

Draft Westminster After Dark Strategy Summary



City of Westminster

Westminster After Dark: A Strategy for a Thriving and Inclusive Evening and Night-time City (2025–2040)

Westminster is a city that never truly sleeps. From world-renowned theatres and historic landmarks to bustling late-night cafés and vibrant communities, it is a place of culture, opportunity, and connection.

However, with over 211,000 residents and millions of visitors each year, managing Westminster’s evening and night-time environment (6pm–6am) requires careful planning to balance the needs of businesses, workers, visitors, and local communities.

The Westminster After Dark Strategy 2025–2040 sets out a bold vision to make Westminster a safer, more inclusive, and sustainable place after dark. It aims to enhance the city’s cultural and economic vibrancy while ensuring residents feel valued, businesses thrive, and the environment is protected.



Why We Need This Strategy

Westminster's evening and night-time economy plays a crucial role in London's success, but it also brings challenges. Through extensive consultation with residents, businesses, workers, and visitors, the Council has identified key priorities:

- **Safety and Peaceful Homes:** Reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, and noise disturbances to create a welcoming environment for all.
- **Accessibility:** Improving public spaces, transport, and infrastructure to ensure the city is inclusive and easy to navigate at night.
- **Cultural Accessibility and Community:** Supporting Westminster's diverse cultural scene, including LGBTQ+ venues and community-led initiatives.
- **Economic Opportunity:** Helping businesses and night workers flourish while balancing growth with community wellbeing.
- **Environmental and Biodiversity Sustainability:** Promoting eco-friendly practices and protecting biodiversity across the city's evening and night-time landscape.

What You Told Us

The strategy is shaped by feedback from thousands of people who live, work, and spend time in Westminster at night:

- Residents want safer, quieter streets but also value the city's cultural vibrancy.
- Businesses seek greater flexibility, improved infrastructure, and support to innovate.
- Workers need better late-night transport, fairer working conditions, and safe environments.
- Visitors love Westminster's cultural offer but highlight concerns around affordability, safety, and limited late-night transport.
- Community groups stress the importance of inclusivity and protecting vulnerable spaces, such as LGBTQ+ venues.



Our Westminster After Dark Strategy Vision for 2040

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By 2040, Westminster will elevate and further develop its reputation as an exciting, inclusive, and sustainable evening and night-time global destination, prioritising the needs and experiences of its residents, visitors, workers, and businesses. Anchored by safety, culture, accessibility, economic opportunity, and sustainability, the Westminster After Dark Strategy will enhance the city between 6pm and 6am as a welcoming, thriving, and resilient place for everyone.”

This means a city where:

- Residents feel safe and included.
- Communities and cultural spaces thrive.
- Visitors enjoy world-class experiences.
- Businesses and night workers have opportunities to succeed.
- Environmental sustainability is at the heart of Westminster’s evening and night-time future.

How We'll Get There

The strategy is built around five core pillars that will guide Westminster's journey to achieve our Westminster After Dark vision:

- **Safe and Secure** – Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour while making streets, transport, and venues safer at night.
- **Accessible and Positive Places** – Creating well-designed, welcoming, and inclusive public spaces that work for everyone after dark.
- **Communities and Culture** – Supporting a diverse cultural scene and strengthening Westminster's night-time identity.
- **Economic Development and Opportunities** – Helping businesses grow while ensuring workers have the support they need.

- **Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity** – Embedding green initiatives to make Westminster's evening and night-time economy sustainable.

Each pillar is underpinned by specific strategic objectives, which collectively will drive the delivery of the Westminster After Dark Strategy over the next 15 years.

This strategy marks the first long-term plan dedicated to shaping a brighter, more balanced evening and night-time future for Westminster. By working together with businesses, residents, and community groups, we can create a city that works for everyone, day and night.



Safe and Secure

Westminster's evening and night-time will prioritise safety with visible initiatives, strong partnerships, and measures to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour, and noise, creating a secure and welcoming environment.



