehicles and drivers based in every county in the country, the services they provide tend to operate in the higher population areas, so coverage in rural areas can be very limited. Currently the operation of ride-hailing services on a commercial basis using unlicensed vehicles and unlicensed drivers such as that provided by companies such as Uber in other jurisdictions is not permitted under existing legislation in Ireland. It is the view of the NTA that an unregulated ride-hailing service operating alongside a regulated small public service vehicle (SPSV) sector could result in a very significant number of SPSV drivers moving to a ride-hailing service which may not be in the general public interest. The Programme for Government includes a commitment to examine the potential for ride-hailing services to improve rural connectivity. This pilot should examine issues such as public oversight of the safety of the vehicles being used, the insurance in place, and the vetting of drivers. As a minimum, this proposed pilot should be considered when the SPSV industry has had an opportunity to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NTA had recognised that there are gaps in SPSV service provision in rural areas. In order to address the service provision the Authority has introduced the following:

- Extending LocalLink services into evening and night-time
- Subsidised Local Area Hackneys
- Subsidised Community Car Schemes

#### LocalLink Services

In July 2018, a total of 65 new evening/night-time services were approved to operate on a pilot basis to assess the demand in rural areas for evening and night-time services at an annual cost of €1m.

The NTA reviewed the data on these services and the general consensus from the LocalLink offices, who managed these services on behalf of the NTA, was positive but highlighted that most of the services ended too early in the evening and an extension of time should be considered should these services continue. Factors that improved the customer response to the offer of service included thriving Night-Time Economies offering diverse services from their immediate environs. Routes which facilitated specific attractions and/or facilitated evening classes were also more successful. The Taskforce supports the roll out of these services and active consideration should be given to extending the timeframes of operation to support participation in the Night-Time Economy.

#### Subsidised Local Area Hackneys

Local Area Hackneys are a special category of licence for rural areas where it has been identified that there is no public transport service available. However, take up of these licences is low due to insurance costs. The NTA are currently piloting a subsidised Local Area Hackney Scheme in 15 pilot areas identified by the Authority and the LocalLink offices. Services under this pilot commenced in December 2019 and had not operated for sufficient time before the Covid-19 pandemic to assess the pilot's effectiveness. The pilot continues to be funded in 2 locations. It is proposed to re-engage this pilot activity once the impact of the pandemic on travel has eased.

### Subsidised Community Car Schemes

A Community Transport Service is a transport service provided:

- (a) by persons concerned for the social and welfare needs of one or more communities;
- (b) without financial gain for the person providing the service or another, and
- (c) where the payment for a journey or in respect of passengers using the service does not exceed the cost of providing the services in respect of the journey.

The NTA found that there were no applications to offer this type of service as the start-up costs were considered prohibitive. A pilot subsidised Community Car Scheme was initiated in 2019 and continues in five locations. The pandemic impacted on delivery of this pilot and its success cannot be measured at this time.

Notwithstanding the limited experience of the pilot projects for the hackney and community car schemes, the NTA would like to continue with the piloting of both schemes and to further establish evening services into rural towns and villages. In particular, a service plan could be developed for any rural towns selected as locations for Night-Time Economy pilot projects on foot of the Taskforce's recommendation above.

### Safe Cycling at Night

The NTA recognises that the infrastructure to support safe cycling at all times - including late at night - needs to be radically improved across the State. The NTA has developed cycling strategies for all our cities, which set out where a network of cycle lanes should be provided. Many local authorities have been developing plans also to make provision for safe cycling for their towns and villages. The Department of Transport is also funding the development of Greenways across the state.

A cycle network plan has been developed for each city and the NTA will work with local authorities to deliver significant sections of the networks as well as new cycle lanes in rural towns and villages. In Dublin alone, over 200km of segregated cycle lanes are proposed as part of the BusConnects programme. In total it is proposed that over 600km of segregated cycle lanes will be provided in the next decade delivering a network of safe segregated cycling facilities in our towns and cities.

The Government has provided €240m for walking and cycling infrastructure in 2021 for over 450 projects at different stages of delivery in the Greater Dublin Area and in the regional cities. A further €70m has been provided for the remaining local authorities to provide improved walking & cycling infrastructure this year. The Taskforce supports this ongoing effort.

