



Night Time Economy Summit

OUTCOMES REPORT

NIGHT TIME ECONOMY SUMMIT – OUTCOMES REPORT

REPORT INFORMATION

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FOREWORD

The Night Time Economy (NTE) is incredibly important to Dublin. It involves a diverse array of stakeholders and activities which illuminate, animate and differentiate our city. These stakeholders and activities also contribute significantly to the economy, society and cultural development. As the NTE is so multifaceted, it is vital that we explore, discuss and consider the different perspectives of those involved and impacted. The annual Dublin City Summit Series for 2023 hosted by the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) of Dublin City Council, therefore, focused on the NTE in Dublin. The NTE Summit brought together and facilitated dialogue between key stakeholders on the current status and future direction of the NTE in Dublin. The Summit featured 17 speakers who discussed challenges and highlighted opportunities for collaboration via addresses and panel discussions.

This Outcomes Report provides a compilation of the insights, along with an extensive account of the summit. It has been produced to share knowledge and inspiration in order to ultimately encourage greater collaboration, awareness and development regarding the NTE in Dublin and other settings. I wish to thank the Economic Development Office in Dublin City Council for organising the summit and producing this outcomes report which will benefit many interested parties and assist future policy formulation. Thank you as well to the representatives for sharing their valuable contributions. Finally, I wish to thank all those stakeholders who will work collaboratively on account of the insights featured in this report and towards supporting the future enhancement of the Night Time Economy in Dublin.

Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Night Time Economy (NTE) Summit was hosted in the Project Arts Centre, on the 30th of November 2023. The summit represented the 2023 iteration of the annual Dublin City Summit Series, an initiative of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) of Dublin City Council. It was led by Dublin City Council and supported by the Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste along with various key stakeholders. The aims of the summit were to share knowledge and perspectives, obtain insights and ideas, and highlight opportunities for collaboration and development, in order to inform policymakers, stakeholders and interested parties regarding future policy formulation and strategies relevant to the development and enhancement of the NTE in Dublin and other settings. The summit was structured on four interlinked themes, which although not exhaustive, represent key elements regarding night time economy development. Each theme was the focus of a panel discussion. Panellists were asked to contribute from their perspective regarding their current context, insights, ideas and examples, and recommendations on improving the panel discussion topic. The four themes and panel discussions were:

- 1. Safety & Security**
- 2. Place & Mobility**
- 3. Policy & Regulations**
- 4. Sustainability & Circular Economy**

The summit commenced with Chairperson of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC, Cllr Tom Brabazon introducing the programme, followed by a welcome address by Cllr Hazel Chu who attended on behalf of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, a keynote address by Jo Cox-Brown and then a series of panel discussions. The summit also sought to exemplify the NTE by incorporating

various arts and cultural performances along with food-tasting experiences. During the summit, stakeholders shared insights, ideas and examples regarding the need, challenges and opportunities for developing the NTE in Dublin and further afield. This outcomes report provides an account of the insights shared by contributors along with an extensive overview of the summit. It will be disseminated to inform national government, policymakers, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Summary of Key Insights

Welcome Address: Cllr Hazel Chu (on behalf of the Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste)

- The night-time economy is incredibly diverse, dynamic and important to Dublin. It involves numerous stakeholders, sectors and an immersive array of cultural, hospitality, sport, health, education, retail, festival and entertainment activity. Taking place during the approximate hours of 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., this activity is an intrinsic part of living, working, visiting and learning in the city, which contributes to the economy, societal development, the promotion of culture and heritage and to the unique identity of Dublin.
- Although Dublin has a renowned night-time economy, it needs to be nurtured, developed and improved so that it's inclusive, accessible, safe, sustainable and equitable for residents, businesses, participants and visitors.
- There has been great progress by the NTE National Task Force put together by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in 2020, with funding for soundproofing, night-time economy events, and country-wide night-time economy officers.

