Westminster After Dark Strategy

2025 – 2040



City of Westminster

Contents

Foreword 4

History of Westminster After Dark 6

Introduction 14

- The Case for Westminster's Evening and Night-Time Strategy is Clear 15
- The Four Phases of Westminster After Dark 16

Our City After Dark 18

Westminster After Dark by the Numbers 20

- Our Residents, Workers, and Visitors After Dark 20
- Economic Dynamics After Dark 23
- Property and Business Landscape After Dark 27
- Crime and Safety After Dark 28

What You Told Us About Westminster After Dark 30

- How We Engaged With You 30
- The Stakeholder Assembly 31
- Key Insights from Our Engagement 32

Our Vision for Westminster After Dark 34

- Our Westminster After Dark Pillars 35

Safe and Secure 36

How we will ensure Westminster is safe and secure after dark 38

Accessible and Positive Places 40

How we will create an accessible and positive Westminster after dark 42

Communities and Culture 44

How we will support and enrich communities and culture after dark 46

Economic Development and Opportunities 48

How we will drive economic development and opportunities across Westminster after dark 50

Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity 52

How we will deliver environmental sustainability and biodiversity across Westminster after dark 54

Delivering this Strategy 56

Innovation and Collaboration in Challenging Times 56

Implementation Plan 57

Collaboration and Leadership 57

Monitoring and Evaluating Progress 58

Westminster After Dark Advisory Group (WADAG) 58

Aligning with Existing Council Stategies and Policies 60

Foreword

We are proud to present the Westminster After Dark Strategy 2025–2040, the Council's first strategy dedicated to shaping the evening and night-time environment.

This strategy not only addresses concerns raised by our communities but also opens new opportunities for responsible growth and development. It is designed to support and create a vibrant, safe, and inclusive space that benefits everyone, whether they live, work, study, run a business, or provide essential services in Westminster. Central to delivering the Council's commitment to a Fairer Westminster, this strategy ensures our city remains equitable, thriving, and welcoming to all.

Westminster has long been a global hub of activity and culture, drawing visitors from around the world with its unique mix of history, entertainment, and innovation. As our city evolves, the evening and night-time are playing an increasingly vital role in Westminster's identity and economic success. However, we also recognise that Westminster is home to over 211,000 people who can be affected by issues arising from night-time activities in their neighbourhoods. Our strategy thus not only capitalises on the opportunities of a dynamic evening and night-time economy, but also seeks to protect our residents, ensuring we create a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive evening and night-time environment for all.

This strategy is the result of extensive research, engagement, and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, residents, business owners, educational institutions, cultural organisations, community groups, and essential service providers. Their valuable input has shaped a comprehensive and inclusive strategy with a clear vision for the future.

> **"Westminster will be globally recognised as a destination where everyone, whether living, working, studying, visiting, or investing, feels safe, valued, and empowered to enjoy an inclusive, sustainable, and innovative space."**

Our vision for Westminster After Dark is to create a vibrant, culturally diverse evening and night-time environment that balances the needs of a thriving city with the wellbeing of its residents and visitors. We recognise the challenges of balancing competing demands, but our goal is clear: by 2040, Westminster will be globally recognised as a destination where everyone, whether living, working, studying, visiting, or investing, feels safe, valued, and empowered to enjoy an inclusive, sustainable, and innovative space. By achieving this balance, we aim to build on Westminster's exceptional evening and night-time offer and ensure that residents, visitors, workers, and businesses coexist and flourish after dark.

We invite all stakeholders to join us in bringing Westminster After Dark to life and making it a global example of a vibrant, safe, and welcoming evening and night-time city.



Councillor Aicha Less

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Public Protection.



Councillor Geoff Barraclough

Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.

History of Westminster After Dark

Westminster's identity after dark has been shaped over centuries, evolving from a seat of royal power and governance into a global centre for culture, entertainment, and commerce.

This transformation has reflected broader social, economic, and technological changes, positioning Westminster as a leading destination for evening and night-time activity.

Early Foundations: The 17th and 18th Centuries

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Westminster became the epicentre of political and aristocratic life.

The area around St James's developed into a hub for social elites, with exclusive gentlemen's clubs and coffee houses, such as White's and Boodles, serving as meeting places for politicians, intellectuals, and business leaders. These venues set the precedent for Westminster's reputation as a place where political, cultural, and economic discourse thrived after dark.

At the same time, the West End began to emerge as a focal point for leisure and entertainment. The opening of Drury Lane Theatre in 1663 and Covent Garden's transformation into a cultural district provided a foundation for Westminster's theatrical and artistic scene, drawing in audiences from across London and beyond.


Apollo Saloon,
YORKSHIRE STINGO,
NEW ROAD.
GRAND
GALA
NIGHT,
Wednesday,
JULY, 27th, 1836.
The Gardens and Pavilion
WILL BE
BRILLIANTLY ILLUMINATED
WITH
Many Thousand Lamps & Devices by
Mr. Neale.
A GRAND
Concert,
Of Vocal and Instrumental Music.
PRINCIPAL VOCAL PERFORMERS
Miss Hodson, Miss Byfield
Miss Kemble, Mrs Gannon
and Mrs Stevenson.
Mr. Byfield Mr. Ludford
Mr. Freeman, Mr. Gannon
Messrs Nelson & Starmer
AFTER WHICH A
Vaudeville,
To be Supported by Messrs. Gannon, Starmer,
and Freeman, Mrs. Fawcis, Mrs. Gannon, and
Miss Byfield,
LIVING TABLEAUX,
BY THE
NEOPOLITAN BROTHERS
DANCING By
Madamoiselle LEONI
From the Italian Opera House
A SUPERB DISPLAY OF
FIRE WORKS,
By Mr. Darby, & Assistants.
In the Course of the Evening Several GLASS and
FIRE BALLOONS,
After the Fire Works, the BALL ROOM
will be thrown open for
Quadrilles and Country Dances,
Under the Direction of Mr. CLAPP
Military Band
Will be in Attendance
Admission, Gentlemen, 1s

Late night entertainment flyer from 1836

The Rise of Entertainment Districts: The 19th Century

The 19th century saw the rapid expansion of Westminster's evening and night-time offer, driven by the growth of the West End theatre district and the development of grand music halls, such as the London Palladium and the Empire Theatre. Gas street lighting, introduced in the early 1800s, made night-time activity safer and more accessible, encouraging a broader spectrum of society to participate in Westminster's nightlife.

During the Victorian era, Soho emerged as a vibrant entertainment hub, with the rise of public houses, taverns, and social clubs shaping its lively character. By the late 19th century, parts of the West End, including Soho, became associated with prostitution and illicit underground activities. Meanwhile, the expansion of railway networks into central London brought an increasing number of visitors, solidifying Westminster's status as a national centre for evening entertainment.



Edgware Road – 1910



Coronation Fair Hyde Park – 1838

The Jazz Age and Post-War Revival: The 20th Century

By the early 20th century, Westminster's evening and night-time scene had become a symbol of cultural vibrancy and innovation.

The interwar years saw a surge in jazz clubs, cabarets, and dance halls, with Soho establishing itself as a hub of bohemian life and artistic experimentation. Iconic venues such as Café de Paris and Ronnie Scott's drew world-class performers and cosmopolitan audiences, cementing Soho's reputation as a centre for nightlife and entertainment.

The post-war period brought both challenges and renewal. While bomb damage and economic austerity took a toll on some areas, the 1950s and 1960s saw a resurgence of nightlife, with the rise of rock and roll clubs, LGBTQ+ venues, and avant-garde theatre. Carnaby Street and the wider Soho area became synonymous with youth culture, fashion, and music, reinforcing Westminster's role as a focal point for countercultural movements. However, the expansion of alcohol and entertainment venues also brought increased crime and social challenges. Soho, in particular, became infamous for its strip clubs, peep shows, and sex shops, concentrated around Berwick Street and Walker's Court.