Action 27	
	Extend 8 new routes to be 24-hour operations in Dublin  Standardise the specification of enhanced services to facilitate the Night-Time Economy depending on the type of town.  Improve regional services including a possible 24 hour service on Route 101 Dundalk-Drogheda-Dublin and Dublin- Naas - Newbridge.  Specific improvements to Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford services
Lead Responsibility	NTA
Supporting Responsibility	D/Transport
Timeline	2022 - 2024
Action 28	
	Access to the Night-Time Economy needs to be specifically included and considered as part of the Connecting Ireland consultation process.
Lead Responsibility	NTA
Supporting Responsibility	D/Transport
Timeline	Q4 2021
Action 29	
	Build on existing NTA pilot schemes to provide additional evening and night-time services in rural areas. Work with LAs to develop target towns and villages.
Lead Responsibility	NTA
Supporting Responsibility	D/Transport, LAs
Timeline	Q1 2022
Action 30	
	NTA to work with Local Authorities to develop a targeted and responsive transport solution for towns and cities involved in the pilot projects
Lead Responsibility	NTA
Supporting Responsibility	LAs, D/Transport
Timeline	Q4 2021
Action 31	
	Continue to improve cycling infrastructure to facilitate safer cycling at night
Lead Responsibility	NTA
Supporting Responsibility	D/Transport
Timeline	Ongoing

**Public safety and security**

- Safeguards to be put in place to protect women and other vulnerable people engaged in Night-Time Economy activities.
- Night-Time Economy issues to be included in statutory guidance on the operation of Community Safety Partnerships and Joint Policing Committees.
- Implement best practice safety campaigns for promoting across businesses operating in the Night-Time Economy throughout the country.

Many of those with whom the Taskforce engaged, highlighted the important role of personal safety and security during the night-time hours in supporting the development of a strong Night-Time Economy sector. This is particularly the case in the larger urban centres, where surveys have showed significant concerns in relation to safety among the public in certain areas.

It is important, in the context of the re-emergence and expansion of the Night-Time Economy sector, that we redouble our efforts to protect those who are vulnerable, particularly women and girls. The issue of safety for everyone and especially for women and girls was raised during the consultation process and it is of particular relevance in the Night-Time Economy. Everyone - including those working in the sector and those enjoying a night out - needs to feel and be safe and secure in our cities and towns.

The Taskforce welcomes the work underway in the Department of Justice on the implementation of the O'Malley Report, through 'Supporting a Victim's Journey: A Plan to Help Victims and Vulnerable Witnesses in Sexual Violence Cases' published in October 2020. The Department's recently published Statement of Strategy 2021-2023 commits to implementing these changes in full.

The Taskforce also notes that a new National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) will be in place at end 2021. All of this work is being taken forward in partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the sector and other stakeholders, including An Garda Síochána, and a number of subgroups of the National Monitoring Committee for the DSGBV Strategy have been tasked with leading on specific implementation actions. The Taskforce recommends that the Department of Justice convene a dedicated subgroup - as part of the implementation arrangements for this report - to ensure that appropriate actions and safeguards are put in place to protect women and other vulnerable people partaking in Night-Time Economy activities. Specific actions should be included in the next National DSGBV Strategy and progress reported on.

The Joint Policing Committees (JPCs) already in place in each local authority are currently being replaced with Community Safety Partnership. Three have been established on a pilot basis and the aim is to extend this model throughout the country over the next two years. These, alongside the existing JPCs, can provide a structured arrangement through which the high-level policing issues arising in areas with high concentrations of Night-Time Economy activities can be discussed periodically (every quarter) - a specific item should be placed on the agenda for each CSP/JPC meeting and the requirement in this regard should be reflected in the next iteration of statutory guidance on the operation of CSPs/JPCs. Each local authority, through its Night-Time Economy Advisor which the Taskforce is recommending should be appointed to the CSP/JPC (initially in the pilot project areas), and An Garda Síochána can liaise on an ongoing basis in relation to operational public safety issues arising in the context of the operations of the Night Time Economy.

