



Action Plan 2024–2025

Developing Longford's after-dark culture, community and economy



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Welcome to the *Longford Night-Time Economy Action Plan*. I am delighted to introduce this new action plan marking an exciting time in the development of Longford’s after-dark culture and community. This initiative outlines Longford County Council’s (LCC) commitment to enhancing the town’s night-time economy, supported by the appointment of a dedicated night-time economy advisor. Guided by the *Night-Time Economy Taskforce Report* (published in September 2021) and aligned with strategic frameworks such as the *Longford County Council Corporate Plan 2024–2029*, this plan is designed to create an inclusive, diverse, dynamic, and sustainable night-time economy.

Our vision is clear: to establish Longford as a vibrant place at any time of the day. We want to create a welcoming home that is a bustling destination where work, culture, community, and connection thrive. To bring this vision to life our pilot initiative includes a number of objectives:

- Develop an inclusive and vibrant space to enhance the local area, in which every voice can be heard.
- To design and deliver a cohesive action plan that reflects the unique needs for Longford’s residents and visitors that tailors to all timeframes and age groups.
- Creating a lasting framework that can inform ongoing work within LCC to support the night-time economy and emphasise collaboration, innovation, and sustainability with stakeholders.

Longford County Council is dedicated to the successful implementation and execution of this action plan. It would not be possible without the engagement of the night-time economy stakeholders, whose vision has been instrumental in shaping it. I would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our funding partners, community groups, and council departments for providing continued support and championing specific actions. The combination of your passion and commitment will drive Longford’s Night-Time Economy to new heights. As we embark on this new, exciting adventure, let us work together to craft a Longford that is full of creativity and opportunity at night time.

Here’s to a livelier, brighter, and more connected Longford, day and night!

Karen Reilly

NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY ADVISOR

Longford County Council



Almost Famous
PHOTO: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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Longford Lights Festival 2024
PHOTO: LISSETTE CARCAMO



A Message from Chief Executive

I am delighted to present the *Longford Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2024-2025*, a strategic framework aimed at enhancing and enriching the cultural, economic, and social vibrancy of Longford town after dark.

This plan represents a bold step forward in recognising the vital role that a thriving night-time economy plays in supporting local businesses, encouraging cultural expression, and creating an inclusive and safe environment for residents and visitors alike.

Developed through extensive consultation and engagement with stakeholders, community groups, and local businesses, this plan reflects the aspirations and priorities of the people of Longford. It builds upon the solid foundation laid by the *Longford County Council Corporate Plan 2024-2029* and aligns with the national *Night-Time Economy Taskforce Report*.

We are committed to implementing this plan with the support of our partners to ensure Longford Town becomes a model for innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity in Ireland's Night-Time Economy. The three pillars outlined—Cultural Activity, Mobility and Transport and Safety and Security—will guide our actions and deliver tangible results for our community.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to this plan. Your insights, ideas and enthusiasm have been invaluable in shaping this roadmap for the future.

Together we can make Longford's Night-Time Economy a cornerstone of our cultural and economic development ensuring it continues to grow and thrive for years to come.

Paddy Mahon
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Longford County Council



A Message from Director of Services

Longford's *Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2024-2025* presents an exciting vision for the future of Longford Town. It highlights our commitment to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and safe night-time culture that benefits residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Through collaboration with industry and agency partners, innovation, and investment, we aim to create opportunities for cultural expression, social engagement, and economic growth.

This plan sets out clear actions to enhance our towns appeal from early evening, creating a vibrancy that will see Longford Town as a place where people of all ages have extra reason to visit, dwell and enjoy all that we have to offer.

Micheal Nevin
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
Longford County Council



Fox (Spirit from the Underworld)
Samhan Town Procession 2024



Background

What is the night-time economy? By definition 'the night-time economy refers to the diverse, social, cultural and economic activities occurring during specified evening and night time hours. It balances the needs of the inter-related communities that co-exist to bring it to life and create a special sense of shared space'. A vibrant night-time economy thrives, from 6pm onward with a variety of activities that cater to all ages at varying stages of the evening and night-time hours, supported by effective transport and a compact public sphere.

The development of the night-time economy in Ireland has emerged as a response to support the sectors that have been affected following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media have established a multi-agency task force to address the barrier to create a night-time culture as a part of the Programme for Government.

The aim of this is to create a diverse and dynamic night-time economy in line with the *Night-Time Economy Taskforce Report*, which was published in September 2021. This report outlines practical recommendations, which can be utilised to address challenges with licensing, planning, safety, transport, regulations, and the diversification of night time spaces. This response is focused on the long-term development of an inclusive and sustainable nightlife which includes recovery of the sector and improvement in the local area.

A key recommendation from this report was the establishment of Night-Time Economy pilot programmes with the appointment of night-time economy advisors, which included Longford. We are now committed to lead by example and share a space that is vibrant and inclusive with a bustling night-time economy.



**Cathedral View
Supper Club—
From Ballymaloe
to Cathedral View**
Host Geraldine Stewart
with special guest
Rachel Allen
PHOTO: FRANK MCGRATH

Policy Context



County Longford is located at the heart of the midlands and holds place as Ireland’s fourth smallest county. County Longford covers an area of 1,091km² and is bordered by County Westmeath, County Cavan, County Roscommon, and County Leitrim. When considered in a more regional context County Longford falls within the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly administrative boundary. More than that, Longford has a rich history—a vital component to the county’s identity and a legacy that can be honoured by an increasing population in the county. Between 2016 and 2022, Longford saw an increase in population by 14.4%, the highest population growth in the country, with a total population of 46,751 people.

Longford has a central location in the country with rail and bus links to major cities such as Dublin and Sligo, along with links to airports between 80–90 minutes away. 3rd level institutions can be found in Athlone, Maynooth, Dundalk, Dublin, Galway and Sligo, which are all within 90 minutes of Longford Town. According to the resident population of the Census 2022 Electoral Division data, within a 30-minute catchment area (by car) from Longford, there is a population of 69,244 and a labour force of 32,210 people. Within 60 minutes of Longford, the occupational sectors are dominated by professional services, commerce and trade.

Longford boasts a beautiful landscape that offers a mix of natural beauty and cultural heritage, perfect for exploration and relaxation. The environment consists of rivers, boglands, hills and agricultural land. The Royal Canal Greenway consists of 130km of scenic trails, offering a mix of walking and cycling routes through Longford’s picturesque landscapes and charming towns. Longford continues to be dedicated to reaching Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions targets to decrease to 22%–30% from 36% by 2030. Longford is making strides towards a more sustainable future, including the adoption of sustainable night time culture. The *Longford Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2024–2026* for Longford Town is being led by the **Night-Time Economy Advisor** with the support of the

Longford night-time economy stakeholders, the **Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media**, and **Longford County Council**.

The *Longford Town Night-Time Economy Action Plan* is based on a principle of collaboration between stakeholders to accomplish key visions and to take action to realise the potential of the night-time economy in Longford. In doing so, the value of the ongoing work will increase for stakeholders. This pilot programme is a new, innovative, and exciting opportunity for Longford town, and gives us the chance to establish equally exciting initiatives and collaborations. By implementing this pilot programme, the experience can be used as a learning opportunity for the development of a longer-term sustainable night time economy.

To make this plan possible, the development of a night-time economy stakeholder forum was key. An engagement session was held to represent the various businesses, organisations, arts, culture, sport, economic and community sectors who act as stakeholders and reflect a diverse range of perspectives on the night time economy. A list of these stakeholders can be found in the Appendix. These stakeholders have played a vital role in the development of this plan, and we wish to extend our thanks for their contributions, feedback, constructive criticisms, and their continued engagement to date. This document hopes to serve as a means to identify

and implement practical solutions to enhance our night-time economy that can be achieved throughout the two-year period for this trial. This action plan has been informed by research from business and public surveys, stakeholders forums and the development of the Longford County Council Night-Time Economy working group within Longford County Council. This grassroots project shaped by local and national stakeholders and overseen by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, and Longford County Council will complement national level policies and programmes that are trickling from the ‘top down’ to ensure strong alignment at the national and regional level for Longford Town. Some of these policies include:

- Longford County Council Corporate Plan 2024–2029
- Longford Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2024–2028
- Longford County Development Plan 2021–2027
- County Longford Arts Strategy 2023–2027
- County Longford Tourism Strategy 2023–2027
- County Longford Local Economic and Community Plan 2023–2029
- Longford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024–2029

Although these plans are related to the local government and council activities and obligations, there is limited specific data relevant to the night-time economy. As this information at a national and local level remains a challenge, this pilot programme aims to collect data that can inform future development decisions. This data can include but is not limited to:

- Local surveys
- Social media reports
- Economic data (if available)
- Consumer surveys
- Post event surveys
- Local statistics