During the 1980s and 1990s, efforts to address challenges in the West End's evening and night-time economy led to significant crackdowns on crime and prostitution, curbing illicit activities. New licensing policies were introduced, including Westminster's first Stress Area Policy, aimed at managing the cumulative impact of licensed premises. These measures played a key role in reshaping the landscape of Westminster's nightlife, balancing its vibrancy with greater regulatory oversight.



London Palladium – 1910



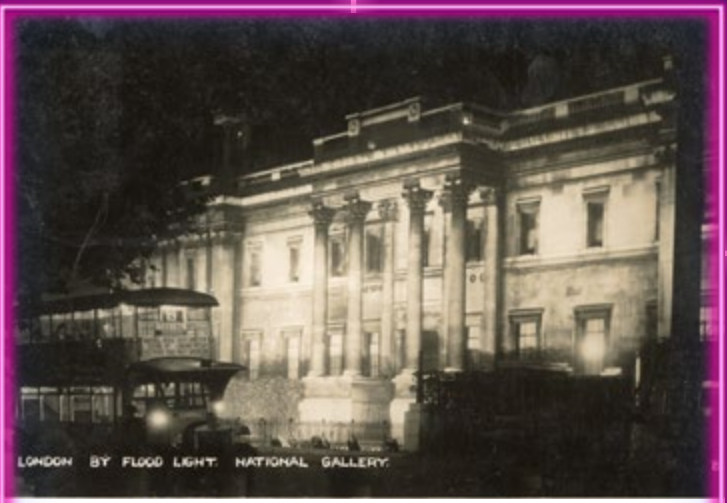
Whiteley's – 1920



Leicester Square – circa 1920's



Prince of Wales Theatre – 1922



National Gallery – 1932



Selfridges – 1935



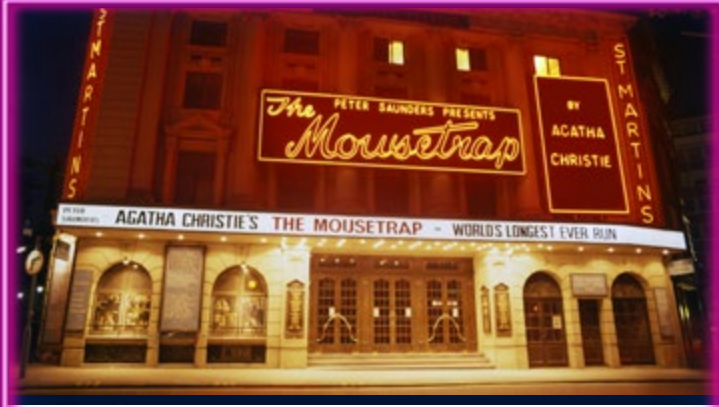
Empire Theatre Leicester Square – 1953



Italian restaurant Otello – 1960



Piccadilly Circus – 1962



St Martin's Theatre – 1988



Shaftesbury Theatre – 1996



Bar Italia – 2011



Liberty London – 2023



Shaftesbury Avenue – 2024

Globalisation, Diversification, and Challenges: The Late 20th Century to Present

From the 1980s onwards, Westminster's evening and night-time environment experienced significant growth, shaped by globalisation and diversification.

The West End cemented its reputation as a world-leading theatre district, while Soho remained a vibrant hub for LGBTQ+ nightlife, independent music, and dining. However, challenges related to crime, nuisance, and crowd management persisted, requiring ongoing intervention as Westminster's night-time economy evolved. The expansion of late-night hospitality and entertainment, coupled with the rise of club culture, brought economic benefits but also increased regulatory pressures, particularly around noise, safety, and public order.

In the early 21st century, Westminster's nighttime landscape continued to evolve, driven by a growing focus on international tourism, cultural programming and the activation of public spaces. The introduction of the Licensing Act 2003, which transferred authority over alcohol licensing from the Magistrates' Courts to the Council, gave local communities a stronger voice in licensing decisions. At the same time, it created new opportunities for operators, fostering the expansion and transformation of evening and night-time businesses. This shift saw a move away from traditional vertical drinking establishments towards more food-led and experiential venues, shaping a more diverse and dynamic evening and night-time economy.

Major events such as Lumiere London, West End Live, and late-night museum openings, highlighted a shift towards more inclusive and diverse after-dark experiences. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing economic crisis underscored vulnerabilities in the evening and night-time sectors, necessitating a reimagined approach to resilience and sustainability.

Introduction

Westminster has always been the heart of London's evening and night-time economy, world famous for its culture, entertainment, and hospitality.

From the grandeur of theatreland on Shaftesbury Avenue to the vibrant nightlife of Soho and Leicester Square, Westminster plays a defining role in shaping London's identity after dark.

Westminster's evening and night-time landscape has developed alongside the evolution of its social, economic, and technological fabric, reflecting changes in consumer behaviour, policy shifts, and the ongoing challenge of balancing the needs of businesses, residents, and visitors. Today, despite its rich history, Westminster's evening and night-time environment faces unprecedented challenges that require a dedicated, long-term strategy.

The pandemic fundamentally reshaped the way people engage with the city after dark, accelerating changes in consumer habits, worker behaviour, and economic pressures. While Westminster remains a premier destination for evening and night-time activity, businesses have struggled with rising operational costs, changing footfall patterns, and staffing shortages, while residents continue to voice concerns over noise, anti-social behaviour, and the environmental impact of evening and night-time activities. Furthermore, safety concerns, notably including crime and violence against women and girls, highlight the need for coordinated interventions to ensure Westminster remains welcoming and secure for all.



The case for Westminster's first Evening and Night-Time Strategy is clear

Westminster After Dark maintains and builds upon what people love about our city after dark, while putting forward a series of interventions and policies to help businesses to thrive, visitors to enjoy the city's attractions, and residents to get a decent night's sleep.

Developing and delivering this ambitious strategy won't be easy. Westminster is home to an incredibly diverse range of stakeholders, each with differing needs and expectations. Businesses seek opportunities for growth, later operating hours, and greater flexibility, while residents call for better noise management, stronger enforcement against anti-social behaviour, and improved public safety measures. Cultural institutions strive to expand their offerings, yet face financial and policy constraints, while emergency services and the council must navigate higher demands on our services with reduced funding and limited resources. Finding a balance that respects and accommodates these perspectives is central to the strategy's success.

We acknowledge that no single solution will satisfy everyone but Westminster After Dark is a strategy built on collaboration, compromise, and innovation. Through open dialogue, shared responsibility, and strategic interventions, we will deliver an evening and night-time environment that supports businesses, enhances resident well-being, and strengthens Westminster's global reputation as a world-leading evening and night-time destination.

This strategy represents a commitment to shaping an evening and night-time that is vibrant, safe, and sustainable, ensuring that the city remains a beacon of opportunity and cultural excellence for generations to come and a great place to live and work.