Keynote Address: Jo Cox-Brown, Founding Director and CEO of Night Time Economy Solutions

- The NTE accounts for approximately 4.1% of any area's economy and 27% of the workforce, so it needs proper investment and attention to grow in a sustainable way. Dublin's nightlife stops early compared to EU and global competitors, which can ultimately lead to violence, vulnerability, antisocial behaviour, illegal parties as well as reduced economic viability.
- The diversity of after dark and the changes in transport towards 24-hour services need further attention. There's an impending NTE revolution, with huge shifts in how people use towns and cities at night. After a retraction during COVID-19, the NTE is bouncing back differently and is the only part of the economy in true growth. Instead of treating the NTE as the naughty sibling of the daytime economy, we should recognise it for the valuable contribution it makes to an area's prosperity and design it in anticipation of the likely problems before they occur.

- Young people are drinking 20% less year-on-year and traditional pubs and clubs are closing for various reasons. This impacts how young people party and puts them at risk. Globally, there's a 50% increase in illegal raves, parties and unlicensed venues and a 30% rise in festivals. The global drugs survey showed a 20% growth year-on-year in the use of drugs in young people.
- Are we prepared for the global trend shifts towards experiential events, raves, festivals and night markets and do we have the spaces to enable this to happen? There's a 20% increase in electronic music consumption and yet there aren't necessarily the spaces for that to grow, hence the rise in raves and festivals.
- We need to provide 24-hour transport, hospitality, services and shopping as working trends change to the gig economy with more people than ever becoming self-employed and working global hours during the night.
- Canada is seeing huge growth in the 'other ship,' with young people flooding to these health, spirituality, community and wellness centres that offer breath work, yoga, and ice baths 24 hours a day, are we ready for this big shift into wellness?
- Play-ifying our cities at night drives footfall. In Northern Carolina, a project to light up the area and create swings and places to dance and make music led to 75% of the population using the city at night compared to 20% previously.
- If we want people to have sustainable careers at night, they need to have healthy food, leisure, transport and healthcare not currently available.
- There needs to be a united vision for a city at night to thrive. This involves setting up a working group to oversee the NTE, combining knowledge, data, resources and finances, and engaging in serious discussions on key topics. We need to be held accountable and this vision needs to coexist with commercial, residential and cultural developments.
- We need to align the stakeholder vision, strategy and policies to support the presence of a thriving night-time economy, with culture at the heart of any regeneration. We should set up cultural and NTE boards with allocated budgets for every major town and city to support the appointed NTE Advisors in their roles, ensuring that there's an offer fit for users and non-users.
- A research-driven approach can ensure we deliver what people want and what the trends tell us. As we regenerate, we need to create a space where arts and culture can thrive.
- We need to ensure a place is fit for purpose during the day and night by creating place management strategies.
- Every city needs to be perceived as and actually be safe and secure, and every city and business operating at night needs to be operating sustainably and within the circular economy. We need effective policies and regulations, as licensing plays a critical and essential role in ensuring a safe and responsible operation of businesses at night-time.

Panel 1: Safety & Security

Frank Lambe, City Recovery Manager, Dublin City Council

- We need to know what we mean by NTE and what the challenges are. A recent audit about how the city was perceived and how it was at night was an eye-opener in showing simple things that could be done, such as businesses leaving on lights behind shutters to keep streets bright for people walking.
- The council plans further audits to identify other challenges and is currently involved in a process to recruit an NTE Advisor to develop a strategy. It's important to work together, meaning cooperation with the Gardaí and the reactivation of the 'Better City for All' initiative that will bring focus to the challenges and what needs to be done to address those.
- The council works with the Dublin City Business Forum, and the supports that the council gives to the hospitality industry by way of licensing outdoor furniture is significant. Animation of city streets and people lends to the feeling of safety, a busy city is a safer city and something we must aim for.
- The private security working with the hospitality industry at night, could be ambassadors to help people move around the city and offer assistance because it's an untapped resource that we could potentially do more with.