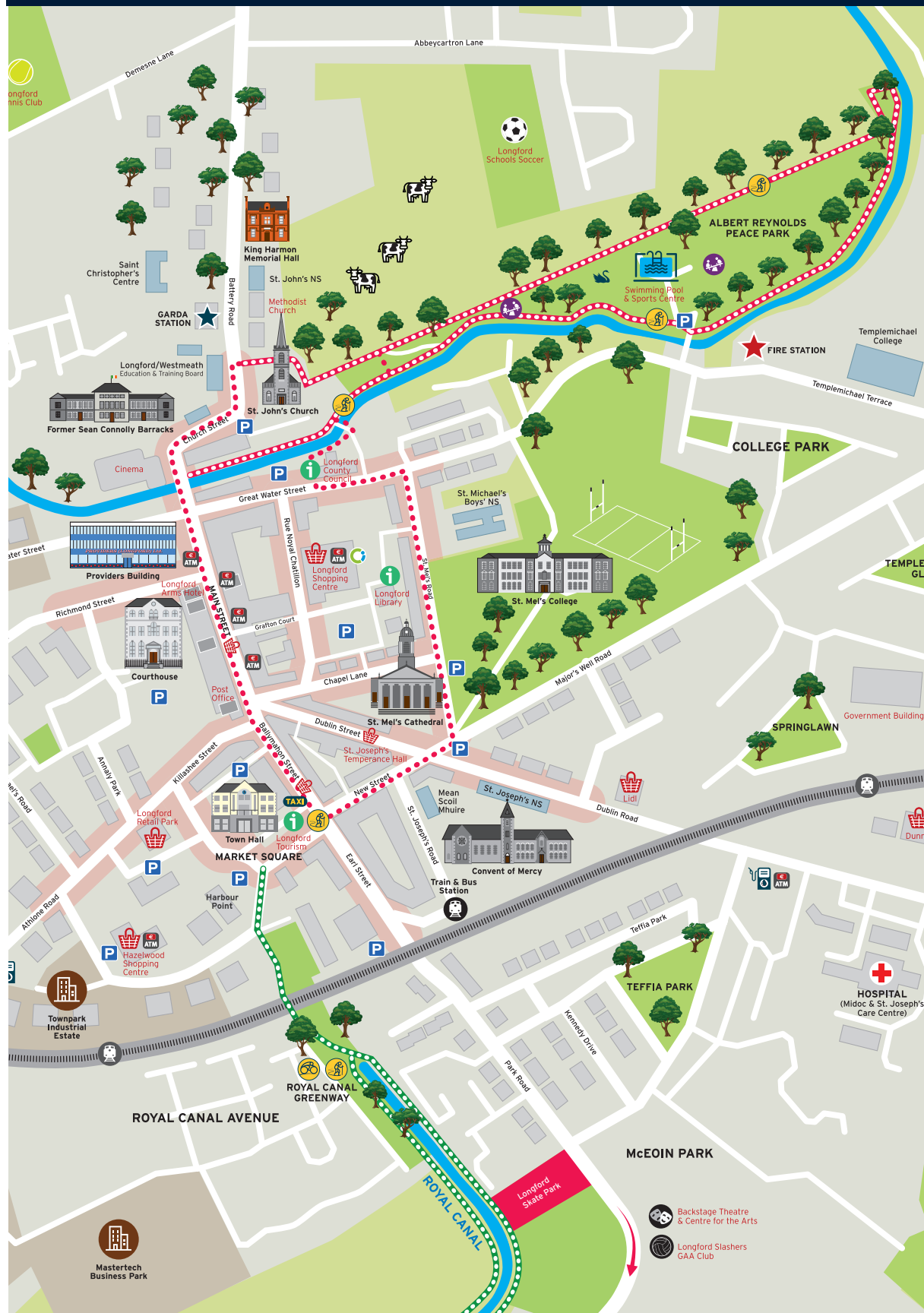
A sustainable night-time economy can largely benefit the locale by providing enrichment within the community, engagement with varying cultures, opportunities for tourism and economic growth, and additional events and festivals. Measuring the success of this pilot plan will be crucial to determine the impact of these benefits, and to ensure that future aspirations can be achieved under this vision.

Key metrics for the success of this pilot programme can be determined by looking at:

- Survey finding
- Resident surveys
- Visitor sentiments
- Attendance at events
- A broader range of events
- Transport availability at night time
- Economic benefits for businesses
- Improved social infrastructure
- Increased footfall
- A large voice for Longford County Council’s night-time economy

Funding streams will be a necessary requirement for the development of a night time economy and such requirements have been outlined within the plan. The Night-Time Economy Advisor will work closely with Longford County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Stakeholders will also be involved to ensure appropriate funding streams are identified. Partnerships and new collaborations can also be founded to provide a long-term sustainable and viable solution or the night time economy in Longford Town and surrounding areas. By using these opportunities and outlined actions for the development of the Longford Night-Time Economy a platform can be provided for a new and exciting era for the evening and night time in Longford.

Longford Town



Longford Culture Night
PHOTO: ADRIAN WROBEL

Our Vision



We aim to make Longford Town a welcoming destination for evenings and night time, where residents and visitors of all ages and cultures can feel included and enjoy a sustainable, vibrant and diverse environment.

To promote the night-time economy in Longford Town we need to think bold. The night-time economy for Longford needs to be completely reimagined and reinvented to define what it means for us and what it can contribute to the local area. To do this we need to engage with the community and think about how we can provide a space in a night-time economy that is inclusive, engaging, diverse and safe. Often the night-time economy has associations that are negatively aligned. People consider anti-social behaviour, late night closing times for clubs and bars and increased alcohol consumption. This plan is committed to changing the narrative for Longford’s night-time economy and wants to work to consider a more balanced and inclusive approach that will accurately reflect the cultural, social and societal changes that we have experienced in Longford Town in a post-pandemic era. By generating a positive economic, social, and recreational environment in which cultural activities and inclusive spaces are provided, this plan aims to change the view of the town’s night-time economy.

Through stakeholder engagement and agreement from Longford County Council, the aspirations for Longford’s’ night-time economy were carefully crafted and considered.



Dead of Night Festival

Our Ambition



Strategic Objectives and Key Pillars



As we consulted there were several themes that recurred relating to the development of the night-time economy. Five key pillars were identified for Longford Town's Night-Time Economy, where we can focus on impactful initiatives that are achievable within the timeframe of the pilot programme. These pillars and their corresponding objectives are outlined as follows:

Pillar 1

Placemaking

Develop inclusive, safe, and vibrant spaces that enhance local culture, attract diverse audiences, and stimulate economic activity to foster sustainable and lively community engagement.

This pillar focuses on enhancing infrastructure, accessibility, and opportunities to make Longford's Night-Time economy inclusive and vibrant. By embedding the night-time economy into the development of Longford Town, plans can focus on breathing a new life into the area and sustaining this regeneration. Key actions will include improving the public realm, (particularly cohesion and functionality), utilise vacant spaces for pop-ups, and expanding the public transport network to provide more access to the town at night.

This pillar will prioritise security and safety, to reduce negative perceptions of Longford town at night and to provide a safe environment by utilising trained personnel and security. Providing training to late-night businesses and organisations can also increase the safety within the town. Innovation and education will be pivotal to help support businesses who wish to capitalise based on the night-time economy activities that will foster, creativity through art, new programmes and culture.

Longford's Night-Time Economy will highlight activities that are community-driven, which will increase opportunities for residents to support evening events. Efforts will be made for open funding calls and initiatives to develop events. We also want to expand the food and retail offering to ensure an engaging experience for visitors and residents.

Pillar 2

Safety and Security

Ensure that Longford is a safe and welcoming place for all by enhancing safety and security measures.

We want Longford's Night-Time Economy to be both perceived as safe, and a safe and welcoming environment for everyone. Addressing the safety concerns for residents and visitors who engage in night-time activities is key to fostering confidence within the town.

Efforts will also be focused on reducing the negative perceptions of Longford as being an unsafe place at night by enhancing security measures during both the evening and night-time hours. This will include visible improvements such as an increase in lighting in public behaviour, increasing the garda presence, and a strategic surveillance programme. In addition, training programmes will be offered to late-night businesses and local groups to equip them with the knowledge and the necessary skills for effective safety management. Combined, these initiatives will contribute to creating a source of security, and an inclusive environment that will encourage more participation in Longford's Night-Time Economy.

Pillar 3

Events and Activities

Foster innovation and creativity at the heart of Longford's Night-Time Economy.

Fostering innovation and creativity in Longford's Night-Time Economy and embracing new ideas will help position Longford town as a place

of rich culture and heritage with night-time economy at the heart. By creating new and vibrant opportunities for innovative thinking and imaginative programme development.

An open call to build local organization capacity, will support the development of events and initiatives. These activities will include working with libraries, local sports partnership, and arts, heritage and Culture Ireland to cater to a diverse audience to enhance the overall offering of Longford's Night-Time Economy.