Safe and Secure Strategic Objectives:

SS1 - Foster a Collaborative and Responsible Evening and Night-Time Environment Across Westminster

We will work with venues, the police, and key stakeholders to establish high standards of crime prevention, safety, welfare, and community respect. This approach will nurture a culture of collaboration, support patron welfare, protect residents, and strengthen Westminster's reputation as a leading example of a secure, sustainable night-time environment. It will support and build upon the Safer Westminster Partnership strategy (2024-27), extending its focus into the evening and night-time environment.

SS2 - Enhancing Women's Safety and Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Environment

We will create a safer, more inclusive evening and night-time environment that addresses women's specific safety concerns, combats violence against

women and girls (VAWG), and builds a supportive infrastructure where women feel confident navigating Westminster's vibrant night-time environment.

SS3 - Developing a "Unified Licensing Policy Framework" and for a Balanced Evening and Night-Time Environment

We will establish a cohesive and adaptable "Unified Licensing Policy Framework" to integrate all licensing regimes into a streamlined, coordinated policy with a clear strategic vision and priorities. This unified approach will balance community and business needs, reflecting Westminster's unique local character while fostering responsible growth and innovation in suitable locations. Tailored policy measures will support business opportunities while addressing local challenges, with safeguards in place to mitigate noise, crime, anti-social behaviour, and other impacts of evening and late-night activity. This will ensure businesses operate responsibly and in harmony with their surroundings.

SS4 - Minimising Noise Impacts from

Late-Night and Early Morning Economy and Related Activities

We will seek to minimise noise impacts, within our powers, on residents in areas with significant late-night and early-morning activity by implementing proactive noise management strategies. This will involve close collaboration with night-time economy venues, transport providers, waste and cleansing services, and local community groups to design and deliver effective noise mitigation measures. Our goal is to foster a thriving and vibrant night-time economy in Central Westminster while protecting and enhancing residents' quality of life.

SS5 - Active Measures to Reduce Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour in Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Environment

We will work with venues, the police, and key stakeholders to establish rigorous standards for safety, crime prevention, and community respect across Westminster's evening and night-time environment, including on residential streets and in housing estates. Collectively we will drive proactive measures to reduce incidents of

crime and anti-social behaviour, foster a collaborative approach to public safety, and implement evolving practices that prioritise effective response and deterrence.

SS6 - Strengthening Safety and Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour After Dark in Residential Areas

We will foster a safer and more secure evening and night-time environment in residential neighbourhoods and estates by working to reduce anti-social behaviour, drug-related incidents, burglaries, knife crime, and low-level violence through targeted enforcement, community engagement, and strategic environmental design enhancements.

SS7 – Developing Funding and Investment Sources to Tackle Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

We will secure and leverage new funding sources to strengthen enforcement and policing in high-crime areas, address anti-social behaviour, and improve crime detection and evidence collection during evening and night-time hours.



Accessible and Positive Places

Public spaces will be inclusive, engaging, and well-designed, ensuring safe and enjoyable navigation across neighbourhoods through improved lighting, transport, and urban planning.



Accessible and Positive Places Strategic Objectives:

AP1 - Enhancing Accessibility, Comfort, and Inclusivity in Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Spaces

We will cultivate an evening and night-time environment in Westminster that champions accessibility, safety, and comfort by addressing the diverse needs of residents, workers, and visitors. Our focus will be on enhancing physical, sensory, and mental health accessibility through key initiatives that aim to ensure Westminster's evening and night-time spaces are welcoming, inclusive, and enjoyable for everyone, whether exploring independently or with others.

AP2 - Creating Accessible and Vibrant Public Spaces After Dark

We will work with partners to enhance our public spaces to be accessible, well-designed, and enjoyable for all during the evening and night-time, by improving public amenities, fostering creative placemaking, and prioritising safety.

AP3 - Create an Inclusive and Safe Night-Time Environment by Reducing Hate, Racism, and Discrimination

We will promote accessibility, equity, and inclusivity across Westminster's evening and night-time economy by implementing proactive measures to reduce hate, racism, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour. This includes fostering a culture of respect and belonging, ensuring all residents and visitors feel safe and welcome after dark.