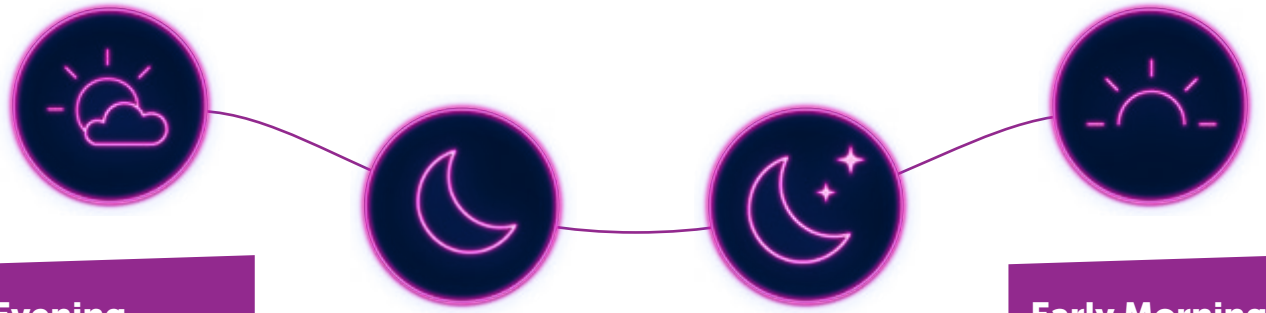


The Four Phases of Westminster After Dark

Westminster After Dark captures activities and services between 6pm and 6am, highlighting the city's transformation into a vibrant, dynamic space. These hours are divided into four phases:

The Council will develop implementation plans for each of the five-year periods of the 15-year strategy. These plans will outline how the strategy will be delivered, detailing specific actions aligned with each strategic pillar objective. Actions within those plans will be tailored to the Westminster After Dark's four time phases.

Each phase of the evening and night-time is integral to the strategy's implementation, reflecting our commitment to adopting tailored approaches that respond to the distinct priorities and dynamics of each time-period.



Evening (6pm–9pm)

A transition from work to leisure, featuring dining, shopping, and cultural events. Public spaces are alive with families, commuters, and visitors.

Night-time (9pm–Midnight)

The peak period for hospitality and entertainment, where foot traffic increases, and prioritising safety and accessibility becomes the priority.

Late Night (Midnight–3am)

Residential areas quieten down, while central venues close and essential services like cleaning and transport take precedence.

Early Morning (3am–6am)

The focus shifts to maintenance and safety as Westminster prepares for the new day.


Jonny loves
TAILS BEERS PIZZA COCKTAILS BEERS PIZZA COCKTAILS
Jonny loves
PIZZA
& BEER

Our City After Dark

Westminster is the political and cultural heart of London and a globally renowned destination for evening and night-time activities.

Home to iconic landmarks, world-class theatres, a vibrant nightlife scene, and rich cultural venues, the city attracts millions of visitors each year. At the same time, it is home to over 211,000 residents who live across its diverse neighbourhoods, from the bustling streets of Soho to the quieter communities of Pimlico and Queen's Park. This dual identity, as a thriving hub of evening and night-time activity and a residential community, defines Westminster's unique character and underscores the need for a balanced approach to its evening and night-time environment.

This strategy spans the entire city, recognising five distinct areas:

Central Westminster:

Marylebone, West End, and St James's wards.

Northwest Westminster:

Queen's Park, Harrow Road, Maida Vale, Little Venice, and Westbourne wards.

Northeast Westminster:

Abbey Road, Regents Park, and Church Street wards.

Western Westminster:

Bayswater, Lancaster Gate, Hyde Park, Knightsbridge, and Belgravia wards.

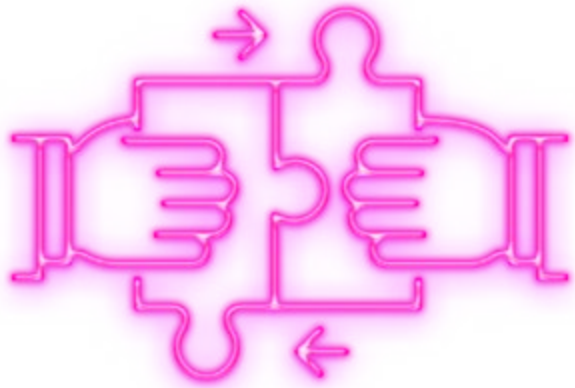
Southern Westminster:

Pimlico North, Pimlico South, and Vincent Square wards.



The strategy's implementation plan will outline actions tailored to each area's specific demographics, economic activities, and unique challenges. By recognising these distinct identities, the strategy's implementation plan will ensure that Westminster's evening and night-time environment meets the needs of residents, businesses, visitors, and workers alike, while supporting jobs and creating opportunities for local people in the evening and night-time economy.

Westminster After Dark by the Numbers



Our Residents, Workers, and Visitors After Dark

Westminster is a dynamic borough, home to a diverse population and a thriving evening and night-time economy (ENTE).

With a total population of 211,508 (source: ONS, MYE 2023), the demographic breakdown is shown in the following table.

Age Group	Female	Male	Total Population	% of Westminster Total
Children (0-17's)	**14,585** (48.4%)	**15,555** (51.6%)	**30,140**	14.3%
Adults (18-64's)	**79,947** (51.5%)	**75,266** (48.5%)	**155,213**	73.4%
Older People (65+)	**14,209** (54.3%)	**11,946** (45.7%)	**26,155**	12.4%
Totals	**108,741**	**102,767**	**211,508**	

Night-time visitor catchment distribution
(Jan–May 2023)

55% Westminster

20% Central London Regions

14% West London

11% Outside London

International tourism to London saw a 20% increase in 2023, adding 31,000 more visitors compared to the previous year, which further emphasises Westminster's role as a key night-time destination.

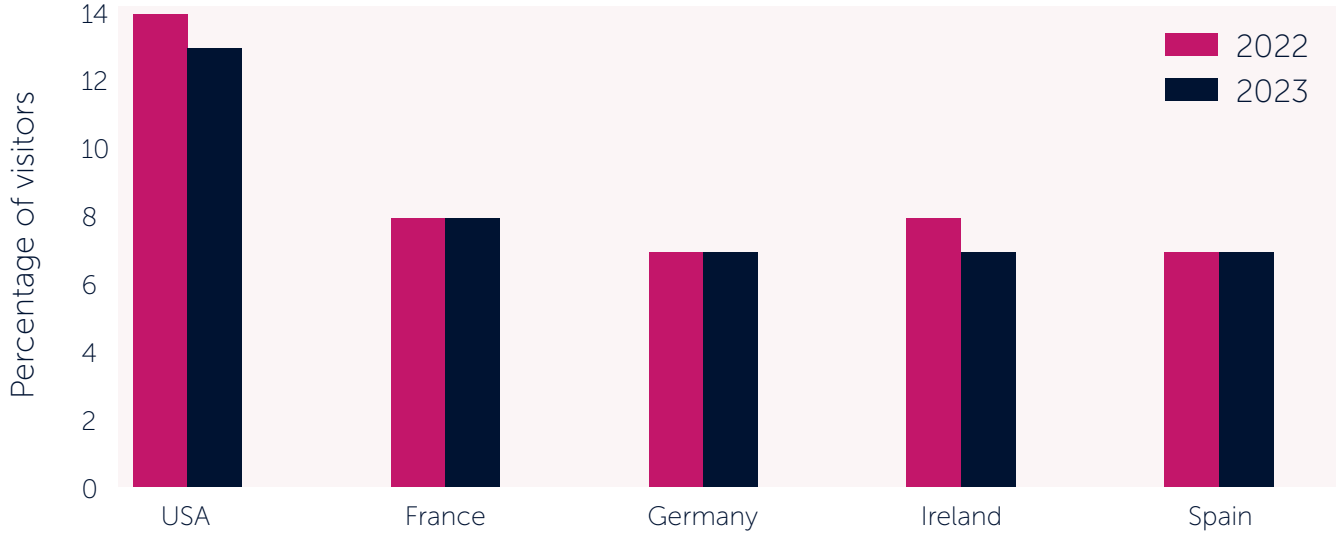
Visitor increase to London
(2023 vs 2022)

20%
Increase in 2023: approx **31,000 more visits** recorded in the capital.

80%
Visitors



Percentage of visitors from the top 5 countries
(2022 vs 2023)



Night workers

Night-time workers form a vital part of Westminster's workforce, accounting for 26% of total employment and reflecting the dynamic, service-oriented nature of the borough's evening and night-time economy. These workers drive key sectors such as hospitality, professional services, and information and communication.