Gerry Farrell, Operations Director, DublinTown

- For years, the number one issue in DublinTown surveys on public perception about the city was around either safety or access. This has been trending down, some of which is a hangover from COVID-19 when people developed new behaviour patterns and weren't coming into the city centre.
- Our perceptions of safety aren't great even though they don't always mirror reality. Generally speaking, by international standards Dublin is a safe city.
- Nightlife and the city at night tend to get forgotten as we still have a very 9-to-5 attitude. For what happens afterwards, the people who work and travel in those economies don't feel safe, even if there isn't any great reason for that.
- A lot of simple things that aren't hugely expensive can be achieved without having to go through a detailed or drawn-out planning process, such as improving lighting and creating attractive and flexible spaces.
- With no monetary or employment value attributed to the NTE, DublinTown is looking at things like demand for public transport. In Belfast, they quantified how much an SOS bus saves their A&E department. If we're able to have the council, business and transport companies all sharing that information, that's using technology and data so we can advocate properly for the NTE.
- People working in sectors which are becoming more 24-hour focused, deserve quality experience, public transport and connection. The more we can quantify and justify the focus and spend, the better.

Tony O'Donnell, Chief Superintendent, Kevin Street Garda Station

- Recorded or reported crime is down on 2019 but there is a perception of safety and communities such as LGBTQI+ and females that have genuine concerns. Diversity and ethnic liaison officers communicate with these social groups to give them encouragement and reinforcement.
- Gardaí aren't afraid to go out at night but they have brought out more specialist units as a PR campaign to show capacity and capabilities.
- The main challenge in the NTE since COVID-19 is how to get people out safely given that premises close together at 2 or 3 o'clock. With only ten 24-hour bus routes and twelve Nitelinks, until the BusConnects programme expands, all those people together at the one time are difficult for the Gardaí.
- There's a great opportunity and benefit if the new legislation comes in with the liquor licensing to introduce staggered opening, as the Gardaí could disperse people over a longer term.

Jo Cox-Brown, Founding Director and CEO of Night Time Economy Solutions

- Globally, approximately 50% of women say they don't feel safe in towns and cities at night-time and the safety of LGBTQI+ people is also more in focus.
- In London, the Metropolitan Police didn't feel safe policing at night-time and often encountered difficult problems. The first-ever 'policing the NTE' training course has been rolled out to 4,000 officers in the UK. We should think about how we keep venues and those who operate them safe and how we help them operate safely. For example, vulnerability and anti-sexual harassment training was rolled out to some NTE venues in Ireland.
- Staggered licensing worked effectively in Nottingham, where no premises on the same street closed within half an hour of each other. There was an instant reduction of 14% in violence against person crime and antisocial behaviour due to the way they could disband people across the city.
- Nottingham, Bath, Manchester and Chester set up safe spaces or buses in areas of high footfall for people to go to if they feel unsafe, drunk or need first aid or help. Staffed with trained volunteers, security and medics, these spaces are taking about 30 people off the police or A&E each night. Costing £80,000 to run and saving about £2 million in resources p.a., they've been really successful around the UK. Dublin could consider something similar.
- In Manchester, over 100 student street angels became ambassadors to help young people and talk to them about alcohol, drugs and mental health.
- Technology will play a really big part in people's safety at night-time. The SafeUp and Where You At apps enable people to find their friends or report issues, and the Safer app allows women to walk home and have a guardian with them. Cities should adopt one technology and share it broadly.