AP4 - Promoting Active Recreation and Health-Focused Activities in Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Economy

We will encourage active recreation and participation in health-related activities within Westminster's evening and night-time environment, supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all residents and visitors. We will focus on creating and enabling accessible, safe, and engaging opportunities for fitness, sports, and wellness activities, such as

outdoor exercise classes, guided walks, cycling events, and wellness pop-ups. By fostering an environment that promotes healthy and active lifestyles, Westminster aims to enhance quality of life through more dynamic setting for sport and active recreation during the evening and night-time.

AP5 - Fostering Social, Cultural, and Financially Inclusive Community Evening and Night-Time Spaces

We will create a welcoming, safe, cultural and community-oriented evening and night-time environment across Westminster that enhances social inclusion, supports local engagement, and prioritises the needs and preferences of the local community. This objective will focus on ensuring the development of diverse recreational and cultural activities, diversifying away from traditional night-life options that rely on the sale of alcohol, that reflect the needs of the communities in which they are situated, and that are socially, culturally, and financially inclusive for residents, families, and visitors alike.

AP6 - Maintain Clean and Sustainable Evening and Night-Time Spaces

We will continue to work with our partners to deliver effective cleansing operations while implementing revised litter reduction and waste management strategies to ensure clean and inviting public spaces during the evening and night-time. Collaborating with businesses, residents, and visitors to promote responsible waste disposal, reduce littering, and support sustainable practices that uphold Westminster's environmental quality.

AP7 – Enhance Night-Time Transport Accessibility

We will advocate for enhanced and expanded public transport options during night-time hours to ensure safe and convenient movement across the city. This includes ensuring residential areas have greater transport access to and from evening and night-time economy hubs, supporting workers with affordable and efficient commuting options, and enabling visits to family and friends. By championing greater reliability, safety, and inclusivity in

night-time transport services, we aim to make Westminster a more connected and accessible city for everyone.

AP8 – Enhancing Digital Connectivity for a Thriving Evening and Night-Time Environment

We will enhance digital connectivity across Westminster's evening and night-time environment by expanding and strengthening the city's digital infrastructure to improve connectivity, enhance visitor experience, and support business innovation. This will be achieved by increasing access to seamless and secure Open Roaming Wi-Fi, encouraging businesses to participate and ensuring widespread availability, while also expanding telecoms network capacity in collaboration with telecom providers and local stakeholders. Additionally, we will work with businesses and venue operators so that they develop the tools and build the awareness needed to leverage enhanced digital connectivity, improving public engagement, accessibility, and safety.

Communities and Culture

Westminster will celebrate diversity by fostering connections, enriching cultural experiences, and expanding inclusive opportunities for residents. Vibrant programming, dynamic partnerships, and accessible venues will ensure everyone can engage, while robust protections will safeguard communities' wellbeing.



Communities and Culture Strategic Objectives:

CC1 - Expanding Community Accessibility to Westminster's Cultural Offerings

We will make Westminster's vibrant cultural heritage and arts scene more accessible and affordable for residents, with a focus on young people, low-income households, and underrepresented groups. By doing so, we aim to foster greater inclusion, strengthen community engagement, and enhance the lives of all residents through shared cultural experiences.

CC2 - Building a Sustainable Funding Model for Cultural Activities

We will develop a diverse and sustainable funding framework that secures long-term investment in Westminster's evening and night-time cultural activities, ensuring vibrant, inclusive, and community-driven initiatives that enrich the cultural landscape and enhance accessibility for all.

CC3 - Protecting and Celebrating LGBTQ+ Cultural Venues in Westminster

We will prioritise the protection of Westminster's LGBTQ+ venues, celebrating their cultural significance and ensuring they continue to be safe, inclusive spaces that enrich the city's diversity. Where we have the authority, we will take action to support their long-term sustainability and recognising their role as vital.