Improving the food scene and encouraging business to pilot a late evening trial to extend their opening hours and provide more availability for dining and café experiences. By creating opportunities for local communities to develop evening events that are supported by the right channels, it will allow the night-time economy to remain dynamic and inclusive, reflecting the character and uniqueness of Longford Town.

Pillar 4

Communications and Viability

Drive awareness of the myriads of activities available in Longford at night time through inclusive outreach strategies.

This pillar focuses on enhancing the viability and the outwards appeal of Longford's Night-Time Economy. Through communication and targeted marketing strategies by a newly established Night-Time Economy Marketing Group. This group will be central for ensuring there is a concise and consistent plan for promotional efforts that will drive impactful marketing.

This communication strategy will highlight Longford's night time economy and create a unified message that will resonate with residents and visitors. This pillar's efforts will focus on reaching a wider audience, diversify media channels and engage with new and emerging talent and communities in Longford to create a new vision of Longford's night time economy.

A key initiative will be the creation for a 'What's On' for Longford at night to provide a comprehensive guide to the evening and night time events, activities, and experiences across the town. This will be a vital resource to inform audiences and attract tourists whilst showcasing a vibrant Longford Night-Time Economy.

Pillar 5

Sustainability

Deliver a strong, inclusive partnership for the successful long-term growth of Longford's Night Time Economy.

A sustainable night-Time economy for Longford Town and a successful implementation of the *Longford Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2024-2025* will be possible using robust structures, by fostering collaboration in the community and by utilising inclusive partnerships. A dedicated Night-Time Economy Development Steering Group will be created to drive the implementation of the action plan and ensure that all objectives are supported and met with effective resource. By talking to existing businesses, there will be a strong foundation for a vibrant night-time economy, that will generate more 'buy-in' and engagement.

Promoting inclusive collaboration and partnerships that outwardly reflect the diverse community we have in Longford will be a cornerstone for this pillar and will cultivate a sense of community and a shared purpose. Positive networks within the community in Longford will provide a strong groundwork for long-term innovation and growth in the night-time economy, ensuring its success and relevance over time.

Implementation of the Action Plan



Pillar 1—Placemaking

	Objective	Actions	Outcome/Deliverables	Partners/Leads	Timeline
1.1	Sustain regeneration and development efforts across the town and embed NTE development in town planning.	<p>Continue to invest and focus on town development and regeneration agenda.</p> <p>Improve/develop parks facilities to promote outdoor recreation and evening use.</p> <p>Identify social, non-alcohol-related spaces to accommodate a range of activities from daytime work gatherings to evening social events and social interaction for different users.</p> <p>Enhance the Mall area and skateboard park to create vibrant recreational and social spaces.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to establish a youth cafe as a safe and engaging environment for young people.</p>	<p>Number of projects completed.</p> <p>Youth Café established.</p>	<p>LCC Infrastructure Team</p> <p>LCC Community/Environment</p>	2024–2025
1.2	Include the voice of all communities in development plans for NTE.	<p>Ensure inclusivity as key focus, reflecting the needs of diverse communities and fostering a sense of belonging in the town.</p> <p>Deliver on autism-friendly spaces.</p>	<p>Plans, policies and NTE events and experiences developed with inclusivity at their core.</p> <p>Autism-friendly spaces available.</p>	<p>NTE / Local Authority Depts</p> <p>LCC Infrastructure team</p>	2024–2025
1.3	Enhance functionality of existing public realm and create a visually cohesive environment that attracts both residents and visitors.	<p>Continue to support businesses in enhancing the presentation of shop fronts and enforce guidelines.</p> <p>Improve of and add to existing street furniture.</p> <p>Enhance aesthetic appeal of Pig Market Lane.</p>	<p>Improvements in consistency and coordination of the town's streetscape.</p> <p>New street furniture and improved public realm.</p> <p>Improved public realm.</p>	<p>NTE / Local Authority Depts</p> <p>LCC Infrastructure team</p>	2024–2025

Pillar 1—Placemaking contd.

	Objective	Actions	Outcome/Deliverables	Partners/Leads	Timeline
1.4	Educate existing businesses to capitalise on opportunities presented by the night-time economy.	<p>Build relationships with business groupings to further identify opportunities for collaboration and cross promotion.</p> <p>Incentivise businesses to actively participate in community events and initiatives to drive economic growth.</p>	<p>Cross promotional offers and activities between businesses.</p>	<p>NTE / Businesses / Chamber</p> <p>NTE Advisor</p>	2024–2025
1.5	Utilise pop up spaces in vacant buildings to revitalise underutilised areas in the town.	<p>Work with agency partners and local businesses to develop opportunities for using underutilised spaces (new uses for NTE).</p> <p>Work with RTI / Local Link to develop new routes / timetables to align with NTE developments.</p>		<p>NTE / Local Authority Depts</p> <p>NTE Advisor</p>	2024–2025
1.6	Enhance public transport options to facilitate access to and from the town at night.	<p>Assess potential for pilot with local bus provider to facilitate late night drop off to identified out of town locations.</p> <p>Initiate active travel improvements with designated cycle lanes.</p> <p>Increase access to more taxis for town at night.</p>		<p>NTE Advisor</p> <p>LCC Infrastructure team</p> <p>LCC Community / Environment</p>	2024–2025

Pillar 2—Safety and Security

	Objective	Actions	Outcome/Deliverables	Partners/Leads	Timeline
2.1	Promote a positive perception of Longford as a safe and welcoming destination at night.	Develop a communications strategy to promote a welcoming and secure night-time experience in Longford, aiming to inform and engage potential NTE users.	NTE communications strategy.	NTE Marketing Forum LCSP Longford Tourism	2024–2025
2.2	Strengthen safety measures during the evening and night to promote a secure and confident environment.	<p>Increase Garda visibility and presence during the evening and night time, encouraging a sense of safety and community engagement.</p> <p>Enhance public lighting to create brighter, more inviting spaces that encourage positive interactions and activities.</p> <p>Collaborate with local safety groups to proactively address community concerns and strengthen confidence in the towns safety measures.</p> <p>Work with Garda Youth Diversion Project to develop pilot opportunities for engaging young people in alternative activities during the evening and night time.</p>	<p>Additional Garda patrols.</p> <p>Improved public lighting.</p> <p>Workshops with local groups</p> <p>New GYDP project initiatives.</p>	NTE / Gardai NTE Advisor LCSP	2024–2025
2.3	Provide training for safety management for late-night opening businesses.	<p>Assess outputs from other NTE approaches to devise scenario best suited to Longford's needs.</p> <p>Engage NTE related businesses to attend NTE Safety Programme.</p>	<p>Safety training delivered.</p> <p>Communications to maximise attendance.</p>	NTE Advisor NTE / Businesses / Chamber	2024–2025

Pillar 3—Events and Activities

	Objective	Actions	Outcome/Deliverables	Partners/Leads	Timeline
3.1	Create opportunities for innovation and fresh thinking in NTE programme development.	<p>Utilise outputs from NTE stakeholder engagement and idea generation sessions to drive programmatic and events.</p> <p>Maximise use of libraries as cultural hubs in hosting evening events.</p>	New programmes and activities delivered for NTE audiences.	NTE Advisor	2024–2025
3.2	Position the arts and cultural fabric of the town as a central element for NTE activity development.	<p>Work with Arts, Heritage and Creative Ireland coordinators to align potential and develop replicable NTE programmes and events.</p> <p>Promote youth engagement through Backstage Youth Theatre.</p>	<p>Plans, policies and NTE events and experiences developed with inclusivity at their core.</p> <p>Autism-friendly spaces available.</p>	NTE Advisor Arts, Heritage	2024–2025
3.3	Develop an annual open call for funding to support evening activities and events.	Hold event development workshop / ideation session as element for open call to build capacity in local organisation to develop engaging programmes and activities.	<p>Workshop and open call.</p> <p>New NTE activities.</p>	NTE Marketing Forum	2024–2025
3.4	Develop evening sports, well-being and holistic events and activities.	<p>Develop collaborative initiatives with local sports clubs and societies.</p> <p>Work with the local sports partnership to increase night park runs etc, and sports related social gatherings to promote physical well-being.</p>	New NTE activities.	Sports Partners	2024–2025
3.5	Improve evening and night time food offer in the town.	Work with existing businesses to develop an evening and late-night cafe offer.	New evening late-night coffee offer.	NTE / Businesses / Chamber	2024–2025

Pillar 3—Events and Activities contd.

