

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 MARCH 2017

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING AND HEALTH

EMERGING CRIME TRENDS ASSOCIATED WITH EAST HERTS’
NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL (WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE
MARKET TOWNS)

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report aims to give members an understanding of the changing nature of crime associated with the night time economy in East Herts.
- The report goes on to examine the current services available that support the minimisation of crime associated with the night time economy and seeks to demonstrate how partners work together to make East Herts a safe place by addressing night time economy issues as they relate to businesses, residents and visitors.
- The report identifies issues requiring more investigation and/or different ways of working and makes recommendations for future actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

That:

(A)	themes and issues related to crime associated with the night time economy identified at this meeting be forwarded to the Executive Member for Environment and Public Space and the Head of Housing and Health;
(B)	the actions listed in section 5 be endorsed; and
(C)	additional proposed actions to tackle crime associated with the night time economy identified at this meeting be forwarded to the Executive Member for Environment and Public Space and the Head of Housing and Health.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The term night time economy (NTE) refers to the economic activity taking place in the evening, such as eating and drinking, entertainment and nightlife. For the purposes of this report NTE hours are between 9pm and 5am, seven days a week.
 - 1.2 The NTE can bring many positive benefits to the district, from creating jobs and providing a diverse range of activities, such as providing entertainment, restaurants, pubs and clubs for both residents and visitors.
 - 1.3 There are 13,215 businesses listed on the East Herts business data base of which 527 are licensed to carry out the sale of alcohol, late night refreshment and/or regulated entertainment. These licensed premises are dispersed across the district with unsurprising accumulations around the town centres. It must be noted that not all the licensed premises will be open during night time economy hours stated.
 - 1.4 The NTE impacts on many services provided by both the district and county council from:
 - licensing
 - environmental health
 - community safety
 - trading standards – *County Council function*
 - transport – *shared responsibilities*
 - street cleaning – this is a management element of the NTE which would invariably take place outside of the NTE hours, but will not be discussed in this report.
 - 1.5 Services provided by partners include that of Policing and Health and it is the work of partners providing both immediate and long term preventative responses to NTE issues which help make East Herts a safe place.
 - 1.6 This report will provide insight into the issues affecting the NTE in East Herts, highlighting trends, victims, and the responses in place.
 - 1.7 When referring to ‘town centres’ in this report, we have used the roads classed as being in a town centre within the East Herts District Plan.
- ## **2.0 Crime related to the night time economy in East Herts – the facts and figures**

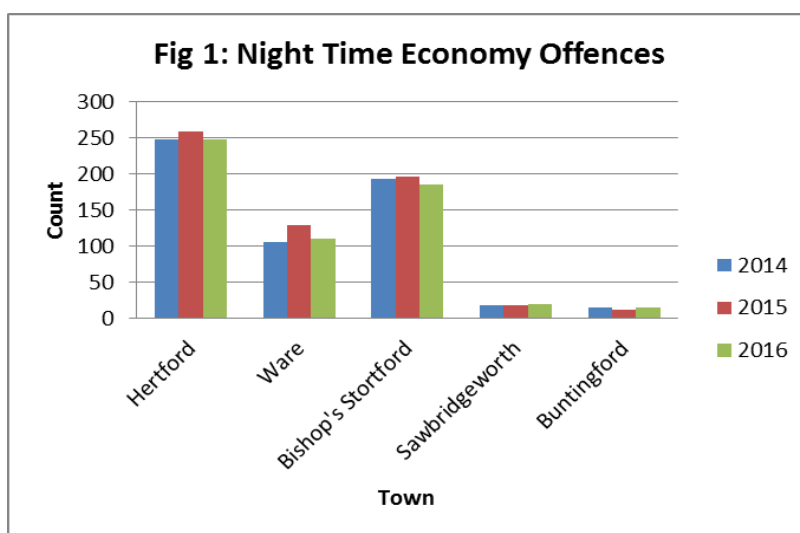
Night time economy emerging crime trends

2.1 For the purposes of this report, NTE crime is defined as crimes in the following Police-defined categories occurring between the hours of 9pm and 5am, seven days a week. This report has used the following crime categories during the calendar years of 2014, 2015 & 2016:

- NTE offences
- Night time alcohol related offences
- Night time ASB
- NTE alcohol related ASB

2.2 Over the three calendar years there were a total of 6,755 NTE related crimes across the district. Of this total, 1,777 offences were committed within the five town centres of East Herts. Of the town centre NTE crimes, some 901 (50.7%) were recorded as having an aggravating factor of alcohol.