CC4 - Address Rough Sleeping and Homelessness in Westminster's Night-Time Environment

Aligned with our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, we will prioritise support to reduce rough sleeping in Westminster's evening and night-time environment by strengthening crisis response and prevention efforts and reinforcing targeted support for those experiencing homelessness.

CC5 - Enabling an Inclusive and Balanced Evening and Night-Time Beyond Central Westminster

We will expand accessible, family-friendly, and non-alcoholic evening activities to foster a vibrant, inclusive evening and night-time environment in Westminster. By supporting community-led events and diverse recreational options, this objective promotes a balanced evening economy that respects residents' needs while celebrating Westminster's cultural identity.

CC6 - Creating Inclusive, Accessible Evening and Night-Time Cultural Programmes for Community Events

We will foster affordable, inclusive evening and night-time experiences and events that engage communities, young people, and vulnerable residents, promoting social connection, community pride, and inclusivity across Westminster. We aim to create accessible, engaging evening and night-time experiences that foster a sense of belonging and wellbeing within the community.



Economic Development & Opportunities

A night-time economy that drives local business growth, empowers creatives, and supports workers by providing opportunities for employment, skills development, and fair pay. It attracts global audiences while ensuring equitable benefits for residents, workers, and communities, fostering an inclusive and thriving economic ecosystem.



Economic Development & Opportunities Strategic Objectives:

ED1 - Enhancing Support and Recognition for Night-Workers in Westminster

We acknowledge and support the vital contributions of night-workers in Westminster, especially our residents, by advocating for fair compensation, improved access to health and wellbeing services, and improved infrastructure after dark. We aim to promote fair wages, health services accessibility, and transport options that reflect the unique needs and costs faced by night-workers, ultimately aiming to elevate Westminster's reputation as a city that values and supports its night-time workforce.

ED2 - Harmonising Licensing and Planning to Foster Sustainable Growth in the Evening and Night-Time Economy While Safeguarding Our Community

We will ensure that licensing and planning processes are closely aligned and mutually supportive, while recognising that licensing and planning decisions must be taken

solely within their respective regulatory and policy frameworks. This approach positions both as key drivers of responsible growth and opportunity in Westminster's evening and night-time economy. It emphasises the importance of balancing the protection of residents with the development of a vibrant and inclusive night-time environment, offering a diverse cultural and social experience where alcohol is just one of many choices available.

ED3 - Empowering Residents with Skills and Opportunities in the Evening and Night-Time Hospitality and Creative Sectors

We will create accessible pathways for residents to gain valuable skills and qualifications that support the hospitality and creative sectors in Westminster. By building strong partnerships with educational institutions and industry leaders, we aim to provide residents with practical training, career opportunities, and clear entry points into these thriving sectors.

ED4 - Fostering Economic Development and Innovation through Collaborative Management of the Evening and Night-Time Economy

We will drive economic growth and create new opportunities within Westminster's evening and night-time economy by fostering a collaborative and unified approach among BIDs, local businesses, cultural institutions and regulatory bodies. This objective will prioritise partnerships that support innovative business models, enhance operational resilience, and leverage shared resources, creating a dynamic and sustainable night-time environment that benefits both local communities and the broader economy.

ED5 - Diversifying Central Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Economy

We will enable a vibrant, inclusive evening and night-time economy in Central Westminster that expands beyond traditional alcohol-led venues, supporting diverse offerings that appeal to a wide range of visitors, residents, and workers. This approach will seek to balance cultural enrichment, family-friendly experiences, and economic growth with community wellbeing.

ED6 - Creating Vibrant Late-Night Entertainment Zones (LNEZ) in Oxford Street, Regent Street, The Strand and Victoria Street.

Subject to the outcome of public consultation, we will seek to establish Late-Night Entertainment Zones (LNEZ) in the following areas:

- Oxford Street (between Regent Street and Tottenham Court Road/Charing Cross Road)
- The Strand (between Villiers Street and Savoy Street)
- Victoria Street (North) (from Buckingham Gate to Buckingham Palace Road, including the Nova and Cardinal Place developments and Terminus Place).