	Objective	Actions	Outcome/Deliverables	Partners/Leads	Timeline
3.6	Increase the number of retail businesses open at night.	Work with Chamber of Commerce and Local Authority partners to promote opportunities for free parking for late-night shopping. Develop a pilot initiative for late night shopping 1 or 2 evenings per week each week.	New late-night shopping offer.	NTE / Businesses / Chamber	2024–2025
3.7	Increase opportunities for communities to develop supported evening activities and events	Create a register of interest for community LED or organisational lead activities which take place in the evening and night-time economy.	Plans, policies and NTE events and experiences developed with inclusivity at their core. Autism-friendly spaces available.	LCC Community / Environment	2024–2025



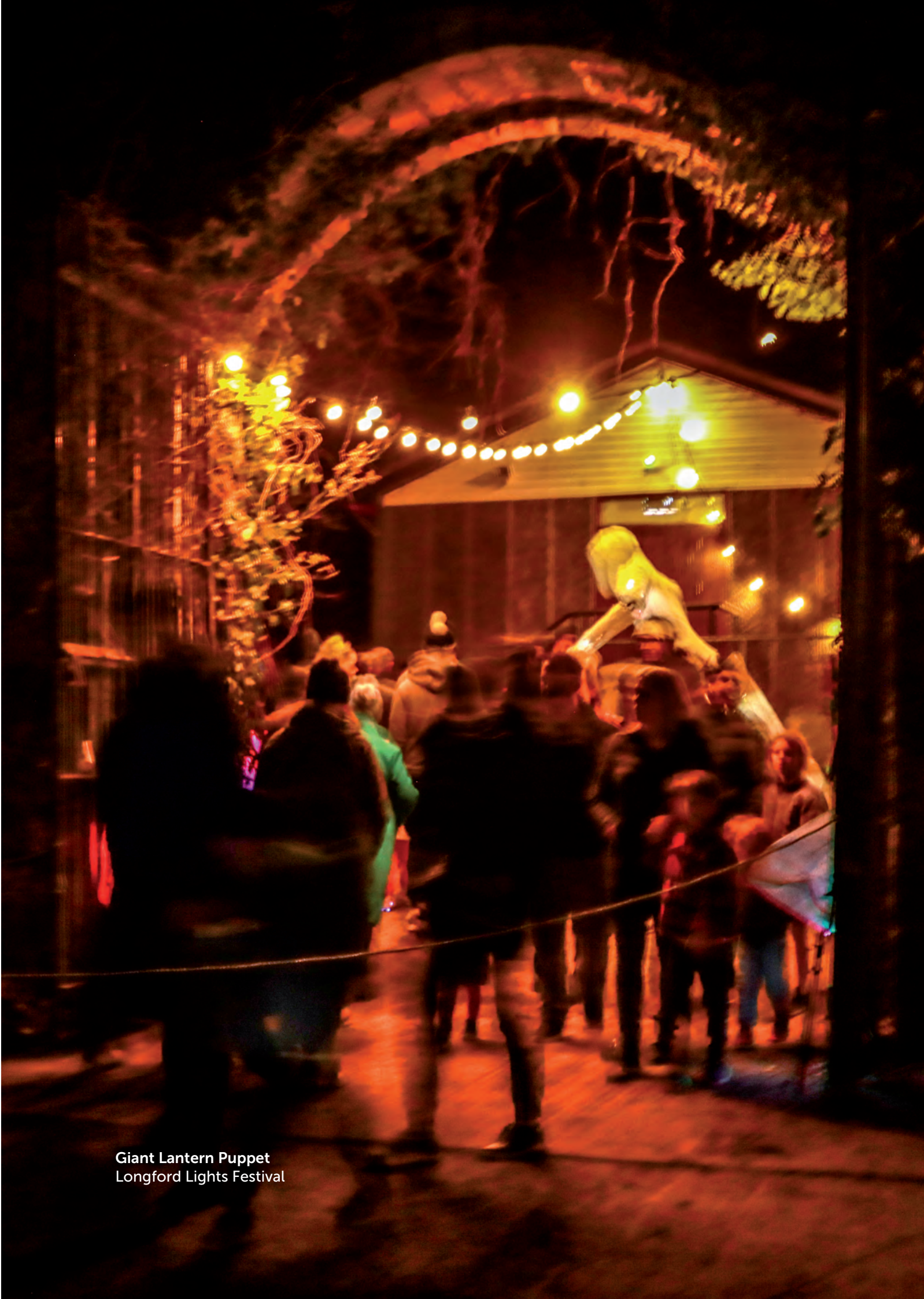
Cal Y Canto Teatro
Longford Lights Festival
PHOTO: LISSETTE CARCAMO

Pillar 4—Communications and Viability

	Objective	Actions	Outcome/Deliverables	Partners/Leads	Timeline
4.1	Create an NTE Marketing Group to progress marketing actions for NTE development.	Identify key stakeholder for inclusion on Marketing Group and develop working group for NTE activation.	NTE marketing Group in place.	NTE Advisor	2024–2025
4.2	Develop a coherent communications strategy for NTE.	Develop key messages around NTE development which inspires and engages all audiences and potential NTE users. Develop communications material which educates communities on what constitutes the nighttime economy. Create positive messaging around the value of NTE to the town to cultivate a local audience for NTE engagement. Connect with audiences across all media channels. Improve public perceptions around safety and security as a critical communications message.	New communications strategy for NTE developed.	NTE Marketing Forum	2024–2025
4.3	Seek opportunities to widen audience reach across all media channels and those which integrate new communities.	Utilise locally-based social media influencers to reach diverse audiences. Seek resource to support marketing and promotional function for NTE. Utilise local authority social and communication channels to promote events activities and experiences.	Promotional output on multiple channels.	NTE / Local Authority Depts NTE Advisor	2024–2025
4.4	Create a 'What's On' for Longford at Night.	Utilise existing platforms for What's On. Design cross-promotional events to interconnect differing night-time economy experiences for different audiences.		NTE Marketing Forum	2024–2025

Pillar 5—Sustainability

	Objective	Actions	Outcome/Deliverables	Partners/Leads	Timeline
5.1	Effectively resource the objectives of this action plan for NTE development to ensure suitability and growth of a vibrant. NTE	Ensure financial backing and internal LCC departmental cooperation for NTE development success.	Appropriate resources in place to deliver ambition of action plan.	NTE / Local Authority Depts	2024–2025
5.2	Create an NTE Steering Group to drive implementation of the action plan for night-time economy development.	Ensure a broad spectrum of stakeholder focus on NTE Development Steering Group.	NTE Steering Group established and operational.	NTE Advisor	2024–2025
5.3	Work with existing businesses to create additional buy in to the night-time economy.	Meet with businesses and business groupings to achieve effective buy in.	Evidence of new NTE activities.	NTE / Businesses / Chamber	2024–2025
5.4	Promote inclusive collaborations and partnerships which reflect the town's diverse population.	Work with young and inclusion agency partners to develop programmes and activities related to NTE development.	New collaborations.	NTE Advisor	2024–2025
5.5	Cultivate positive networks to drive NTE development over time.	Develop connectivity and nurture engagement opportunities with community groups, age active groups, tidy towns initiative sports organisations local enterprises and businesses sports partnership and community safety partnership.	Community involvement.	LCC Community / Environment	2024–2025



Giant Lantern Puppet
Longford Lights Festival

Monitoring and Evaluation



We look forward to the successful implementation of the *Longford Town Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2024-2025*. Priority actions outlined in the plan will be monitored, as this will be crucial in ensuring the adaptability and success of the implementation. It will be important to capitalise on local and national funding opportunities that align with the plan’s pillars and objectives. Regular engagement with Longford County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, along with the Night-Time Economy Stakeholder Forum will allow continuous review and assessment of the plan. Proper monitoring and evaluation will help us maximise the impact of this plan and its effectiveness over time.

Responsibilities

This plan was approved by Longford County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. These authorities have overall responsibility for the Night-Time Economy Action Plan for Longford Town, with the support of the Stakeholder Forum. The agreement by the stakeholders will ensure a broad representation for all residents and visitors in Longford Town.

The local authority and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, will provide ongoing support to the Night Time-Economy Advisor. They will also provide funding and guidance in relation to the process as it is required. The daily role of the Night-Time Advisor involves the following:

- Pilot administration.
- Manage and coordinate progress reports to be signed off by the Stakeholder Forum and presented to the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and Longford County Council.
- Prepare an agenda for stakeholder meetings and organise such meetings.
- Overall management of the Night-Time Economy Action Plan and the delivery and implementation of the plan.

Stakeholder meetings will be held quarterly to review the progress and update reports on the implementation of the action plan. Key Point Indicators will be specified and used to provide reports to the stakeholder forum. In circumstances where outputs cannot be quantified, a summary of the data and/or performance will be provided.

Monitoring Outputs

Progress reports will be provided to Longford County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media by the Stakeholder Forum on behalf of the forum that will outline the following:

- Progress on actions per annum.
- An overall progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan and a comprehensive list of recommendations for the sustainability of the night time economy for Longford Town.