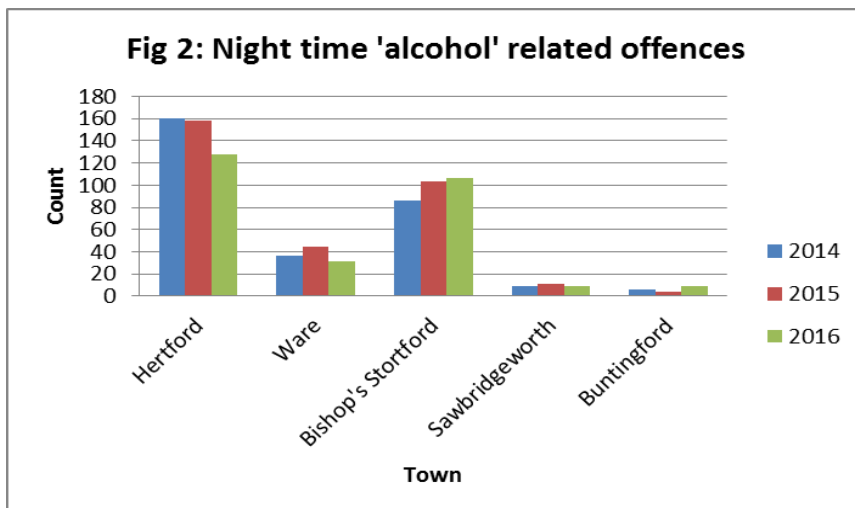
2.3 The graph below shows the split of all NTE offences across the towns over the three calendar years.



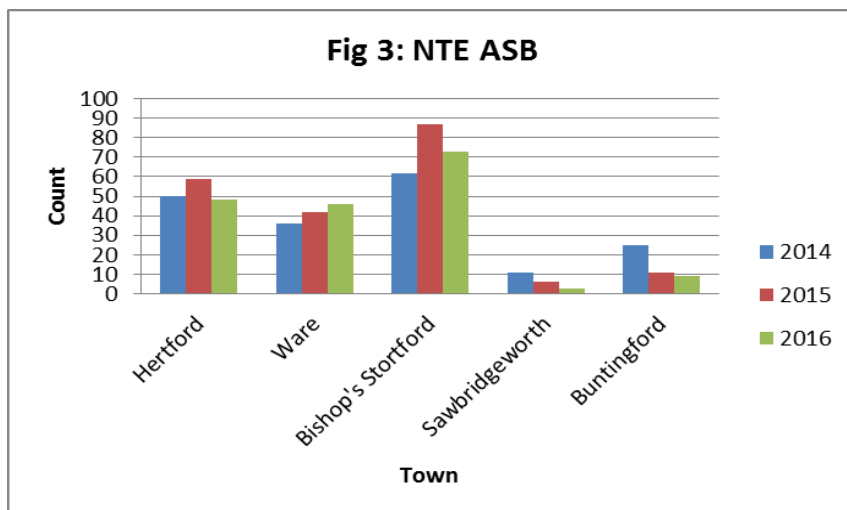
2.4 As would be expected due to size, NTE related crime is most frequent in Bishop's Stortford and Hertford.