There are, of course, other factors which also can play an important role in supporting public safety and security in the centre of our cities and towns in the late evening and night time. The design and layout of public spaces and factors such as effective public lighting and the use of CCTV are particularly important. These factors should be taken into account, where appropriate, when local authorities and other public bodies are undertaking public realm projects and should

be reflected in the assessment of funding applications for such projects under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, as referred to in the "Financial supports for the NTE" section below. Innovative ideas from other jurisdictions, in relation to safety, should be examined; examples from Bilbao, in particular, were highlighted during the development of this report.

It should be noted that many local authorities have already developed innovative approaches in this area. Waterford City and County Council's and Cork City Council's "Ask for Angela Campaign", which supported and helped those on a night out who felt unsafe by bringing in a coded phrase "Ask for Angela", as well as Dublin City Council's "Reimagining Dublin 1 Project" are good examples of how local authorities can lead in this area with assistance from An Garda Síochána. International examples of good practice in this area include the Good Night Out Campaign and the Women's Night Safety Charter both in London. The learning from these initiatives should be used to develop a "good practice" guide to be shared across all local authorities.

Health and safety of the public generally as they enjoy the Night-Time Economy is vitally important. The HSE Social Inclusion Office summarises this well, as follows;

*"A framework for managing a safe Night-Time Economy ensures a coordinated, strategic approach across key stakeholder groups such as local authorities, health care providers, specific Night-Time Economy teams, law enforcement, licensing departments and industry to develop sustainable, healthy and safe nightlife. Collaborative input is required to develop tailored health focused harm reduction policies, Communication plans, the provision of training for staff and the provision of onsite interventions, where necessary."*

This approach should be central to any plans to stimulate and support the Night-time Economy in our cities and towns and should form a cornerstone consideration for the work to be taken forward by the Night-Time Economy Committees to be established in the pilot areas initially.



**Action 32**

Establish a dedicated subgroup of the National Monitoring Committee for the DSGBV Strategy with a specific focus on the Night-Time Economy, to ensure that appropriate actions and safeguards are put in place to protect women and other vulnerable people partaking in NTE activities.

Specific actions should be included in the next National DSGBV Strategy and progress reported on. Key stakeholder groups will be represented on this Group.

<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	D/Justice
<b>Supporting Responsibility</b>	An Garda Síochána
<b>Timeline</b>	Q3 2021

**Action 33**

Engage with the Policing Authority to ensure that CSPs/JPCs have guidance on Night-Time Economy issues and that these issues are discussed regularly.

This requirement should be reflected in the next iteration of statutory guidance on the operation of CSPs/JPCs. Night-Time Advisors in the pilot areas should be appointed to the relevant CSPs/JPCs.

<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	D/Justice, D/Housing, An Garda Síochána, Policing Authority
<b>Supporting Responsibility</b>	LAs in Pilot towns/cities
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021

**Action 34**

Review current safety training courses/initiatives/campaigns such as the Responsible Serving of Alcohol (RSA) and Ask for Angela with a view to promoting across businesses operating in the Night-Time Economy throughout the country. **Engage with the Private Security Authority on a future training programme.**

Also include a further review of international experiences and implement best practice in this area.

<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	CCMA
<b>Supporting Responsibility</b>	Relevant stakeholders, Give Us the Night, PSA
<b>Timeline</b>	Q4 2021



### Supporting the Night-Time Economy Sector in the short term and post-COVID 19

A range of financial issues that impact on Night-Time Economy operations arose in the course of the Taskforce's work. We have already pointed to the case for funding to support extended hours of opening in our cultural institutions and significant arts facilities, as well as the need for the recommended review of the Night-Time Economy regulatory regime to include an immediate reduction in fees for Special Exemption Orders.

A further significant issue raised during the Taskforce's work relates to the cost of insurance for Night-Time Economy activities and the need to ensure full implementation of the recommendations arising from the extensive review of insurance costs generally by the Cost of Insurance Working Group. The Taskforce supports the call for speedy implementation of the recommended reforms in this area and notes that these implementation issues are now being taken forward under the leadership of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Investment's Sub-Group on Insurance Reform with recent announcements about intended reforms.

#### Supports for the longer-term

Part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic over the course of 2020 involved a significant move to "bring the indoors outdoors", with many dining, cultural and other activities that would previously have taken place indoors moving to outdoor settings. Given the wider importance of a high-quality public realm in supporting the achievement of compact urban growth more generally, it is important that optimum use is made of the outdoor environment, including public spaces, in order to support the continuation of Night-Time Economy operations.