Panel 2: Place & Mobility

Liz Halpin, Head of Dublin, Fáilte Ireland

- In a 2022 survey, about 84% of people claimed they were really satisfied with Dublin's offering, while sometimes not everything stays open as long as you would expect. Dublin has a perception of having a great nightlife. One of the challenges is to expand the night-time offering so that there are lots of activities that are reflective of a diverse market and different interests.
- The animation of the public space is really important for visitors. Music is an example of something we're associated with, so how do we gather all the vibrant opportunities to interact with visitors to elevate our offering?
- While we're in a strong position, there are plenty of things we can continue to do, so Fáilte Ireland is working closely with lots of partners on the NTE. Dublin has a real breadth of offerings but not everybody knows about it, due to a very defined footprint of where we typically go. How do we open up new parts of the city for people to explore, and how do we disperse visitors so that the benefit of tourism is extended beyond that hotspot in the city?
- We shouldn't underestimate the importance of front-of-house staff and Dubliners, because part of a visitor experience is the authentic experience of Dublin, so what's right for the resident will benefit the visitor.

Deirdre Scully, Acting City Planner, Dublin City Council

- The most recent City Development Plan for 2022-2028 has a dedicated chapter on culture. Both the economy and culture chapters have strong references, policies and objectives in regard to supporting the NTE.
- Effective place and public realm design to support NTE activities is vital because whatever activity someone engages in, they always move through public space. How that space is managed and how the experience is, are all crucial, because that's being part of Dublin.
- Planning the spaces to host public events is an essential part of making a city work for its people. We need places to gather and relax while being able to do that in a way that's comfortable, attractive, pleasant, well-lit and, critically, that people feel safe, secure and overlooked.
- It's about the type of uses and location, particularly high-number uses and their relationship with public transport and connectivity. The last Development Plan included 'cultural clusters,' but it's about looking at that in a wider sense and the use of the NTE, how we position that in the city and what type of relationship it has with the residential population.
- It's about ensuring the services and connectivity so that when someone leaves somewhere, it's a short walk to a wide range of public transport that lets them safely and efficiently exit the city.

Anne Graham, CEO, National Transport Authority

- The NTA receives funding to put services in place and through the BusConnects plans, the authority seeks to deliver more in terms of public transport to assist the NTE and those that work early and late shifts.

- As the national taxi regulator, a challenge is that the taxi industry suffered a loss during COVID-19, with driver numbers in Dublin still down about 4%. Another issue is the willingness of taxi drivers to work at night-time, which is around business as well as how safe they feel.
- NTA's checks and customer surveys suggest the availability of taxis in Dublin is reasonably good, albeit challenging at peak times. There is a need to grow the industry and the NTA is trying to find ways of incentivising it.
- The NTA wants to deliver more mobility and access to services on a 24-hour basis. The challenge is getting resources, trying to attract people into transport and delivery on the public transport and taxi sides. The goal is to deliver as many services as possible, make those services as accessible as possible and allow passengers and drivers to feel as safe as possible.
- Women don't feel as safe on public transport. There's a big job in getting the mobility up to support the NTE and to make it safe for all.

Tim Graham, Dublin Place Brand

- Dublin Place Brand is about creating a reputation so people want to come to the city and the NTE is part of that. It's about what the city does, as that's what resonates with people. The NTE is a big draw to those who want to live and work here. Getting that right, and everything around it, including transport, mobility, and safety, is very important to promote that reputation.
- A huge part of Smart Cities is about data and technology. We need to look at the data as a whole, not just economic data, to see what brings people into the city, mine that data deeply, use it and compare it to other places. It's also about bringing in applications and new technology ideas from elsewhere. For example, Malaysia has a 'park easy' app, which is real-time information that tells you exactly where you can park, as well as apps to carpool, which cuts down on pollution levels. Smart Dublin conducted a pilot project with an autonomous bus a few years ago on the quays, which worked very well.
- The most important thing is collaboration and stakeholder engagement, and ideas will also come from talking to people in different communities. At the UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) conference about culture in cities, someone from Portugal had set up an 'ideas hub' that brought in lots of people and generated some brilliant ideas, which could be piloted.