Optionally, they may contain:

- Where data is available, an updated statistical data report will be provided once measured.
- Additional objectives that have been agreed on by the Stakeholder Forum and any updates may also be provided.



Haunted House Scene
Dead of Night Festival

Looking Ahead



The *Longford Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2024-2025* represents a forward-thinking and inclusive strategy to transform the town into a vibrant and thriving place to be after dark. By focusing on key pillars, we aim to enhance infrastructure, innovation, safety, partnerships and culture within Longford. This plan will lay a solid foundation for the sustainable growth of the Night-Time Economy in Longford.

The success of this initiative will be determined by the efforts of all stakeholders, including the community, businesses, and residents of Longford Town. By working together and becoming collaborative, adaptable, and creative, we can create a night time economy that reflects the potential of Longford Town and will help to revitalise Longford Town.

As we embark on this exciting journey, we remain incredibly committed to engaging with the community, and evaluating our ongoing efforts. We wish to strengthen the community and pursue opportunities that will expand these efforts. By working together, we believe that Longford can become a place full of energy, connection, and innovation during both the day and the night.





Development Outputs of a Stakeholder Engagement Session

11th June 2024

This document presents the outcomes of a stakeholder engagement session for the development of a nighttime economy in Longford Town which was held on Tuesday 26 June 2024 at the Longford Arms Hotel in Longford Town.

Environmental Analysis

The session opened with a welcome by night-time economy facilitator Dymphna Reilly and this was followed by an interactive working session assessing the environment and ecosystem of Longford Town as it pertains to the development of the town an enhancing in the night-time economy within the town.

The workshop intent was to understand the differing perspectives of stakeholders from across business local county councils and local authority structures community representatives and elected representatives, to hear their views in relation to nighttime economy development and to assess the core areas and strategic priorities for development from their perspective for a successful night-time economy to be delivered in the town.

The key areas discussed in the session were:

- Audiences / Customers
- Stakeholders / Funders
- Infrastructure
- Resources and Sustainability
- Placemaking
- Collaborations and Partnerships
- Visibility and Communications
- Programming activities and events

Session Outputs

Central to the discussion was the concept of Longford County Council as a destination with significant value for the people of local area and the wider county. Creating relevance for customers was identified as crucial, with a strong emphasis placed on developing a clear narrative about the value that Longford Night-Time Economy represents to different audiences. The following pages provide an overview of the outputs of the environmental analysis element of the session under each of the areas considered.

Audiences / Customers

For the development of the night-time economy in Longford, it is essential to consider the diverse and multi-generational audience. The identified customer groupings include:

- Young Adults (18 to 30 year olds)
- Youth Groups
- Community Members of All Ages
- Residents of Longford Town and County
- People with Disabilities or Mobility Issues
- Visitors to the County
- Families
- Ticket Buyers for Events
- Retirees

Stakeholders / Funders

To ensure the successful development of the nighttime economy in Longford, it is essential to involve a broad range of stakeholders and funders. These include:

- Longford County Council
- Local Sports Partnership
- LEADER Development Company
- Training Stakeholders
- Garda Diversion Youth Projects
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Initiatives
- Creative Ireland
- Purple Flag
- Local Area Partnership
- Sports Island
- Fáilte Ireland
- Just Transition Fund
- Business Community
- Community Groups
- Sporting Organisations
- Event Organisations

The development ecosystem must reference existing plans and policies for Longford County and Longford Town. Key plans for review and alignment include:

- Local Area Plan
- Town First Plan
- Transport Plan
- Tidy Towns Initiative
- Creative Ireland Plan
- Other Relevant Plans and Policies Including Longford Town

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure improvements crucial for enhancing the night-time economy development in Longford include a variety of essential elements discussed in the session.
- To encourage social interaction and provide resting areas, there is a need to increase seating options throughout the town.
- Equally important are high-quality, well-maintained footpaths that ensure safe and accessible walkways for pedestrians.
- Enhanced public transport options are vital for facilitating seamless movement to and from the town centre, along with active travel improvements—well-lit streets, designated cycle lanes and secure bike parking.
- Addressing the town's accessibility—more car parks with clear signage are necessary to improve navigation and accessibility.
- Cultural and heritage spaces dedicated to activities and displays, particularly those engaging youth, are essential for enriching the night-time experience.
- Flexible public spaces adaptable for various events are also critical for fostering community engagement.
- Maintaining a pleasant environment which includes regular cleaning and upkeep of streets, alongside providing additional public toilet facilities to meet the needs of residents and visitors alike.
- Repurposing existing buildings for cultural events and community activities enhances the town's cultural vibrancy.
- The proposed development of Connolly Barracks represents a significant infrastructure project poised to further bolster Longford's amenities.
- Promoting libraries as cultural hubs capable of hosting events and cultural evenings beyond their traditional role supports cultural enrichment.

- Enhanced security measures, including increased police presence, improved lighting, and security patrols, are essential for addressing safety concerns and ensuring a sense of security at night.
- Increasing accommodation options, such as hotels and guesthouses, cater to the needs of growing visitor numbers.
- Utilising vacant spaces for temporary events activates different areas of the town, contributing to its dynamic nightlife.
- Implementing a cashless parking system with tap-and-go facilities streamlines parking processes and enhances visitor convenience.
- Enforcing guidelines for consistent and coordinated shop front appearances enhances the town's overall aesthetic appeal.
- Additionally, providing additional coach parking facilities and improving taxi availability addresses transport needs, ensuring convenient access to and within Longford.

Resourcing and Sustainability

In terms of resourcing and sustainability, the importance of extending opening hours for local businesses was emphasised, although it was disappointing that very few businesses were present during discussions. There is a critical need to instil a sense of ownership among these stakeholders, ensuring they recognise the significant value that a nighttime economy can bring. Addressing climate change challenges should underpin all future developments, particularly concerning public lighting and infrastructure improvements.

It is crucial not to rely solely on volunteers or businesses alone, but to foster a collaborative effort that benefits all involved. Each party must play a role in contributing to the success and sustainability of night-time initiatives. Building capacity within local town teams and businesses will be essential, potentially through workshops or upskilling

opportunities, to align with the evolving needs of the night-time economy.

The integration of new audiences was highlighted as crucial for future growth, leveraging the full potential of emerging communities. Sustainability hinges on initial understanding and widespread support for these initiatives, ensuring they resonate and are embraced by the broader community from inception.

Placemaking

Longford recognises the importance of supporting local businesses in enhancing the presentation of their shop fronts to create a welcoming and unified streetscape that enhances the town's overall appeal. Increased support is necessary to assist businesses in achieving this goal, fostering a visually cohesive environment that attracts both residents and visitors. Additionally, it is crucial to ensure that businesses understand and capitalise on the benefits and opportunities presented by the night-time economy. Educating and incentivising businesses to actively participate in community events and initiatives will be essential to driving economic growth and fostering community cohesion.

Reinstating the summer festival is important to reinvigorate local culture and draw crowds of visitors and locals, injecting vibrancy into community life. Enhancing the Mall area and Longford Skateboard Park is also imperative to create vibrant recreational and social spaces that cater to the diverse needs of Longford's residents. Regeneration and development efforts must prioritise understanding and supporting ongoing projects throughout the town. This includes immediate actions such as developing street furniture and improving areas like Pig Market Lane to enhance both functionality and aesthetic appeal. Inclusivity must remain a core focus of these efforts, ensuring that all place-making initiatives reflect and cater to the diverse needs of the community, fostering a sense of belonging for all residents.

Longford aims to develop youth and family-friendly spaces to meet the growing needs of its residents. This includes exploring opportunities to establish a youth cafe as a safe and engaging environment for young people. Creating autism-friendly spaces and parks is essential to ensure accessibility and inclusion for all members of the community. Increasing the number of parks and facilities tailored to young families is crucial to promote outdoor recreation and enhance the quality of life for families living in Longford.

To foster a dynamic and inclusive community atmosphere, Longford plans to create social and nonalcohol related spaces that accommodate a range of activities from daytime work gatherings to evening social events. This initiative aims to provide diverse options for socialising and leisure, alongside enhancing public realm spaces to facilitate congregation and social interaction across all age groups.

Programming and Activities

In shaping Longford's night-time economy, a visionary approach to programming and activities emerged as crucial. Rather than repeating familiar offerings, there was a resounding call for innovation and fresh thinking. This sentiment was underscored by a strong desire to explore new avenues, particularly in sporting engagements and collaborative initiatives with local clubs and societies. Surveys highlighted a community eager for diverse recreational opportunities, suggesting events like park runs and sports-related social gatherings would resonate well. This enthusiasm was echoed by the local sports partnership, emphasising the potential for these activities to galvanise community involvement and promote physical well-being.

Cultural enrichment was also a focal point, with proposals for art exhibitions, workshops, and poetry nights. Recognising the need to support capacity building, workshops were recommended to empower individuals and groups in crafting and executing engaging programs.