A number of public funding schemes already in place, particularly the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, Fáilte Ireland's Outdoor Dining Scheme the D/TCAGSM's Outdoor Public Space Scheme, all have the potential to provide funding for this purpose and the custodians of those schemes should continue to actively consider how infrastructural projects that support Night-Time Economy operations

can be encouraged further. This could be achieved through the assessment criteria for applications being amended to include specific marks for a project's potential to support the Night-Time Economy the introduction of sub-programmes of funding specifically for Night-Time Economy -supporting infrastructural projects and/ or ensuring that the Night-Time Economy is explicitly reflected as part of the Scheme objectives.

In terms of further long-term measures, the Taskforce recognises the importance of solutions and ideas coming from the ground up with interventions to stimulate Night-Time Economy activity being based on needs of the town/city area identified as part of detailed local planning. However, many of the recommendations outlined elsewhere in this report provide pointers for areas that could be considered for individual areas particularly in the context of the proposed new local structures. These include:

- Adaptation of venues for multi-purpose use
- Improvements to public realm including safety features
- Development of effective urban animation
- Cultural event management
- Partnership with Creative Ireland Culture Teams to activate the Night-Time Economy
- Incentives for late night retail and other businesses
- Safety and security measures

These and other key recommendations in this report, including any new developments in the area of transport will require supporting investment. The Group established to oversee the implementation of this Report will work across Government to leverage and build the necessary supports for these and other new initiatives mentioned in this Report, including as part of the Town Centre First Initiative.

### Current Supports

While the Taskforce is supportive of longer-term, more enduring measures to promote the sustainability of the Night-Time Economy, as outlined above, it also recognises that these will only be relevant if a strong Night-Time Economy sector survives through the more immediate, significant challenges of COVID-19 related restrictions.

A range of supports, including waiving court fees for certain liquor licences, waivers of commercial rates, the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, have been introduced for businesses and workers affected by COVID-19 restrictions, many of them in the Night-Time Economy sector. As restrictions are lifted, care will need to be taken in relation to the manner and timing of the reduction/withdrawal of these supports in order to ensure that such businesses continue to be assisted in reopening and re-establishing their operations on a sustainable basis. To this end, the Taskforce welcomes the Government's announcement of the further extension of key supports in its recently published National Economic Recovery Plan.

In addition to horizontal supports there have been a number of direct funding schemes introduced by Government to assist specific aspects of the entertainment sector to try and off-set the effects of COVID-19. The Taskforce is of the view that these Schemes and any potential new schemes should include consideration of measures to support the Night-Time Economy and the roll-out of the schemes should involve active engagement with those working in the Night-Time Economy to encourage take-up of available supports. These Schemes include:

- The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media published a €50m suite of measures to support the Live Performance Sector;
  - €25m new Live Performance Support Scheme
  - €14m new support scheme for live entertainment businesses
  - €5m to local authorities for outdoor live performances
  - €5m capital supports for live entertainment sector
  - €1m to St. Patrick's Festival

- **The Tourism Business Continuity Scheme** - provides support to providers of certain tourism services who have been unable to qualify for assistance under the Government's COVID-19 Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS). It is designed to help these tourism businesses offset their fixed costs incurred in 2020 and support them to continue operating through 2021.
- **The COVID-19 Adaptation Fund** - contributed to the costs of implementing Fáilte Ireland's Guidelines for Re-Opening. It was intended to support tourism businesses through grant payments to make either the structural adaptations required for fixed, visitor-facing premises, or to cover the cost of COVID-19 related consumables
- COVID-19 Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) helps support businesses when Level 3 or higher restrictions are in place in line with the Plan for Living with COVID-19.
- **The Outdoor Dining Enhancement Investment Scheme** - Fáilte Ireland works in partnership with Local Authorities to facilitate greater capacity in outdoor dining by supporting Local Authorities and hospitality businesses with upgrading and enhancing streets and public spaces and implementing weather-proofing solutions which will facilitate year-round outdoor dining.
- **Urban Animation Capital Investment Scheme** - is a new Fáilte Ireland - pilot Capital Grants Scheme for Local Authorities aimed at supporting sustainable tourism development through public realm and urban animation projects that have the potential to transform and re-imagine urban centres for visitors and communities.