Panel 3: Policy and Regulation

Aidan Sweeney, Head of Enterprise and Regulatory Affairs and Head of Dublin and Eastern Regional Policy, Ibec

- There are sectors of the economy, essential workers, and people working around the clock who also participate in the NTE, so it's a lot broader than just the cultural aspect. The NTE is also important because multinationals are trying to retain people, so quality of life, vibrancy, and being seen to be inclusive and safe are all crucial.

- Regarding the value of the NTE, it's direct jobs and indirect jobs that power the economy. The experience economy is vast and if you take everybody involved, the number of jobs in terms of total economic value is important.
- Policy and regulations are not all the responsibility of the city council as there are numerous players. We want to tackle the cost base and make sure regulations are fit for purpose.
- Pubs are closing and footfall is down. When benchmarked against Paris or UK cities, Dublin is hollowed-out. We don't have enough people on the doorstep and we're relying on transport-oriented development. That's one of the critical things that's in the power of a local authority to do, with zoning.
- We're going to have to factor in the tremendous amount of cost rises placed on NTE businesses, particularly around the labour market changes. We'll have to think about practical things to alleviate those pressures, whether that's around the commercial rates system, tables and chairs and other licensing that local authorities might have, or inspections and red tape.
- One challenge we're going to have, and something the city council can support, is looking at the residential zoned land tax to see if venues are going to start disappearing because of policies.
- We need to resource the OPW venues and galleries and address staff issues if they want to open later. The more things we can do to support different activities for people, the better.
- With the NTE Task Force, you have the economy but you forgot the business community. Everybody has a stake in getting this right, it's the bigger picture because it's about us being able to retain staff and operate at different times, move around safely, and support the vibrancy of incoming tourists, that's the real goal here. Let's build a proper alliance to get this done.

Fiona Collins, Night-Time Economy Advisor, Cork City Council

- The NTE Advisor role is one of coordinator that involves going into the city council and setting up a steering group followed by an action plan that would start after Christmas. The nice thing about the pilot scheme is being able to try new things and see what sticks.
- Cork had a 30% increase in people living in the city over the last four years. There were some good initiatives where outdoor dining added to what was there. It was about having different conversations, collating the information, working with the data and then seeing what could be done to improve.
- What can we do to advance the experience of people living in the city and neighbourhoods so they feel they can go out and do things in the evening? Cork has a lot of European visitors looking for a late-night café culture. Only a few venues have late-night openings. In terms of growing grassroots venues, there's Cork's Electronic Music Council and the increase in dance music, so it's about seeing what we can do with the different elements.
- An alliance is a great way to bring the many different aspects of the NTE together. There's a huge chance for us to set a benchmark for where our NTE is. We're far behind the UK but there's no reason we can't get there quickly.

Sunil Sharpe, Founder, Give Us The Night

- We should be careful not to overstate the re-imagination of nightlife and alienate those in the NTE doing a good job. We had a chance to reform licensing laws but it never happened, we're waiting a long time to do so.
- One major difference between Ireland and the UK is local authorities don't have the same NTE control, whether that's licensing, transport or policing.
- It's difficult to get people to work at night, and safety and transport are intrinsically linked. The perception of safety in the city is impacting our ability to attract drivers and people who want to work in late-night transport.
- Michael McDowell recently referred to a proposal within the update to the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2005, the built-in ability for local authorities to take more of an active role in licensing. This is where we could start to bring joined-up thinking together and become more proactive.
- Over the last five to ten years, it often seemed to be a young cohort that were socialising and older people felt they didn't want to be involved. We need some new venues, but not at the cost of existing ones. We don't have the 'trailblazers' bringing ideas, it's hard for creative thinkers to bring pizzazz.
- We need to hear from the Minister and the NTA about supporting free travel for night workers, which would make it easier for them and their employers.
- It's important the NTE isn't scapegoated when incidents happen, because there are more deeply rooted issues. There's a considerable chance to integrate international communities into nightlife via policy and culture.