Night-time workers across Westminster



Hospitality

44,368 workers

Day-time working

Night-time working

The professional services sector also plays a major role, employing 37,697 night-time workers. This is driven by businesses operating 24-hour global functions and providing essential services such as public relations, media, legal expertise, IT, and cybersecurity.

Hospitality professional services, information and communication

26% of Westminster's workforce are night-time workers.

The Information & Communication sector contributes significantly, with 17,444 night-time workers meeting the growing demand for around-the-clock technology and media services.

Other sectors, such as Arts & Recreation (16,124 night-time workers) and Public Administration & Defence (16,112 night-time workers), further enhance Westminster's evening and night-time economy. These industries reflect the borough's rich cultural significance and its commitment to delivering essential public services.

Economic Dynamics After Dark

Westminster's evening and night-time economy is unparalleled in the UK, surpassing the combined scale of cities like Edinburgh, Manchester, and Birmingham.

In 2022, Westminster's total Gross Value Added (GVA) stood at £89,449 million, with the evening and night-time economy contributing an estimated £23,704 million.

A key driver of Westminster's evening and night-time economy is its licensed businesses. Westminster boasts the highest number of licensed venues for alcohol, entertainment, and late-night refreshments in the country. Key highlights of Westminster's licensed venues include:



Approximately

4,400

licensed premises

across the city with over **2,000** venues concentrated in Central Westminster (Marylebone, West End and St. James's wards).

Indirect economic benefits of



£1.2 billion

spent in local supply chains

and around **£300 million** in annual business rates.



Theatres are significant contributors, generating nearly

£998 million

in GVA



Licensed restaurants and cafes providing the highest employment share, with approximately

31,800 **jobs**

Terminal Hour for Licensed Premises Permitted to Sell Alcohol	Number of Licensed Premises With Terminal Hour	Total Maximum Capacity of Licensed Venues
19:00	33	1,364
20:00	100	7,861
21:00	88	167,536
22:00	144	125,849
23:00	1000	237,516
00:00	1692	285,989
01:00	478	117,457
02:00	131	57,094
03:00	221	79,753
04:00	22	8,186
05:00	19	5,280
06:00	24	8,595
Total All Licensed Venues between 18:00 and 06:00	**3,955**	**1,102,480**

Note: These figures reflect the maximum capacity of premises licensed under the Licenisng Act 2003 to sell alcohol and the terminal hour of those licensed for that licensable activitiy. Actual capacity may be lower, as premises may choose to operate at reduced capacity or close earlier than permitted by the licence.

Evening and Night-Time Economy Sectors



Contribute
£3.7 billion
5% of Westminster's total economy
80,000 jobs

Professional services
3,169 **20.6%**

Arts & recreation
1,821 **11.9%**

Real estate
811 **5.3%**

Finance & insurance
632 **4.1%**

Retail
2,085 **13.6%**

Administration
1,284 **8.4%**

Other services
691 **4.5%**

Health
602 **3.9%**

Hospitality
1,905 **12.4%**

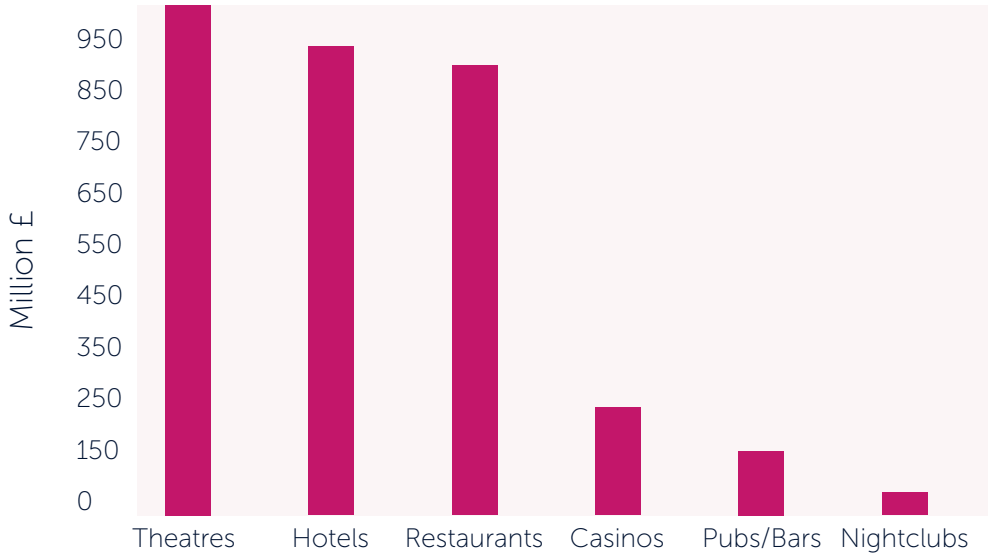
Information & communication
1,171 **7.6%**

Westminster's evening and night-time economy is driven by a diverse range of sectors, showcasing the Westminster's economic and cultural vibrancy:

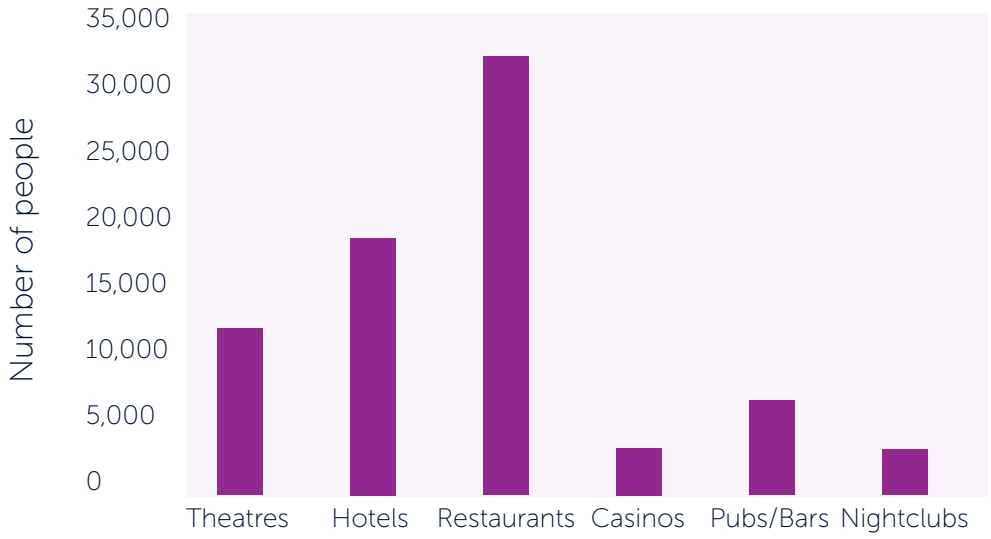
Westminster ENTE business counts, 2023

Share of total ENTE businesses in Westminster

GVA of night-time sector



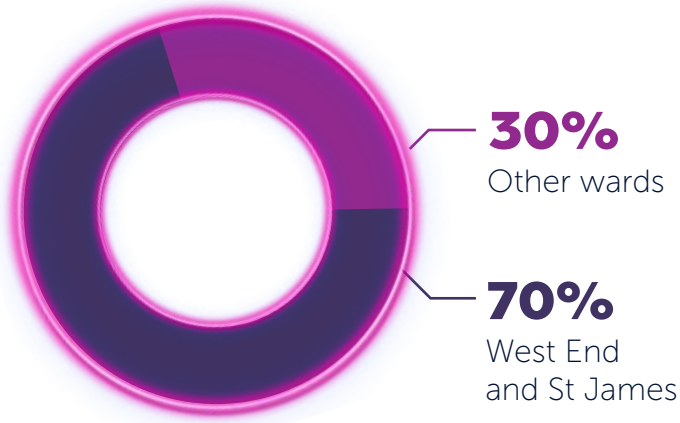
Night-time employment by sector



Evening and night-time employment and economic activity

55,000 jobs

£2.6 billion in GVA



The West End and St. James's wards collectively account for approximately 70% of employment and economic activity in Westminster's evening and night-time economy, supporting around 55,000 jobs and generating £2.6 billion in GVA.

