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South Wales Police Cardiff City Centre Night-time economy policing overview August 2023

Justin Hardwick - Police Licensing Sergeant 2027

Cardiff is the Capitol City of Wales which has experienced exponential population growth in the last decade. There are currently 369 licensed premises in the City Centre, with 134 of these, or 36.4% are Pubs, Bars or nightclubs, 16 or 4.3% relating to take-away premises, and 34 or 9.2% relating to Supermarkets and Off Licences.

The footfall in the City Centre prior to Covid-19 was over 40 million per year, and during Covid-19 these numbers halved. However, since Covid-19 restrictions were lifted the City Centre footfall numbers are nearing the pre covid-19 levels.

However, it should be noted that the night-time economy (18:00 – 06:00hrs) footfall numbers have recovered quicker following the Covid-19 restrictions, and are now higher at 11.6 million than the pre Covid-19 numbers, which were 11.1 million.

On an average weekend in the City Centre the Night time economy can host between 30,000 to 40,000 people, and these numbers increase to 65,000 to 100,000 when there are Large events in the City Centre at the National Stadium.

Over the past 10 years Cardiff City Centre have hosted numerous internationally recognised events such as : NATO, UEFA Champions League, World Heavyweight Boxing events, ICC International Cricket, Pop Concerts and the prestigious Volvo Ocean race. It is evident the night time economy in Cardiff city centre is thriving due to the facilities that Cardiff as a City has to offer – 5 International sporting venues within a square mile. It is recognised that Cardiff city centre night time economy already attracts up to 40,000 people on weekends and up to 100,000 people on large event days. It is acknowledged that the expansion of the late

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night economy in Cardiff City centre places a significant demand and pressure on the emergency services and in particular, Policing resources.

There are a number of emerging challenges facing Cardiff city centre over the next couple of years. These include the anticipated increase in the profile of Cardiff and the continued use of the Stadiums for international sporting events and concerts. The Night time economy football in 2022 was 11.6 million, which is up from 9.7 million in 2017, and these numbers are expected to continue to raise over the coming years with more development in the area taking place and planned.

Two main offence groups accounted for 80.1% of all recorded crime in the Cardiff city centre in 2019/20, they were Other Thefts and Violence against the person. During this period there were 3,006 incidents of Other thefts and 2,395 incidents of violence against the person. In 2022/23 this percentage decreased to 77.3% for these two offence groups, with other thefts recorded as 2,412 and violence against the person as 2,107.

With regards to the 2,107 incidents recorded for violence against the person during 2022/23, 59.6% or 1256 of these incidents were reported between 18:00hrs and 06:00hrs.

There were 83 different street locations where incidents were reported between 1800hrs and 06:00hrs, with St Mary street, Queen street, Mill lane, Park Place and Caroline street being the locations with the highest numbers of incidents reported. When examining the recorded incidents during the evening / night time period, it was noted that a late night venue with a premise licence until 0400hrs had the highest volume of recorded incidents, mainly relating to violence against the person and theft. Late night refreshment premises on Queen street and St Mary Street, also displayed high volumes of incidents relating to violence against the person, ASB (Anti social behaviour) and concern for safety.

The problems associated between alcohol and crime cannot simply be managed by consideration of premises on an individual basis, as evidence exists from research conducted by **Stewart (200:2)**, which suggests that geographical density is important, where there is an over concentration of outlets then greater problems arise. This was also recognised by **Maguire (2003:54)** who concluded as a result of the research conducted in Cardiff, that concentrated growth of new licensed premises in one small area – St Mary Street, is likely to bring with it an increase in alcohol related disorder.

Temporal analysis of the City centre revealed that the highest volume of incidents are reported on Friday and Saturday evenings, with the peak times being between 18:00 to 19:00hrs, and between 01:00hrs to 03:00hrs.

To manage this night time economy demand in Cardiff city centre, South Wales Police have adopted a policing model called, Cardiff & Vale After Dark – CAVAD. Policing resources from around Cardiff and the Vale are deployed in the City Centre on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights to support local officers in meeting the night time economy demand in the City centre. CAVAD duties run from 1800 – 0500hrs, which matches the peak demand of the NTE. The purpose and intention of the Police officers working CAVAD is for the early intervention and engagement with visitors to the City centre, a high visible deterrent to crime, disorder, ASB and public reassurance. The cost of South Wales Police in resourcing CAVAD per year is in excess of £2 million.

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There is no doubt that alcohol fuelled crime is a major issue from a Policing perspective and will continue to be a challenge over the coming years. An institute of Alcohol studies paper of 2015 estimated the total cost to the Police, and ultimately the taxpayer, to be in the region of £8-13 Billion pounds every year.

There have been many relevant research studies which have investigated the relationship between crime, alcohol and the size of the late night economy. Some of this research was undertaken in Cardiff by Professor Sheppard, who developed the now internationally recognised and award winning - 'Cardiff Model'. The problems associated between alcohol and crime cannot simply be managed by consideration of premises on an individual basis, as evidence exists from research conducted by **Stewart (200:02)** which suggests that geographical density is important, where there is an over concentration of outlets then greater problems arise. The Cumulative impact is further complicated by the fact that when large concentrations occur of late night economy premises in a given area they then act as a draw to people who have 'pre-loaded' with alcohol at other locations. This often can then lead to confrontation and violence at locations other than where much of the alcohol was initially consumed, and therefore there is a need to consider the problem on an area basis rather than just as an individual premise basis.

These figures in this report and the '**Cardiff night-time economy update**' report produced by Senior Analyst – Peter King, April 2023, demonstrate the continuing and increasing impact of the high density of licensed premises in Cardiff city centre and the detrimental effect it is having on the licensing objectives. **Cardiff City centre already has the most licensed premises per square metre in the whole of the UK.** The concern from South Wales Police is if the Cumulative impact policy for the City Centre is removed, this will see further licensed premises entering this already highly saturated area, which will most certainly see a further increase in the number of incidents reported to the Police, which will have a further detrimental impact on the licensing objectives.

References

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