In addition, the Taskforce recognises the synergies with the recommendations made by the Arts and Culture Recovery Taskforce, particularly in the area of support for venues and for interventions in the public realm. The Taskforce recommends that the opportunities for the Night-Time Economy are maximised and considered in full as the implementation of the Arts and Culture Recovery Task Force's recommendations is rolled out.

**Support for Electronic Music and Recognition of Club Culture**

Recent years have seen significant growth of electronic music in the mainstream and the genre now represents large parts of modern music and media. It is particularly popular with young people and there is great potential for growth in this sector with Ireland having distinguished itself internationally as an up and coming country for promising and emerging electronic music producers. With a huge output of quality DJ's, producers, promoters, labels, visual artists and more, Ireland can increase its profile in the world of electronic music with some additional support and recognition of the sector.

A sizeable number of music producers, event organisers, club owners, artists and practitioners were surveyed as part of the consultation process and the results showed that there is a large cohort of people involved in dance and club culture who consider that they could be supported and included more in any support schemes made available. Young people in particular who are involved in this culture need opportunities to develop and showcase their talent in Ireland, rather than having to seek out opportunities abroad.

It has also been suggested that a lack of access to adequate spaces will impact on the industry's ability to retain a skilled workforce and maintain career opportunities for local talent. In the last twenty years Ireland has lost over 80% of its nightclub spaces (Give Us The Night data). Many within the industry strongly believe that club culture must now be judged beyond its economic value, like other more established forms of culture. Club culture has traditionally welcomed and brought together various minority groups, and it is commonly recognised that the roots of this culture stem from within the LGBTQI+ community. Safe spaces to congregate, socialise and dance are vital, a sentiment that has been repeatedly expressed by this community and others.

Additionally, these communities play an important role in the early social lives of young people. Nightclubs are inclusive spaces where many marginalised people in society find a place to express themselves. Friendships and relationships are formed here that can last for the rest of people's lives. These connections underpin

the strength of these communities as a whole. Such aspects of the culture need to be recognised and sustainably supported if Ireland is to become an internationally respected destination for electronic music and club culture. Many cited Berlin as an example where a thriving club culture is developed with State support.

It is acknowledged that funding under the Music Industry Stimulus Package, and the Live Performance Stimulus Package was made available to the artists and venues in this sector but a more targeted effort to encourage them to apply and to make the schemes relevant to their work would be beneficial. In this context, it is felt that electronic music and associated activity could be highlighted in any future supports. To support this process, a dedicated representative body could be established by the Sector to provide a practical liaison point for the development of future policy in this area.

**Implementation and Oversight**

The Taskforce has attempted to address a wide range of the challenges and opportunities associated with the Night-time Economy within the context of this report. However, it is acknowledged that many of the recommendations and issues surrounding them are complex and need time to be developed and implemented effectively. This will likely involve further consultation with stakeholders, Departments and Agencies. It will involve collaboration and compromise. Furthermore, the Night-Time Economy is, by its nature, dynamic and ever-changing. New initiatives will inevitably emerge over time, and new policy responses may be required.

It is recommended that an implementation group with representatives from key Departments and Agencies be established immediately and meeting every two weeks at the early stages and monthly thereafter to review progress on implementing each of the Taskforce's recommendations. Those with responsibility for each recommendation will be represented on the group which will be chaired by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Regular reports will be submitted to the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Action 35	
	Review current funding schemes to ensure the Night-Time Economy is adequately included for financial support in both short-term COVID 19 Support Schemes and longer-term schemes right across Government. Ensure new funding schemes in Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht and Media and other related schemes include the needs of the electronic music sector
<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	D/TCAGSM
<b>Supporting Responsibility</b>	D/RCD, D/Housing, Fáilte Ireland
<b>Timeline</b>	Q3 2021

Action 36	
	Ensure that any synergies with the Arts and Recovery Taskforce are maximised in terms of Night-Time Culture.
<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	D/TCAGSM
<b>Supporting Responsibility</b>	Other relevant Departments/Agencies involved in the Arts and Recovery Taskforce
<b>Timeline</b>	Q3 2021