Westminster's hospitality businesses and cultural venues after dark



12.4%
Hospitality **1,905** establishments

20.6%
Professional services, **3,169** establishments

11.9%
Arts and recreation **1,821** venues

13.6%
Retail **2,085** retail outlets

Restaurants, take-away food shops, and mobile food stands contribute **1,074** establishments, representing **7%** of all ENTE businesses.

555 hotels

205 bars

45 clubs

Performing arts venues contribute **787** establishments, representing **5%** of all ENTE businesses.

175 sports venues

108 Amusement venues (arcades, themed exhibits)

1,074
Restaurants, take away food shops & mobile food stands

787
Performing arts venues

555
Hotels

205
Bars

175
Sports activities

108
Amusement and recreation activities

47
Gambling and betting venues

45
Clubs

Property and Business Landscape After Dark

Westminster's commercial property market remains robust:



Average rents for retail and hospitality spaces in 2023 were

£91.60 per sq ft

double the London average.



Retail and hospitality property vacancy rates decreased to

2.23%

significantly lower than the London-wide average.

Restaurants contribute 64% of evening and night-time business rates, followed by pubs (13%), casinos, and cafes (5% each). Westminster's share of London's business rates underscores its critical economic role.



Crime and Safety After Dark

While Westminster's ENTE thrives, challenges persist around safety:

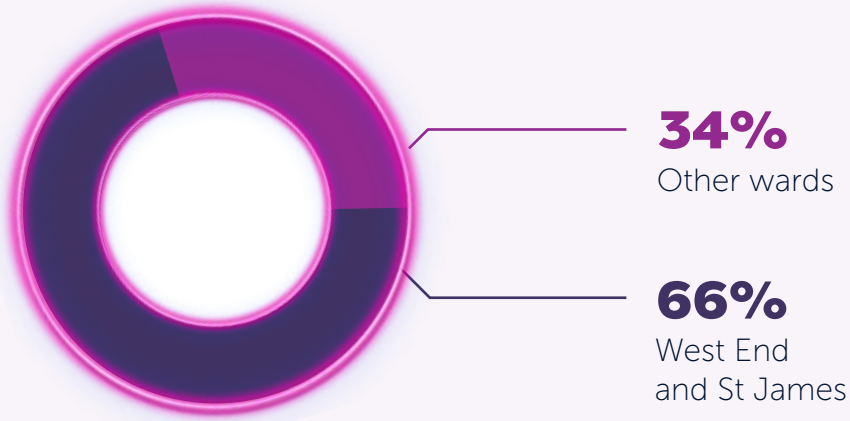
Crime Concentration: **38%** of borough crime and **45%** of public realm crime occur in three Lower Super Output Areas.

Night-Time Incidents: **59%** of violent crimes and **70%** of robberies occur between 6am and 6pm, primarily in the West End and St James's wards.

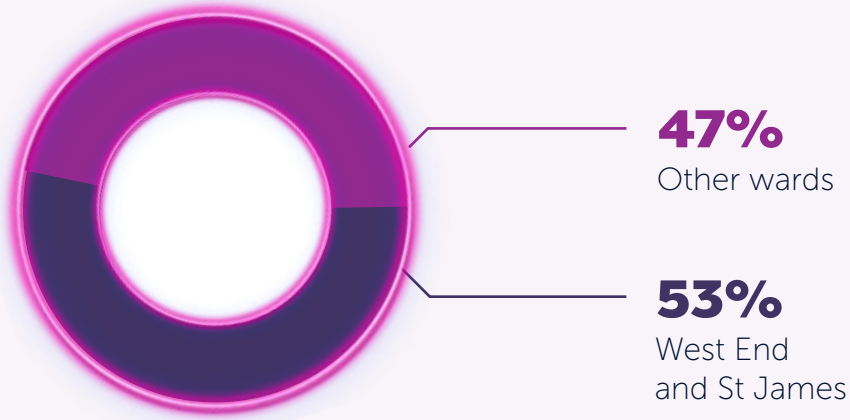
Sexual Offences and VAWG: Over **65%** of sexual offences and **46%** of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) incidents occur in these areas.

Alcohol-Related Issues: **74%** of alcohol-related ambulance callouts occur at night, with **63%** concentrated in the West End.

Crime in Westminster



Violent crime in Westminster



Feelings of safety have declined, with only 74% of residents feeling safe after dark, down from 82% the previous year. Women report significantly lower levels of safety (66%) compared to men (82%).



What You Told Us About Westminster After Dark

This strategy has been shaped by feedback from residents, workers, business owners, visitors, and community organisations.

Through surveys, workshops, and public forums, we listened to your concerns, ideas, and aspirations. Your input has been vital in identifying key themes and shaping a vision for a vibrant, inclusive, and safe evening and night-time environment that reflects the needs of everyone who lives, works, or spends time in Westminster.

How We Engaged With You

We designed an inclusive and transparent engagement process to ensure diverse voices across Westminster were heard. We did this through:

Using a Variety of Methods:

Online surveys, interactive digital maps, in-person discussion groups, on-street interviews, and a Stakeholder Assembly. This allowed us to capture different perspectives, whether residents concerned about safety, businesses focused on economic growth, or workers navigating late-night commutes.

Reaching Every Corner of Westminster:

Engagement was conducted right across Westminster, from the bustling West End to quieter residential areas like Queen's Park and Pimlico. This ensured we understood the unique opportunities and challenges in each area.

Targeting Specific Groups:

We ran tailored sessions for community representative groups, women, and night-time workers. This approach enabled us to hear about issues like crime and noise in busy areas or the need for better late-night transport for workers.

We listened to your concerns, ideas, and aspirations.

Focusing on Key Themes:

Initially feedback was organised under four strategic pillars:

- Safe and Secure
- Accessible and Positive Places
- Communities and Culture
- Economic Development and Opportunities

Based on your input, we introduced a fifth pillar, Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity, to reflect the importance of creating a greener and more sustainable evening and night-time environment.

Ongoing Engagement:

Engagement doesn't stop here. We are committed to an ongoing dialogue with residents, businesses, and visitors, which will form the development of our implementation plan going forward. We will continue to develop collaborative solutions, adapt to emerging needs, and measure our progress in delivering the strategy's vision for 2040.

The Stakeholder Assembly

As part of our engagement efforts, we convened a diverse range of voices for the Stakeholder Assembly. This included residents, the Metropolitan Police, Transport for London (TfL), local businesses, community organisations, and resident associations.

To ensure a balanced group that reflected Westminster's diversity, the assembly used sortition, a method that randomly selects participants from across the borough. This inclusive approach, combined with input from expert contributors, facilitated informed decision-making on key issues related to Westminster's evening and night-time environment.

Starting in January 2024, the assembly was held over three consecutive weekends and followed a structured engagement process, with each day dedicated to a specific phase of the discussion.

The assembly's findings were consolidated into a report outlining key proposals and priorities. These insights have been carefully considered and integrated into the development of this strategy and its implementation plan. To view the full Stakeholder Assembly report, visit **www.westminster.gov.uk/westminster-after-dark**

Key Insights from Our Engagement

The feedback gathered from stakeholders enabled key priorities, opportunities, and challenges for shaping Westminster's evening and night-time environment, to be identified. The engagement reports, audits, and survey results, can be viewed via the Council's website at **www.westmisnter.gov.uk/westminster-after-dark**.