These zones could be designed to enhance Westminster's cultural and economic vibrancy, supporting business growth while reducing the pressure for additional night-time activity in residential areas. This would strengthen the city's global reputation for

diverse and dynamic night-time experiences. In developing these areas, we will ensure that only responsible late-night operators, those who respect residents, visitors, and local businesses, are permitted to operate, maintaining a balanced and sustainable night-time economy.



Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity

Westminster will lead in sustainability, embracing energy efficiency, sustainable transport, and biodiversity-friendly practices to safeguard its environment for future generations.



Environmental Sustainability Strategic Objectives:

ES1 - Embedding Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity into this Strategy.

As we deliver this strategy, we will prioritise environmental sustainability by ensuring our actions promote cleaner air, minimise environmental impact, and enhance biodiversity, supporting a greener and more sustainable evening and night-time economy.

ES2 - Advancing Green Lighting and Sustainable Infrastructure in Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Economy

We will work with businesses and partners to actively reduce the environmental impact of Westminster's evening and night-time economy, by supporting the implementation of energy-efficient lighting where appropriate, promoting green infrastructure (where permitted under the planning system), and encouraging or enforcing eco-friendly operational practices across the evening night-time sector.

ES3 - Advancing Waste Reduction and Circular Economy Initiatives in Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Economy

We will work with businesses and partners to reduce waste generation and promote sustainable practices within Westminster's evening and night-time economy by supporting the Council's waste and recycling programmes, encouraging reuse, and fostering a circular economy approach. This objective will focus on augmenting the Council's new Waste Strategy to ensure it reflects and extends into the evening and night-time hours.

ES4 - Promoting Sustainable Transport to Improve Air Quality in Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Environment

We will encourage sustainable transport choices among Westminster's evening and night-time visitors, residents, and workers, by encouraging greater use of public transport, cycling, and other low-emission travel options. Within the licensing context, we will seek to expand low-emission options, supporting pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure where appropriate under the planning system, and promoting electrical vehicle use, fostering a cleaner and healthier night-time environment.



Delivering the Strategy

The strategy will be implemented in three phases over 15 years, with ongoing collaboration, monitoring, and adaptation to meet emerging needs.

Strong leadership and partnerships with residents, businesses, and cultural institutions will ensure its success.





We Want to Hear Your Views

Our draft strategy is a shared vision for the future of our city's evening and night-time environment, and your voice is vital in shaping it.

We have launched a public consultation to gather your thoughts, ideas, and feedback on the draft strategy. This is your opportunity to help us ensure that Westminster becomes a vibrant, safe, inclusive, and sustainable destination for everyone after dark.

The consultation will run for just over fourteen weeks, starting on **Tuesday 11th March 2025**, and closing on **Sunday 22nd June 2025**.

How You Can Get Involved

We welcome input from residents, businesses, workers, visitors, and community organisations. Your feedback will help us refine the strategy to reflect the diverse needs and priorities of everyone who experiences Westminster after dark.

You can participate by:

- Visiting our Westminster After Dark Strategy engagement platform and completing a survey via our website, www.westminster.gov.uk/westminster-after-dark and following the links,
- Attending one of our in-person or virtual consultation events (dates, locations and how to register are available via our website).
- Sharing your views via email at westminsterafterdark@westminster.gov.uk

What We Want to Hear

We'd like your views on:

- The proposed vision for Westminster's evening and night-time environment.
- The five strategic pillars: Safe and Secure, Accessible and Positive Places, Communities and Culture, Economic Development and Opportunities, and Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity.
- The specific objectives and the initial proposed actions outlined under each pillar.
- Any additional priorities or ideas you believe should be included in the strategy.

Next Steps

Your feedback will be carefully reviewed and used to refine the final strategy, which will be published later in 2025. By participating, you will play a key role in shaping the future of Westminster after dark.

Together, we can create a Westminster that works for everyone, day and night. We look forward to hearing from you.





Westminster After Dark
Strategy Summary

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