Youth engagement was prioritised through initiatives like the Backstage Youth Theatre, seen as a cornerstone for cultural expression and community bonding. Meanwhile, extending the hours of cafes and restaurants was seen not just as a convenience but as a means to foster social interaction and local vibrancy.

Coordinating activities across different groups emerged as a key strategy to maximise impact, ensuring that diverse segments of the community could unite in collective enjoyment and participation. Efforts were also directed towards cultivating evening dance events and exploring holistic well-being activities, responding to a growing interest in diverse leisure pursuits.

Central to these developments was a commitment to innovation and sustainability. Longford was encouraged to embrace new event ideas while leveraging existing resources effectively. Initiatives such as pop-up spaces in vacant buildings were seen as vital for revitalising underutilised areas and injecting vitality into the town's fabric.

Looking ahead, the concept of establishing a signature event like *Longford Town Day* gained traction, promising an annual celebration of community spirit and cultural pride. It was underscored that sustainability should underpin all activities, ensuring they contribute positively to Longford's vibrancy over the long term.

Visability and Communications

In the pursuit of fostering a vibrant night-time economy in Longford, there was a strong consensus on the critical need to cultivate a local audience. This involves instilling renewed confidence in the town and transitioning from reactive to proactive communication strategies that emphasise the town's potential value. Positive messaging emerged as pivotal to this approach.

Utilising existing platforms such as the Longford Town Facebook page and local radio, alongside the events guide, was identified as beneficial. Additionally,

there was a call to enhance multicultural awareness through workshops, facilitating the integration of new communities into the fabric of the town. Supporting teams, promoting social events, and improving public perceptions were also underscored as essential aspects of effective communication.

The use of locally-based social media influencers was highlighted as a potent tool for reaching and engaging diverse audiences. It was emphasised that maintaining robust social media channels and strategically choosing their presence are key considerations. Furthermore, expanding beyond traditional local papers to connect with audiences through various media channels—including Facebook, radio, local online platforms and event listings—is crucial.

Efforts to populate and promote the existing events guide were acknowledged, with a recognition of current gaps in event submissions and the need to incentivise and educate stakeholders on the ease of contributing to the guide. Expanding the community's perception of what constitutes the evening economy was seen as pivotal, necessitating the development of narratives tailored to different audience segments.

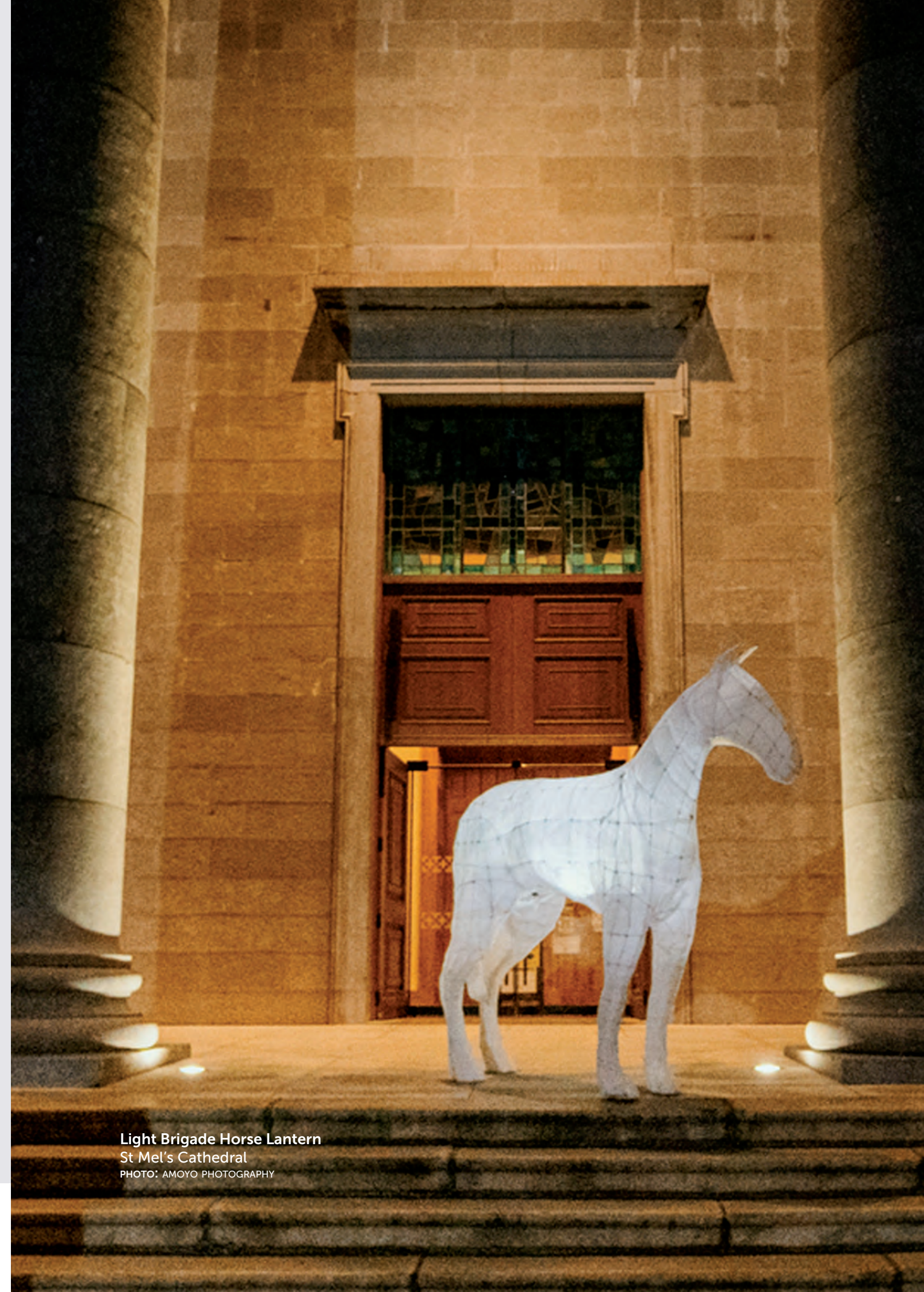
Moreover, there was a consensus on the importance of better public engagement to raise awareness of existing events while also devising innovative solutions to complement the current offerings. Addressing the perception that Longford Town becomes less safe after dark, primarily driven by perception rather than reality, was identified as a critical communication challenge.

Finally, cross-promotional events were highlighted as crucial for illustrating the interconnectedness of different nighttime economy experiences. This approach aims to educate and inspire the public about the breadth of opportunities available within the town, fostering a more cohesive and supportive community environment.