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

# Programme for Government - Our Shared Future

[www.gov.ie/en/publication/7e05d-programme-for-government-our-shared-future](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7e05d-programme-for-government-our-shared-future)

Night-time Culture Social distancing will have a major impact on night-time culture. We will work with stakeholders from across the night-time culture sector to develop innovative approaches to enable it to function and to create a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable Night-time economy in Ireland. We will:

- Establish, in the first 30 days of Government, a Night-Time Economy Taskforce.
- Conduct a full review of the regulations and policy framework governing our night-time culture at national and local level, including the staggering of trading hours for pubs, late bars, clubs, and restaurants.
- Modernise our licensing laws and application processes.
- Support the establishment of the Night-Time Culture Mayors, proposed for Dublin and Cork, and examine the establishment of local committees to advance and improve our night-time entertainment and creative offerings in other urban areas.

## Appendix 2

# Consultation Process - List of Respondents

Aiken Promotion
Alcohol Action Ireland
Alcohol Forum
All City Record Label
An Taisce Planning & Environment Policy Officer
Buzz O'Neill
Bastardo Electrico
Chambers Ireland
Club Comfort
Cork Chambers
Cormac Cashman Event Management & Promotion
Cramptons Building Community Group
DIP (Night Club)
District 8 Events Promoter
Drinks Ireland
Dublin Chamber
Dublin Digi Radio (represent venue owners, promoters, artists)
Dublin Town
Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber
Event Industry Association of Ireland(EIAI)
Faint
Galway Chamber
Galway City Council
HSE Alcohol & Mental Health & Wellbeing Programme (HSE)
Hill Grove Night Club (Kerry - nightclub and hosts festivals/events)
HSE Cork Local Drug and Alcohol Taskforce
HSE National Social Inclusion Office
IBEC
Irish National Opera
Improvised Music
Irish Wheelchair Association

Lab Works Collective
Love Drogheda BID
LVA
Mermaids Night Club
Music for Galway
No More Hotels
Purple Flag & ATCM
Recovery Academy Ireland
Restaurants Association of Ireland
Rockfords Night Club & Nancy Late Bar
Royal Theatre Group, Royal Theatre & Events Centre, Castlebar
Sligo BID
Temple Bar Residents Association
The Complex
Thisispopbaby
Tralee Chamber Alliance
Virgin Mary Bar
Visit Waterford
Vintners Federation Ireland (VFI)
Waterford Business Group
Waterford Chamber
Waterford Co Co , Economic Dev Unit
WWW L Deering
Where The Time Goes
Dublin Night Club Late Bar Ass - Open Letter
Hospitality Sector - Open Letter

### Appendix 3

## Stakeholders presentations to the Taskforce

- HSE, Alcohol Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme
- HSE, National Social Inclusion Office
- Alcohol Action Ireland
- Purple Flag & Association of Town and City Management (ATCM)
- Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)
- Chambers Ireland
- Dublin Town
- Aiken Promotion
- Event Industry Association of Ireland (EIAI)
- Trevor O Shea
- Royal Theatre Castlebar
- Irish Tour Operator Association (ITOA)
- Licensed Vintner's Association (LVA)
- Temple Bar Residents Association
- Factory
- WWW
- Thisispobaby
- Restaurant Association of Ireland (RAI)
- Vintner's Federation Ireland (VFI)

### Appendix 4

## International Sub Group - Guest Speakers

**Benny Mc Cabe**, Hospitality Sector- Cork

**Azier Abanunza Robles Bilbao**, City Council

**Mick Bradley**, Copenhagen Experience, Snr Architect, Limerick Co. Co.

**Lutz Leichsenring & Marc Wohlrabe**, Club Commission, Germany

**Jo Cox-Brown**, UK Night-Time Economy Solutions

**Mark Adam Harold** Night Mayor, Vilnius, Lithuania

**Dr Prof Terry Stephens**, International Tourism Consultant

**Nora Hickey M'Sichili**, Director, Centre Culturel Irlandais

**John Montgomery**, FRSA London, the UK, Ireland, Europe, Australia and New Zealand

**Kon Viatskalis**, Lord Mayor, Darwin

**Sacha Lord**, Night-Time Economy Adviser for Greater Manchester