The following is a summary of the key themes from the stakeholder engagement:

Residents

Some residents expressed concerns about safety, noise, and the impact of night-time activities on their quality of life. Issues like anti-social behaviour, crime, and disturbances from late-night venues, especially in areas like Soho and Covent Garden, were frequently raised. Others enjoyed the vibrancy and "buzz" in Westminster's evening and night-time environment and wanted it to continue to develop and evolve.

Key insights:

- More visible policing and improved street lighting.
- A proportion of residents, particularly those in Central Westminster, wanted stricter regulation of late-night venues to balance vibrant nightlife with residential peace.
- Some expressed environmental concerns, including light pollution and energy-efficient lighting.
- More CCTV and specific action to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- There were views that Westminster's evening and night-time offer was stagnating, and they had moved to Westminster for the city's vibrant and varied offer- which they would like to see increased.

Business Owners

Business owners, particularly in hospitality and entertainment, saw significant opportunities in Westminster's night-time economy but emphasised the need for supportive measures that would enable growth, reduce burdens and provide flexibility to adapt to customer needs.

Key insights:

- Greater regulatory flexibility, including extended or variable operating hours, and streamlined planning and licensing processes and decision making.
- Positive action to reduce crime, particularly theft, violence and anti-social behaviour.
- Improved amenities like seating, clean public toilets, and sustainable practices (e.g. waste reduction, green infrastructure).
- Partnership working and positive communication between stakeholders.



Night Workers

Workers in sectors such as hospitality and retail highlighted safety and transport as critical concerns for commuting after dark.

Key insights:

- Concern over the high costs of activities and limited affordable options in the context of the cost-of-living crisis.
- Conscious about their safety, particularly in areas like Soho, with calls for better lighting and a visible police presence.
- Improved public transport links to enhance accessibility.
- Greater access to public amenities, especially public toilets.

Visitors

Visitors praised Westminster's vibrant night-time offerings, but highlighted challenges related to affordability, safety, and transport.

Key insights:

- High costs of activities and limited affordable options due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- Safety concerns, particularly in areas like Soho, with calls for better lighting and a visible police presence.
- Improved public transport links to enhance accessibility.

Community Organisations

Community groups stressed inclusivity and representation in Westminster's evening and night-time environment.

Key insights:

- A greater diversity of cultural programming reflecting Westminster's demographic mix.
- Preservation of safe venues, particularly for LGBTQ+ communities in Soho.
- A balance between human wellbeing and eco-friendly practices.

Our Vision for Westminster After Dark

Westminster's evening and night-time environment is a defining part of its identity, requiring a bold and ongoing strategy to embrace opportunities and address challenges between 6pm and 6am.

This strategy is designed to underpin our work across the Council and with partners, combining immediate projects and quick wins with longer-term approaches to ensure sustained progress and measurable outcomes along the way.

Although this strategy covers the period from 2025 to 2040, it does not signify the conclusion of our work, vision, or ambition. The oversight, support, and development of Westminster's evening and night-time environment will remain a core priority for the Council well beyond the life of this strategy.

Our Vision

> **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.**

Our Westminster After Dark Pillars

This strategy is built on five key pillars, each essential to achieving our vision. These pillars and their associated objectives inform the Westminster After Dark Strategy Implementation Plan, keeping us on track to reach our 2040 goals.

1 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.

2 Accessibility & 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.

3 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 community wellbeing.

4 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.

5 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.

Safe and Secure

As Westminster continues to attract visitors and businesses to its vibrant evening and night-time scene, ensuring the safety and security of everyone who visits, lives, and works in the city after dark remains a top priority.

This strategy builds on the significant efforts already underway to reduce crime and disorder, while driving further improvements in collaboration with key stakeholders, including the police, businesses, BIDs, and community organisations. Our goal is to implement sustainable measures that prevent crime, reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB), mitigate the impact of noise disturbances, and create a welcoming and secure environment for all.

While progress has been made in reducing crime and disorder, businesses must continue to take greater responsibility for the safety of their patrons and the wider community. We will support and recognise businesses that lead by example, that adopt best practices, manage their venues responsibly, and contribute to a safer evening and night-time environment. At the same time, we will enforce licensing laws more robustly and hold venues to account if they fail to foster a safe and secure atmosphere.

> **Collaboration will be at the heart of creating a safe, inclusive, and vibrant evening and night-time environment in Westminster.**

Residents raised concerns about increasing noise disturbances due to the growth of the evening and night-time economy, especially within Central Westminster. We are committed to working with residents. businesses, and other partners, to find practical solutions to mitigate noise impacts.

We will implement tailored measures to meet the specific needs of the different areas across Westminster, including enhanced street lighting, increased police

patrols, and proactive interventions such as Night Stars. Women's safety will remain a priority, with efforts focused on combating violence against women and girls (VAWG) and supporting infrastructure that ensures women feel confident and secure navigating the city after dark.

Through the development of Westminster's first "Unified Licensing Framework," we will consolidate our licensing policies into a single, cohesive approach that ensures consistency across the city. This framework will create a balanced system that supports business growth while addressing community needs, promoting responsible operations that enhance a vibrant, diverse, and well-managed evening and night-time economy.

CASE STUDY

Westminster's Night Stars

The Night Stars scheme is a Westminster City Council initiative aimed at enhancing safety and wellbeing in the city's evening and night-time environment. Through a team of trained volunteers, Night Stars provide a visible, supportive presence in key night-time areas like Soho, the West End, and Leicester Square, particularly during busy hours from Thursday to Saturday.

Night Stars aim to:

- Increase Safety: Volunteers help reduce anti-social behaviour by offering support and monitoring key areas.
- Assist Vulnerable Individuals: They provide water, first aid, directions, and, when necessary, safe escorts to help people in need.
- Strengthen Community: Volunteers are drawn from the local area, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and engagement.

The scheme has improved safety perceptions and reduced pressure on emergency services by addressing minor incidents on the spot. Positive feedback highlights Night Stars as a reassuring presence, making visitors feel more secure and creating a more welcoming night-time experience.

To find out more visit: **www.westminster.gov.uk/night-safety/night-stars**



How we will ensure Westminster is safe and secure after dark

SS1 - Foster a Collaborative and Responsible Evening and Night-Time Economy 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

As Westminster's evening and night-time environment continues to evolve, ensuring public spaces are welcoming, clean, and accessible remains a key priority.

Our strategy focuses on enhancing the physical environment to ensure it is inclusive, vibrant, and safe for everyone. Key priorities include accessibility for all, including individuals with disabilities.

Stakeholders have highlighted the need for better lighting, cleaner streets, and more accessible public amenities, such as public toilets, particularly in high-traffic areas like Soho and Covent Garden. Residents have expressed concerns about noise, traffic, and the quality of public spaces, while visitors and workers have stressed the importance of safer, well-lit streets and improved late-night transport options.

> **Through initiatives that promote health, recreation, and cultural opportunities, we will enrich Westminster's offer beyond traditional nightlife.**

By improving public spaces, enhancing accessibility, and fostering a culture of respect and belonging, we aim to create a welcoming atmosphere that meets the diverse needs of residents, workers, and visitors. Through initiatives that promote health, recreation, and cultural opportunities, we will enrich Westminster's offer beyond traditional nightlife. At the same time, we remain committed to balancing vibrancy with community wellbeing, ensuring that noise, congestion, and environmental impacts are carefully managed to protect the quality of life for all. We will utilise our planning policy to direct evening and night-time activity away from residential areas. This strategic approach will provide a clear direction to enhance our thriving, sustainable, and inclusive Westminster after dark.