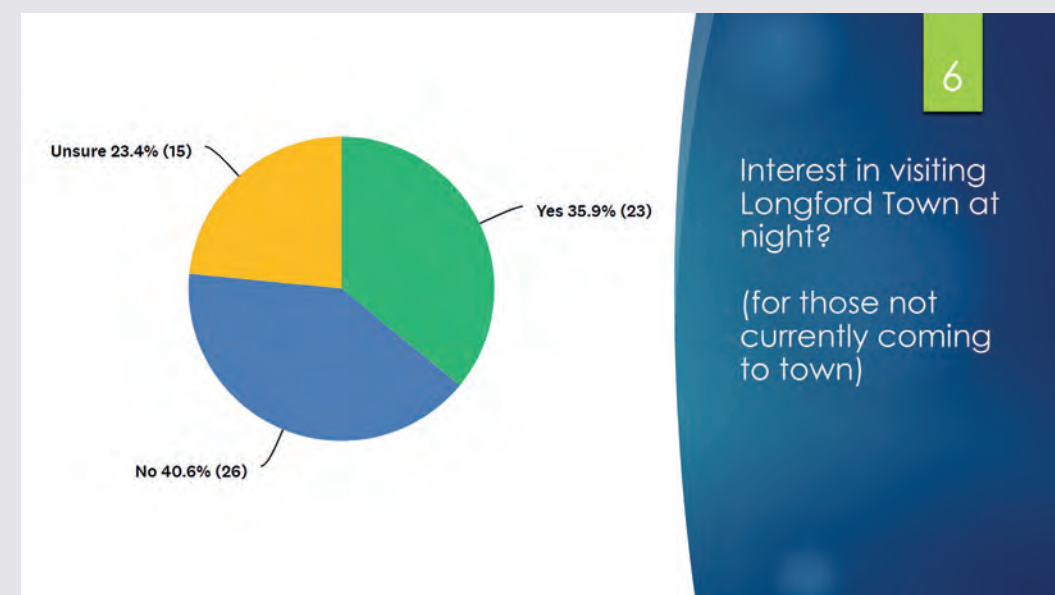
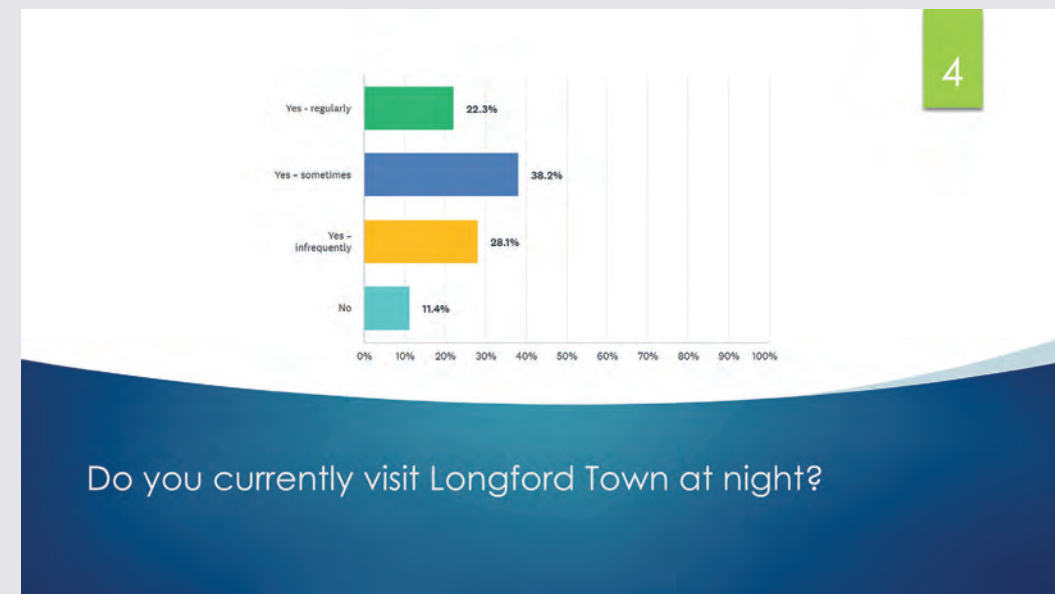
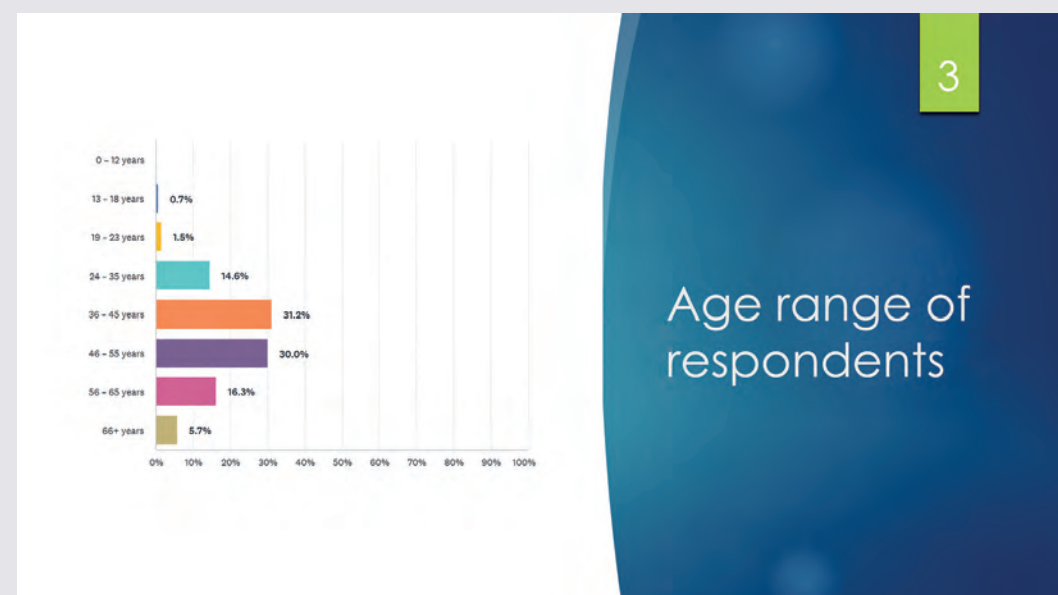
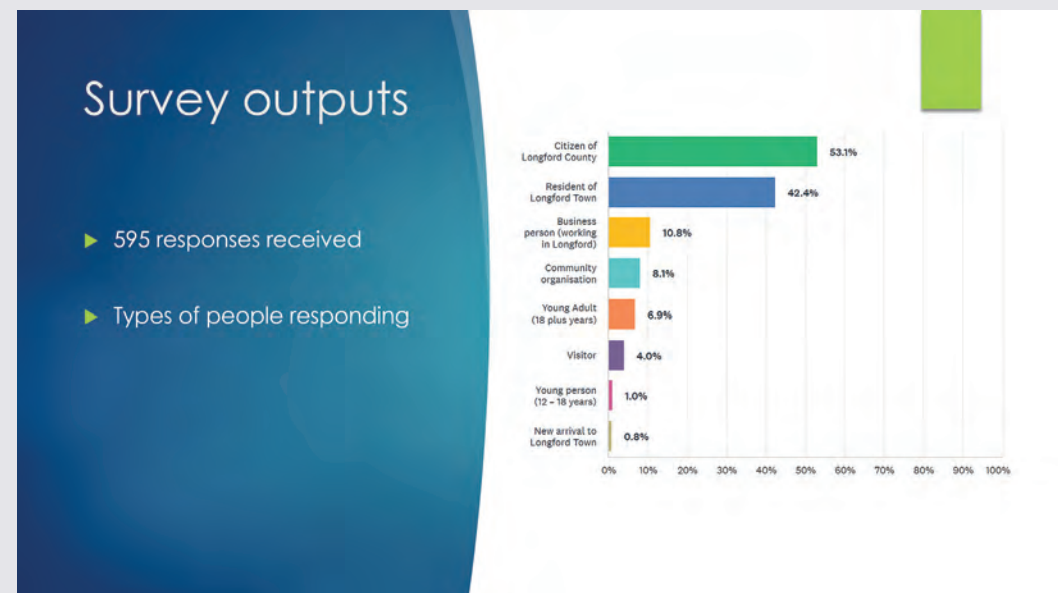
Collaborations and Partnerships

Achieving success hinges on fostering inclusive collaborations and partnerships that embrace the town's diverse population. Central to this endeavour is cultivating positive public-private networks involving community groups. This approach not only enhances inclusivity but also underscores the potential benefits that the night-time economy can bring to the town.

Utilising the town team as a catalyst for action was highlighted as a strategic opportunity. This involves working closely with active age groups, Tidy Towns initiatives, sports organisations, local enterprises and businesses. Collaborating with Longford Sports Partnership and Community Safety Partnership further strengthens these efforts, ensuring a comprehensive approach to enhancing night-time activities.



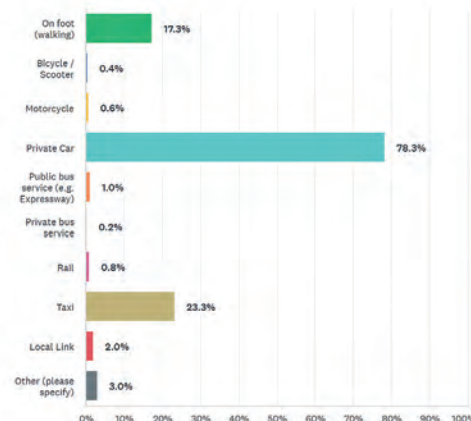
Light Brigade Horse Lantern
St Mel's Cathedral
PHOTO: AMOYO PHOTOGRAPHY



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Visit a restaurant	63.2% 314
Socialise in bars / pubs	61.6% 306
Meet friends / family	53.3% 265
Go to the cinema	36.8% 183
Go shopping	31.4% 156
Go to a theatre show	21.1% 105
Attend a concert / cultural event	20.1% 100
Attend a sporting event	18.5% 92
Visit a night club	11.3% 56
Take a walk around the town	10.3% 51
Attend a local club / society	9.3% 46
Participate in a sporting activity	9.3% 46
Attend a church / religious service	7.0% 35
Other (please specify)	Responses 3.6% 18
Work in a night time economy business	2.6% 13
Work in services to support the night time economy (e.g. security, road cleaning, infrastructure etc)	0.6% 3

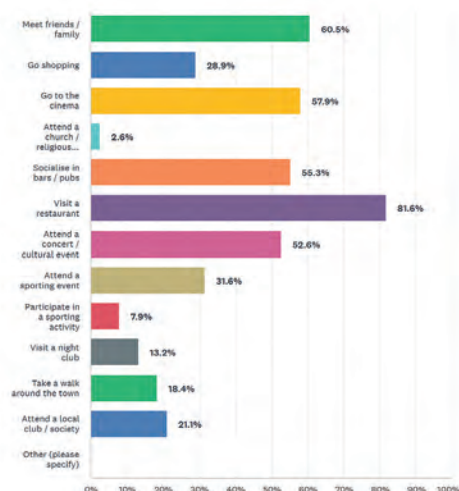
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What people currently do when visiting Longford Town at night



8

What modes of transport are used for visiting at night?