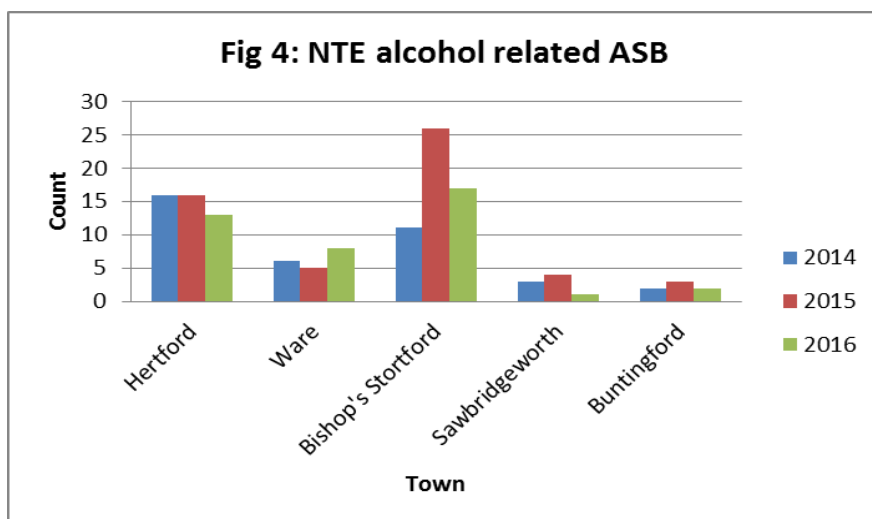
2.5 This trend is also reflected in night time 'alcohol' and ASB offences.

2.6 Night time 'alcohol' related offences were most frequent in Hertford (446 offences over 3 years) and Bishop's Stortford (295 over 3 years).



2.7 There were a total of 568 ASB incidents recorded within the five main towns of East Herts. Of these 133 (23.4%) were recorded as NTE alcohol related:





- 2.8 Although the statistics indicate relatively low levels of NTE crime in Buntingford, the Police have indicated their concerns that this may increase in future years given the growth in the town.
- 2.9 Every year the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) compiles a strategic assessment showing the community safety and crime trends over a 12 month period. The CSP is in the process of compiling the 2017 assessment and initial evidence suggests East Herts should consider alcohol related crime as a priority.
- 2.10 Whilst a direct comparison for NTE crime types has not been made for this report with other districts/boroughs across the county, it is possible to suggest where East Herts features with our neighbours for NTE related crimes. East Herts CSP receives annual comparisons of crime levels across the county and the most recent risk matrix supplied for the forthcoming community safety strategic assessment gave East Herts the lowest risk score of 1 for night time violent crime and a risk score of 5 out of 10 for alcohol related crime.

Night time economy crime victims

- 2.11 It has not been possible to obtain a full breakdown of victim data from the Police for this report, however, police intelligence suggests the main victims of the NTE are those in the early to mid-twenties.
- 2.12 In addition, the Hertford and Ware Street Pastor Coordinator has commented that they often see the following:

“We find people in a vulnerable state, usually but not exclusively female. Often they are drunk and have been put out of a club by door staff – or they leave to get a breath of fresh air and will not be let back in as they have had too much to drink.”

Our role then becomes one of caring for the person, trying to find friends or family to collect them. Care offered could be simply keeping them company or going so far as to call an ambulance.”

NTE crime linked to festivals and events

- 2.13 There are many annual festivals and events which take place across East Herts. The majority of these events are known to partners, mainly through the Safety Advisory Group, and early conversations with event organisers helps facilitate a safe and well managed event. It is worth noting that a number of these events are licensed to carry out activities, and the majority of them take place with no major repercussions.
- 2.14 Whilst the majority of these events take place during the day, the events taking place in the town centres often result in a continuation of activity into the licensed premises once the event has finished. If known in advance additional resources can be deployed to help respond to the unusual influx of people visiting the town centres after an event has finished.
- 2.15 In addition, an extension of the traditional NTE are the festivals that take place in rural East Herts. Issues stemming from them can include noise levels, drug offences, theft from tents and vehicles and safety issues with people getting to and from the events.