CASE STUDY

Kingly Court – An Accessible and Positive Night-time Destination

Kingly Court in Carnaby, Soho, exemplifies a vibrant, accessible, and inclusive approach to evening and night-time economy. Known for its open-air courtyard, Kingly Court hosts a diverse mix of over 20 restaurants, bars, and cafes across three floors, creating a welcoming environment for a wide range of visitors. The court's design ensures accessibility, with wheelchair-friendly spaces and a variety of seating options that encourage comfortable social interactions.

Kingly Court's tenant mix includes a focus on sustainability and diverse cuisines, contributing to an inclusive and positive community atmosphere. The venue's pedestrianised surroundings enhance safety and accessibility, allowing visitors to enjoy late-night dining in a relaxed, car-free setting. It is close to public transport options, so visitors do not need to pass through residential areas. Additionally, its integration of non-alcoholic options and experiential dining choices appeals to a broad audience, aligning with Westminster's goal to foster diverse and positive night-time spaces that prioritise inclusivity, safety, and community appeal.

Through Kingly Court's thoughtfully curated environment, Carnaby showcases a model for accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable evening and night-time experiences that support both economic vitality and community engagement.

To find out more visit:
carnaby.co.uk/kingly-court-info



How we will create an accessible and positive Westminster after dark

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

Each part of Westminster, from the historic heart of Central Westminster to the diverse and evolving neighbourhoods in the North, South, East, and West, has its own cultural identity and community needs.

This part of the strategy seeks to nurture local creativity, increase cultural engagement, and ensure all residents, workers, and visitors feel connected and supported in their communities during the evening and night-time hours.

A strong sense of community is essential for building an inclusive evening and night-time environment. By broadening the range of evening and night-time activities, we aim to create vibrant local offers that serve Westminster's diverse communities while enhancing the character of each neighbourhood. The strategy focuses on fostering connection through community-led events and cultural activities, activating public spaces for gatherings, and promoting inclusive, non-commercial, and family-friendly experiences. By improving access to affordable cultural programming, we will create spaces where residents can come together, celebrate diversity, and engage in the cultural life of their neighbourhoods.

> **A strong sense of community is essential for building an inclusive evening and night-time environment.**

Stakeholder feedback has underscored the importance of tailoring opportunities to meet the distinct needs of each area in Westminster. By reducing financial barriers to cultural activities and investing in community-driven initiatives, we will promote social inclusion and strengthen local connections. Protecting key cultural hubs, such as LGBTQ+ venues, and securing long-term funding for cultural activities are central to ensuring Westminster's evening and night-time economy remains vibrant, diverse, and accessible.

Aligned with the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, we will also address the challenges of homelessness in the night-time environment by enhancing crisis response and providing targeted support.

CASE STUDY

Grand Junction's Community Choir

The Grand Junction Community Choir, which is run in partnership with the Westbourne Community Champions, offers an inclusive and relaxed evening activity that brings people together through music. Led by experienced choir leader Kim Hawthorn, the choir meets weekly during term time (Mondays, 6–7 PM) and welcomes adults of all ages and skill levels, with no prior singing experience required.

The sessions explore a wide variety of music, with members encouraged to suggest songs, creating an engaging and collaborative atmosphere.

The sessions provide a unique opportunity for community connection, supported by free tea, coffee, and biscuits. Each term culminates in a free performance evening open to all, fostering a sense of achievement and celebration.

By combining music, community, and accessibility, the Community Choir has established itself as a vital part of Grand Junction's evening and night-time offerings, enriching the lives of participants and strengthening the local cultural fabric.

To find out more visit:
grandjunction.org.uk/events/community-choir



How we will support and enrich communities and culture after dark

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.


AWARD WINNING GAY BAR
PEDESTRIAN ZONE
No vehicles
11 am - Midnight
At any time
KU LOUNGE

Economic Development and Opportunities

Economic development drives business growth, job creation, and enhances the city's global reputation after dark.

A thriving night-time economy energises local communities, attracts a diverse range of visitors, and supports Westminster's position as a world-class destination. At the same time, it's essential that this growth is responsible, ensuring that the needs of residents, workers, and businesses are balanced to create a sustainable and inclusive environment.

Each area of Westminster has its own economic potential. Central Westminster must balance business growth with the quality of life for residents, while Northern, Southern, and Western areas seek to unlock new opportunities by improving public spaces, evening and night-time infrastructure, and new opportunities for cultural and entertainment venues. Equally important is the need to support night-time workers by ensuring safe, affordable transport options and creating opportunities for skill development and career progression in the evening and night-time economy.

> **"Westminster can create economic opportunities that benefit both businesses and the wider community."**

Stakeholders have emphasised the importance of inclusive growth, with calls for more diverse cultural and non-alcohol led venues, alongside initiatives that foster local skills and entrepreneurship.
By addressing these needs, enabling evening and night-time activities where appropriate, and making the city more attractive for innovation and investment, Westminster can create economic opportunities that benefit both businesses and the wider community.

We will empower local communities by creating pathways for residents to develop skills and build careers in hospitality and creative industries, with a significant proportion of these jobs rooted in

Westminster's evening and night-time economy. Late-Night Entertainment Zones in key areas like Oxford Street, The Strand, and Victoria Street will provide spaces for live music, theatre, and cultural activities, enhancing Westminster's reputation as a vibrant cultural hub.



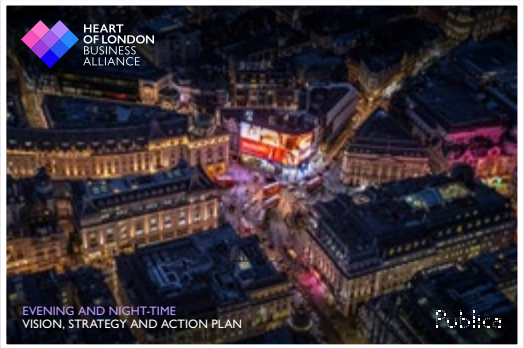
CASE STUDY

Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA) Evening and Night-Time Economy Strategy

The Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA) is a Business Improvement District (BID) that covers the heart of the West End, including Leicester Square and Piccadilly. HOLBA has developed a strategy for its local evening and night-time economy (ENTE), aiming to elevate its status as a world-class cultural and commercial hub. Representing over 600 businesses, HOLBA's vision focuses on making its BID area a vibrant, inclusive, and accessible between 6pm and 6am. Key goals include enhancing safety, fostering inclusivity, and creating diverse experiences that attract workers, residents and tourists.

Central to HOLBA's strategy are five strategic objectives that promote a collaborative, evidence-led approach, prioritise safety, and expand offerings. These objectives also address unique ENTE challenges, such as high operating costs, staff shortages, limited amenities, and rising crime. HOLBA's action plan outlines 77 initiatives that target these areas, intending to improve public safety, accessibility, and cultural offerings across 39 hectares in the heart of London. By focusing on inclusivity, HOLBA aspires to make its BID area a sought-after destination that fosters community engagement and economic vitality around the clock.

To find out more visit: **holba.london/what_we_do/evening-and-night-time-economy**



How we will drive economic development and opportunities across Westminster after dark

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, 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 will be designed to enhance Westminster's cultural and economic vibrancy, supporting business growth while reinforcing 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

Sustainability and biodiversity have become central to Westminster's evening and night-time strategy following strong feedback from residents, workers, and visitors.

Originally not a dedicated focus, sustainability and biodiversity have emerged as key priorities due to the growing awareness of the environmental impact of the evening and night-time environment. Stakeholders expressed a clear desire for a greener, more eco-friendly Westminster after dark, and the council shares this commitment to making the city's evening and night-time environment sustainable, vibrant, and able to adapt to rising temperatures and a changing climate.

Each part of Westminster faces unique environmental challenges, from air pollution and waste in Central Westminster, to underutilised green spaces in the North and South. People have highlighted the need for more sustainable transport options, better recycling, energy-efficient lighting, and the activation of public spaces with eco-conscious activities. They envision a Westminster where rooftop gardens, pedestrian-friendly streets, and improved green corridors not only enhance the city's aesthetic appeal after dark but also support evening and night-time biodiversity and reduce environmental impacts.