9

What would bring those not currently visiting the town at night into Longford

Challenges / barriers to engagement

Over 88% of people said they had a reason for not coming into town at night. Those reasons included:

- ▶ Safety and security concerns 73.3%
- ▶ Not a lot going on 52.2%
- ▶ Transport difficulties 50.6%
- ▶ Not enough shops open at night 22.4%
- ▶ Not enough places for young people to meet and socialise 15.9%
- ▶ I don't know what's going on 13.4%
- ▶ Public lighting 9.7%

Who benefits most from nighttime economy development?

- Local businesses 76%
- All citizens of Longford Town and county 73%
- Visitors / tourists 46%
- People living in the Town 42%
- Young people 36%
- Venues and cultural businesses 26%
- New communities 9%
- Older people 7.5%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Improved safety and security in the evening and night time	69.6% 365
Improved transport options for getting into and out of town at night	69.1% 362
More late night coffee shops / restaurants etc.	58.6% 324
A night market (pop ups / food offers etc)	52.6% 291
More venues open for night time activity	48.8% 270
Better communication of what's on at night	46.5% 257
Increased safety measures for those working in the night time economy	36.0% 199
Later opening for retail businesses	26.8% 148
More public spaces to congregate and socialise	23.1% 128
Access to public toilet facilities	19.5% 108
Improved public lighting	17.7% 98
Improved accessibility for all citizens	12.8% 71
Improved access to parking for late night shopping / socialising	10.8% 60
Other (please specify)	Responses 5.6% 31
Total Respondents: 553	

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Infrastructure Improvements



Experiential Improvements

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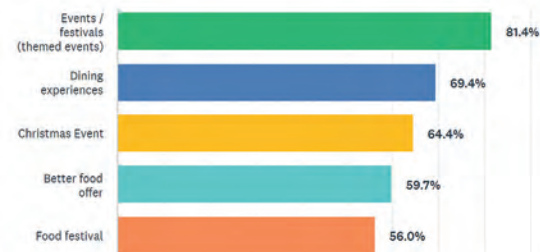
- ▶ 60% indicated that more restaurants are required
- ▶ 55% want better communication of what's on at night
- ▶ 54% indicate that a night market or pop-ups food offers etc
- ▶ 51.9% want more things to do for families
- ▶ 44.4% want to have more cultural experiences and events
- ▶ 43% would like to have coffee shops open at night
- ▶ 40.8% want more things available for young people to do
- ▶ 33/8% want to see more things available for people living in the city
- ▶ 32.3% want to see more sporting and wellbeing programmes available
- ▶ 30.2% would like to have a grater range of shopping and services avialbe (hairdressing etc)

ANSWER CHOICES

- ▼ Additional activity in town at night
- ▼ Increased footfall to businesses
- ▼ Increased tourism potential
- ▼ Enhanced community / citizen engagement and town use
- ▼ Boost in retail activity
- ▼ Improved accessibility
- ▼ Increased use of the town for healthy living (e.g. walks, park use etc.)
- ▼ Increase in town experiences / cultural offer (e.g. festivals, events, markets)
- ▼ Opportunities for business to diversify - open longer (e.g. products, services, experiences)
- ▼ Improved safety for those working during night-time
- ▼ Improvement in transport options to access the town

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How can NTE benefit Longford Town?



15

Types of events and experiences (top five)



Fairground Rides
Summer Festival



Key principles for success

- ▶ **NTE supported and planned for by local Government** – embedded into local planning, NTE champion – to cohere the vision for the NTE
- ▶ **Building partnerships** to diversify the local economy – with the local community and visitor in mind
- ▶ **Identifying opportunities and creating a plan of action**
- ▶ **Changing perceptions** – in terms of safety, access, patterns of consumption and movement around the city, and an understanding of what's on
- ▶ **Innovating thinking** – specifically in relation to publicly-funded or publicly-owned spaces and their use beyond the norm, time/season etc.
- ▶ **Engineering a balance of different uses** – Mixed use approach offering a range of experiences in different facilities for different audiences
- ▶ **Coordinating stakeholders** – hospitality, leisure activities, cultural and heritage spaces, venues, wellbeing initiatives, as well as retail and commercial supports, e.g. transport linkages and parking
- ▶ **Allowing citizens to choose** from alternate activities / experiences – points of difference



Who does it best?

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- ▶ Good examples in Europe where mixed models for all ages are incorporated in NTE visitor and local offer
- ▶ Night Mayor Initiative – Amsterdam, Zurich, Paris, London
- ▶ URBACT – Cities After Dark Network (ERDF) 2023 - 2025
- ▶ Waking up town centres in UK www.visitbritain.org
- ▶ Focus on economic development more than tourism development
- ▶ Nantes – Development through Metropole in late 80s – leadership and collaboration – clarity of strategic focus




Canongate Stars and Stories

Royal Mile, Edinburgh, Scotland

An illuminated self-guided Walking Trail of 24 light boxes featuring quotations which celebrate Edinburgh's print and publishing heritage; drawn from famous books and writers from across the ages, on display in local business up and down the Royal Mile.

Seasonal from November / March annually 4pm - 11pm

A collaboration between UNESCO City of Literature, local businesses, literary organisations and community groups.

Mix of cultural venues, public buildings, bars, cafes, retail premises etc. Part of a wider UNESCO City of Literature campaign #wordsonthestreet



Alive After Five

Newcastle, UK

Alive after Five is a staple of Newcastle's city life, striving to make life easier for everyone in the city through two measures:

- Park for free after 5pm in 7 multi-storey car parks Monday to Saturday and
- Shop till late, until 8pm weekdays and 7pm Saturdays

<https://www.getintonewcastle.co.uk/city-info/alive-after-five>



NE1 PRESENTS
NEWCASTLE Restaurant Week #GETIN
21ST JANUARY

Alive after five

Nantes Green Line / Le Voyages à Nantes

A cultural trail in the city

The Green Line guides you from contemporary artistic works to remarkable elements of the region's heritage; from classic sites to unknown treasures; from a historic alleyway to contemporary architecture; from a surprising vista in the city to sunset on the Loire estuary. Development from industrial wasteland to creative spaces Pedestrianisation project as part of this.

Visitor centric – always on – connected with hospitality partners via signage and a coordinated approach to delivery for visitors collaboration between Nantes Métropole, commercial and cultural partners and Nantes Tourism.

- ▶ L'Estuaire Project- always open
- ▶ Green Line – 365
- ▶ Lu Biscuit Factory – arts centre, museum, restaurant, bar – earliest closing time 20:00 - Sunday 0 (11:00 – 11:00)







HOW TO PLAY HELLO LAMP POST

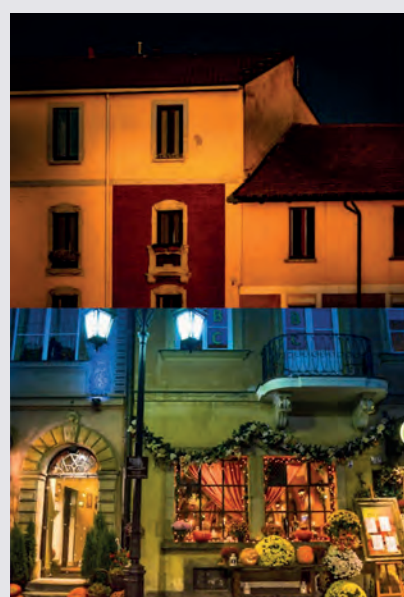
- 1 **PICK AN OBJECT**
Look out for an item of street furniture with a code on it.
- 2 **SAY HELLO**
Send a text in this format:
Hello object #code
e.g. "Hello hydrant #B6291" to (512) 580 7373
- 3 **KEEP TALKING**
You'll soon get a reply.
Answer the object's questions and learn what other people have to say.

The Playable City – Manchester, Galway 2020 and Global

A network and commissioning programme which explores playful techniques for re-booting planning and reanimating the city. www.playablecity.com
Hello Lamp Post allows visitors to the city to "talk" to urban objects.

Your role today in developing Longford's NTE

- Environment Analysis
- Identification of Gaps and Potential
- Prioritisation of key objectives for NTE development



Next Steps – Action Planning

Refinement of areas for development - ideas, experiences, initiatives

1. Who needs to be involved for development?
2. Who is the target market?
3. What are the main actions which need to happen to make this a reality?
4. What is the anticipated timeframe for delivery?
5. How will you measure success?

Vesta
Longford Lights Festival
PHOTO: LISSETTE CARCAMO



Longford Town at Night
PHOTO: LISSETTE CARCAMO