3.0 Actions to minimise the amount and/or impact of NTE crime

- 3.1 There are a number of statutory, formal and informal services and intervention measures in place to respond to the effects of the NTE, to enhance the NTE and to make East Herts a safe place to visit.
- 3.2 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and its partners often target NTE customers with crime prevention advice usually at peak times of the year, such as Christmas, with messages about getting home safely for example. In addition, the CSP has funded the presence of the St John's Ambulance to help respond to issues at peak NTE times of the year.
- 3.3 The following sections of this report describe the structures and responses in place.

Licensing Enforcement

- 3.4 The collective capacity of the 52 main licensed premises in Hertford, Bishop's Stortford and Ware is estimated by the Police at 10,891 persons.
- 3.5 The co-location of the council's licensing enforcement team and Herts police officers dedicated to enforcement activity is unique in Hertfordshire. The officers share an office at Hertford Police Station. This enables council and police officers to work closely and establish and maintain relationships with licensed premises through inspections, applications, notices and attendance at Pub Watch meetings. Premises are visited with varying frequencies depending on need, scale of an issue, if changes have been made to a license, or through a request for a new application. Enforcement operations take place four times a year carrying out unannounced checks, with additional reactive operations taking place in response to issues when they arise.

Pub Watch

- 3.6 Pub Watch covers four out of the five towns in East Herts with a total of 62 members. Bishop's Stortford has the highest membership with 21 venues signed up, Hertford with 19, Ware with 17, and Sawbridgeworth 5. Currently, there is no Pub Watch coverage in Buntingford.
- 3.7 Pub Watch has been running for approximately ten years, and those involved in the scheme meeting monthly with the Police and the Council, to share intelligence with the aim to reduce crime related to the night time economy. In addition, Pub Watch allows those signed up to communicate between venues through the use of radios and private Whatsapp conversations.
- 3.8 The Behave or Be Banned (BOBB) Scheme is an example of a successful Pub Watch initiative where individuals are banned from premises if they commit anti-social behaviour. On average there are between 100 – 120 individuals on the BOBB scheme at any one time, banned from one or all licensed premises in a town centre.

NTE management tools

- 3.9 There are a number of tools used by licensed premises and encouraged by community safety partners. These include the use of radios to communicate with the CCTV control room for example. The application of new community safety equipment in response to managing an evolving NTE is seen in the application and use of at Scannet, or ID scanners. Scannet is a piece of equipment which, when installed on the doors of late night

entertainment establishments, can assist security staff identify fake ID and flag up those banned from the establishment and/or other venues. The police are very supportive of exploring this further and have organised meetings with managers of the larger venues in Bishop's Stortford, Hertford and Ware. East Herts Council officers are fully involved.