> **Our strategy places sustainability and biodiversity at its core.**

Key initiatives include fostering a circular economy through recycling and encouraging better sustainable evening and night-time transport options such as low-emission vehicles, cycling, and pedestrian-friendly routes.

CASE STUDY

Sustainable Waste Collection Supporting Westminster After Dark

Westminster City Council, in partnership with Veolia, has launched the UK's largest electric waste collection fleet, powered by the very waste it collects. Operating 24 hours a day, this fleet plays a crucial role in supporting Westminster's evening and night-time economy by efficiently managing waste while significantly reducing environmental and noise impacts. The initiative enhances the experience of residents, workers, and visitors by curbing noise pollution and improving air quality.

The quieter, zero-emission vehicles are particularly effective in high-traffic areas like Soho and Covent Garden, where late-night activities are central to Westminster's identity. These vehicles not only minimise noise disruption for residents but also contribute to drastically reducing Westminster's carbon footprint. Charging infrastructure at fully electric depots is powered by energy recovery facilities using waste collected from homes and businesses across Westminster, ensuring a closed-loop approach to sustainability.

By integrating cutting-edge technology and sustainable practices into essential city services, Westminster demonstrates its commitment to creating a cleaner, quieter, and more environmentally conscious urban environment after dark, setting an example for cities across the UK.

To find out more visit:**westminster.gov.uk/news/westminster-council-unveil-uks-largest-electric-waste-collection-fleet-powered-waste-they-collect**



How we will deliver environmentally sustainable and biodiversity across Westminster after dark

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.




SINGAPULAH
SINGAPULAH
ZERO EMISSIONS
City of Westminster
CLEAN STREETS
LOWERING OUR EMISSIONS FOR WESTMINSTER
boschung

Delivering this Strategy

The Council will play a critical role in shaping the evening and night-time environment and delivering this strategy through the following actions:

- Facilitator of Services: Providing essential infrastructure and ensuring compliance with regulations.
- Strategic Leader: Mobilising stakeholders to address priority issues and set strategic direction.
- Place Stewardship: Responding to the unique characteristics of Westminster's neighbourhoods with tailored services and solutions.
- Partnership Builder: Collaborating to deliver social and economic benefits.
- Insight-Driven Planner: Conducting research and engaging stakeholders to develop solutions.
- Community Advocate: Representing residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Enabler of Opportunities: Supporting businesses and communities through funding, resources, and equitable initiatives.

Innovation and Collaboration in Challenging Times

Challenging economic conditions and constrained public finances requires a united and innovative response.

By adopting a shared and joined-up approach, we will pool resources and expertise from a wide range of partners to tackle pressing issues such as public safety, environmental sustainability, and economic resilience. Through collaboration, we can maximise opportunities by playing to our strengths, while mitigating financial pressures, creating a more efficient and impactful strategy. This approach ensures Westminster's evening and night-time environment remains vibrant, inclusive, and climate-resilient, with the flexibility to adapt to evolving opportunities and challenges.

Implementation Plan

To ensure this strategy remains effective and adaptable over its 15-year span, we've committed to breaking it into three phases, each lasting five years.

This phased approach allows us to implement, review, and refine our actions as Westminster's evening and night-time environment evolves.

- We will develop an implementation plan for each five-year period, outlining specific initiatives based on emerging trends, feedback, and past successes.
- As we progress, the strategy will move through three phases:
  1. Foundation Phase (2025-2030) - establishing initial frameworks, partnerships, and pilot programmes.
  2. Expansion Phase (2030-2035) - scaling up successful initiatives from the Foundation Phase.
  3. Maturity Phase (2035-2040) - integrating further sustainability, cultural engagement, and economic resilience.
- This iterative process ensures we remain flexible and responsive, actively working toward a vibrant, safe, and inclusive Westminster after dark.

Collaboration and Leadership

Strong collaboration and leadership are essential for the successful delivery of this strategy.

We will take a leading role in coordinating efforts, ensuring the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors are balanced while enhancing Westminster's global reputation.



Monitoring and Evaluating Progress

We will work with all stakeholders to ensure a clear, structured approach to delivering the strategy:

1. **Plan the delivery:** We will develop an implementation plan that sets out the roles, responsibilities, and timelines to guide delivery.
2. **Set Clear Objectives:** we will define measurable goals to ensure focus and alignment, providing benchmarks for success.
3. **Take Action:** We will implement the necessary steps to achieve the objectives.
4. **Monitor and Evaluate:** We will regularly assess progress by collecting data, analysing results, and gathering feedback from stakeholders.
5. **Adjust and Improve:** We will use evaluation insights to refine actions and ensure continuous improvement.
6. **Learn and Reflect:** We will apply lessons learned to improve future initiatives and strengthen delivery.

Westminster After Dark Advisory Group (WADAG)

We will create a Westminster After Dark Advisory Group (WADAG) who will play a vital role in supporting the successful delivery of this strategy.

Comprising a diverse mix of stakeholders with a vested interest in Westminster's evening and night-time environment, the group will bring together representatives from the Council, Business, the Police, residents, visitors, workers, cultural institutions, and community organisations. This broad membership will serve as a strategic sounding board, ensuring the strategy remains adaptive, well-balanced, and aligned with the needs of all those invested in Westminster after dark.

WADAG will actively monitor the implementation of the strategy, providing feedback on proposed and ongoing actions, identifying new opportunities, and addressing emerging challenges. By fostering collaboration between public, private, and community stakeholders, the group will help shape a coordinated approach to delivering the strategy's objectives.


CARNABY
LONDON
Bohemian
Rhapsody
Open your eyes
Look up to the skies
The Kooples

Aligning with Existing Council Strategies and Policies

This strategy will complement and support other policies, frameworks, and initiatives that shape Westminster's evening and night-time environment, ensuring a cohesive and integrated approach to the city's development after dark.

It will align with existing strategies related to public safety, culture, economic growth, transport, environmental sustainability, and public health, reinforcing shared objectives and enhancing their impact on Westminster after dark.

However, this strategy will not override or supersede any formally adopted statutory policies or strategies. Instead, it will operate within the existing regulatory landscape, providing a guiding framework that informs decision-making while respecting established legal and policy requirements. Where appropriate, it will influence and contribute to future policy development, ensuring that Westminster's evening and night-time environment evolves in a way that remains responsive to local needs, supports responsible growth, and enhances the city's reputation as a global cultural and economic hub.

The following strategies will compliment and support the following existing strategies, policies, plans and charters:

- Fairer Westminster Strategy 2022 - 2026
- City Plan 2019 - 2040
- Licensing Policy (Licensing Act 2003) 2021 - 2026
- Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021 - 2040
- Sustainable Transport Strategy (new version in consultation)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2023 - 2028
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2033
- Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2016 - 2031
- Paddington Public Realm Strategy 2023
- Greening and Biodiversity Strategy 2024
- Cultural Strategy 2021 - 2025
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (new version in consultation)
- Cost of Living Strategy 2022
- Public Realm Strategy (SPD) (new version in consultation)
- Responsible Procurement and Commissioning Strategy 2022 – 2026
- Cycle Strategy 2014

- Walking Strategy 2017 - 2027
- Noise Strategy 2010
- Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy 2024 – 2027
- Children and Young People Drugs Strategy 2023 – 2026
- Air Quality Action Plan (new version in consultation)
- Our Plan for a Fairer Economy 2022
- Greener City Action Plan 2015 – 2025
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2021
- Westminster Community Participation Charter 2024

These strategies, policies, plans and charters were active at the time this strategy was published.







Westminster After Dark
Strategy 2025 – 2040

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