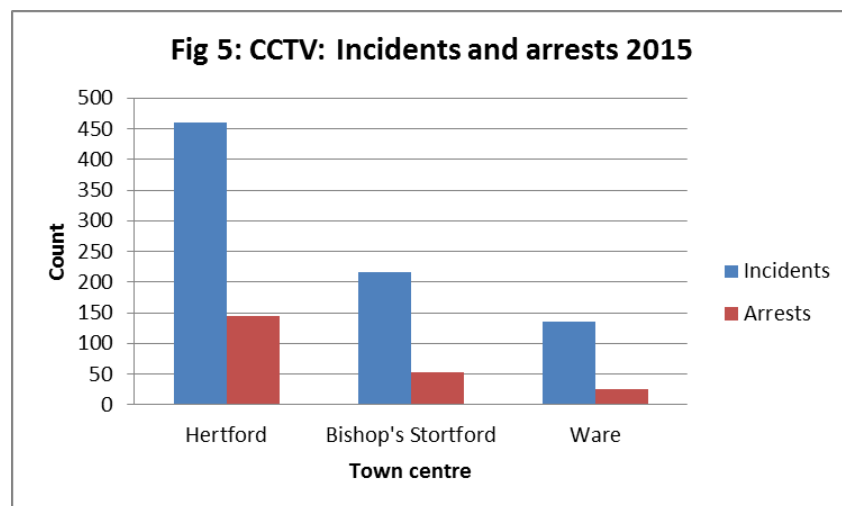
Transport and the NTE

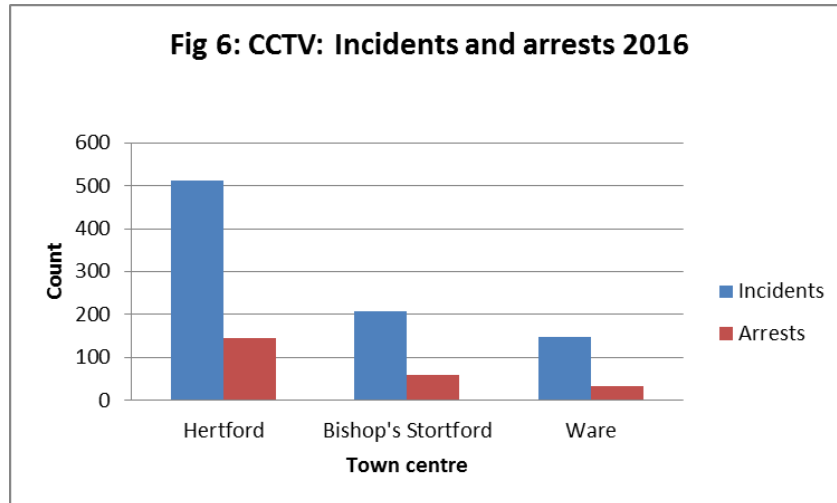
- 3.10 Getting people home safely and quickly after visiting the town centres and more rural NTE premises is essential for a well-managed night time economy across the district.
- 3.11 The council has a responsibility to provide taxi ranks. There are nine taxi ranks located in East Herts with four in Bishop's Stortford three in Hertford and two in Ware. To help facilitate the use of the taxi ranks, there are two taxi marshal schemes operating in Hertford and one currently under trial in Bishop's Stortford. Both operate on Friday and Saturday evenings.
- 3.12 New and existing drivers are being put through mandatory training that covers rules and regulations, driver safety, customer service, reporting safeguarding concerns (adult and child) and disability awareness training. This combined with robust policies particularly around convictions means that taxi drivers as a whole are becoming more professional and are offering a better, safer service to those living or visiting East Herts and ensuring these businesses thrive and grow.
- 3.13 East Herts Council has seven licensed vehicles with CCTV surveillance installed inside the cab. However, licensed vehicles can purchase their own CCTV cameras and as such the exact number of licensed taxis with CCTV is unknown.
- 3.14 Informal consultation was carried out with East Herts taxi drivers in preparation for this report. Four taxi drivers responded providing anecdotal evidence to their views on what the NTE issues were for East Herts.
- 3.15 One taxi driver said they had seen an increase in the evening trade over the last seven years, particularly with larger groups being vocal and loud. Despite this, the taxi driver spoke positively about the Police and marshalled taxi ranks stating that the visible presence makes for a safe environment.
- 3.16 The three other taxi drivers were less positive, suggesting assaults on taxi drivers and the public, vandalism of premises and

taxi, and card fraud were issues affecting the NTE in East Herts. In addition, one taxi driver suggested safety within taxis was an issue with the public verbally and physically abusing taxi drivers over maximum capacities and unpaid fares for example.

CCTV

- 3.17 Public CCTV provision covers Hertford, Bishop's Stortford, Ware and Stanstead Abbots where 18 cameras cover Hertford, 11 Bishop's Stortford, 6 Ware and one on Stanstead Abbots High Street.
- 3.18 The cameras are currently in traditional hotspot areas. There are also five mobile cameras available.
- 3.19 The CCTV control room in Stevenage has direct contact to the police and is monitored 24 hours a day. Businesses registered through Shop Watch and Pub Watch can log into the control system to report problems and communicate with other staff and businesses.
- 3.20 Control room statistics are shown below for one calendar year relating to all incidents and arrests 24/7.





3.21 In 2015 there were a total of 814 incidents recorded by the control room, with a total of 223 arrests. In 2016 there were 870 recorded incidents with a total of 239 arrests. Both years saw 36% of the incidents recorded resulting in an arrest. Whilst the nature of the incident and the time of the incident have not been defined, it suggests the current CCTV provision (which predominately covers the town centres) is detecting incidents. Further investigation is required to establish the proportion detecting NTE related crime.

Street Pastors

3.22 In East Herts there are two Street Pastor Schemes covering Hertford and Ware, and Bishop's Stortford.

3.23 The Hertford and Ware Street Pastors started in October 2009 and currently have 19 active volunteers aiming to patrol weekly, either on a Friday or Saturday night often starting the evening in Ware and moving to Hertford between 11pm and midnight. The Street Pastor Coordinator has noticed changes to the NTE issues affecting the two towns particularly in correlation to the easier access with premises being able to obtain late licenses.

3.24 The Street Pastors carry a radio when patrolling both towns and have good relations with the police, councils and councillors. The coordinator reports that in Ware the issues have never escalated to a level to warrant radio use to link up to the Police or the CCTV control room.

3.25 Both the Street Pastor schemes rely on donations and other support to function and year on year obtaining funds is a risk to the continuation of the schemes. Current funding streams include donations from the churches, fundraising, and a substantial grant from the Police Crime Commissioner.

Purple Flag accreditation

- 3.26 Given the commitment of East Herts Council and its many partners to maximising the safe enjoyment of the district's thriving night time economy, it may prove appropriate to consider the case for assessing current partnership working against the Purple Flag criteria.
- 3.27 The Purple Flag is an accreditation process similar to the Green Flag award for parks and the Blue Flag for beaches. It is operated by the Association of Town and City Centre Management.
- 3.28 A comprehensive set of standards, management processes and good practice examples designed to help transform with a research, training and development programme, improving a town and city centres' NTE. Accreditation leads to Purple Flag status for town and city centres that meet or surpass the standards of excellence in managing the evening and night time economy.
- 3.29 Around 50 town and city centre have Purple Flag accreditation across the country, with one, Watford, in Hertfordshire. It may prove useful to consider the situation in East Herts' main towns against this standard.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 Researching the area of NTE in readiness for this scrutiny report has been a useful exercise to identify the characteristics of crime related to the current NTE situation in East Herts and the potential issues and risks affecting the district.
- 4.2 Evidence suggests NTE activity is most prevalent in Bishop's Stortford and Hertford and there are many responses in place to address NTE related issues. It is worth noting that as crime evolves, partner responses and initiatives will too.
- 4.3 The victims of NTE-related crime are suggested to be both men and women, mainly in their twenties.
- 4.4 An extension of the NTE is suggested to be the organised events and festivals which are increasingly taking place in the town centres. These events are often known to the East Herts Safety Advisory Group, but it is worth noting that with their increase in prevalence, an increase in advance planning is required in addition to ensuring immediate responses are in place.
- 4.5 The evidence shows that there is a great deal of good practice in East Herts with close partnership working allowing CSP partners

to prepare and respond to the NTE issues in the district. Whilst East Herts regularly experiences overall low crime levels and partners are quick to maintain it, NTE issues have had their peaks over the years, and the recent strategic assessment evidence suggests alcohol related crime could be a priority.

4.6 Community safety partners will ensure the annual community safety action plan reflects emerging trends in the NTE.

5.0 Suggested actions for consideration by the Community Scrutiny Committee arising from this report

5.1 Based on the information presented in this report, officers would suggest the following actions for consideration. Community scrutiny members are invited to propose amendments and/or additional actions for officer consideration.

- Flag up NTE-related crime issues in the Community Safety Assessment drafted by East Herts Council on behalf of the multi-agency East Herts Community Safety Partnership. This helps ensure that the issues remain on the agenda for all partners and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Carry out a review of East Herts CCTV to include camera locations and equipment to ensure it is fit-for-purpose with regard to maximising safety during evenings and the night time.
- Ensure all town and parish councils are aware of the East Herts Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and the supportive role of partners can play when town and parish council and organised and running events.
- Consider new and innovative ways to support the NTE, such as the role of Scannet / Live ID.
- Assess the benefits of seeking Purple Flag accreditation.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Scannet (ID scanners)

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