Panel 4: Sustainability and Circular Economy

Sabrina Dekker, Climate Action Co-ordinator, Dublin City Council

- As part of the EU Mission for Climate Neutral Cities, Dublin City Council submitted pilot city applications in the first rounds to look at energy usage and transport. How can we create a sustainable circular energy system there, possibly denoting it as a positive energy area of the city? If there are renewables on the rooftops of certain buildings, then there's storage, so those businesses can save money by using that in the evening.
- On circularity and working businesses, what is the waste product that can be subsequently used by another business? Where are the connections, how do these link to each other? Do we reduce pressure on the energy system, because while people are out enjoying themselves, they're not using energy at home? However, there's an energy increase there so how do those play against each other and how do we balance that out?

- In Singapore, the night buses had bar stools based on the principle of dealing with noise pollution by containing everyone at the party destinations and transporting them home. In Salt Lake City, they looked at how to design the city and transport network around people who might be leaving venues inebriated. This was thinking about it from a different perspective, starting with safety and going forward to designing it so that it's simple for people.
- Recycling should be easy for somebody who's slightly inebriated to know where to put something and then it's perfected for everybody else.
- Given that it's such a quiet time of night, Dublin Bikes could be 24/7 (an easy win for everyone). How do we have a just transition to the NTE? Whose NTE is it? Are we speaking to the cultural values that people have?

Megan Best, CEO, Native Events and Director, Julia's Bicycles EU

- We compare badly to our NTE counterparts internationally. For example, in Amsterdam, outdoor events in the city centre now have to be connected to the grid and aren't allowed to use generators. In Manchester, there's a stock of reusable cups for markets and events supported by the city council and a mobile washing unit for those cups that moves from event to event. This has circular economy embedded in event production from the beginning.
- Work done around festivals on a greenfield site or in an urban space revealed that a lot of the waste coming out of them is single-use packaging for food. The huge number of waste characterisation studies at festivals in Ireland and the UK showed that food packaging is a serious issue, not necessarily in terms of carbon emissions, because waste processing isn't actually a huge carbon emitter, but in biosphere integrity, novel entities and plastics entering our oceans. Single-use in the first place is anti-circular economy.
- Other European cities like Berlin or Amsterdam have a phenomenal cycling infrastructure that is well-lit and easy to navigate.

Anna Walsh, Director, Theatre Forum and Co-Founder, Green Arts Initiative Ireland

- From the work with the Green Arts Initiative for arts centres, venues and theatres, the biggest issue concerning their sustainability is energy usage and efficiency. The largest carbon impact for production companies making the work to be presented on stages and at festivals is typically their accommodation and transport costs. Often forgotten, for those attending huge concerts, small gigs, late-night events or festivals, transport is the main issue. The availability of affordable and frequent 24-hour public transport is required to underpin the night-time and cultural economy.
- The Ireland edition of the Theatre Green book will be launched in early 2024 as a resource (adapted to Ireland) that deals with the issues around waste and production, including sets, lighting and energy usage in rehearsal rooms.

- There's a responsibility on Dublin City Council toward the arts and culture buildings under its control, management, leasehold or other arrangement, as they haven't been updated or upgraded to the energy standards they should be operating at. This must be a priority for every local authority. A big capital investment programme in every arts centre, arts building and cultural institution around the country is not only important for those organisations in their own sustainability and to attract future audiences, but also to set an example for sustainability and energy efficiency in their areas. It also makes that building more accessible, cheaper to run, and an attractive place for younger audiences that will attend shows in the city in future.

Ossian Smyth TD, Minister of State for Public Procurement, eGovernment and Circular Economy

- Circular economy is about keeping our resources and money in circulation locally and not thinking about dumping things and waste. It ties in with shopping and going out locally, which is pro-community, with people physically coming together. Nightlife is fundamentally environmentally friendly and efficient because you're using a building that would otherwise have been empty and buses that would have been in the garage. The whole thing should be environmentally friendly if we do it right.
- For stakeholders, transport is the main thing we've got to fix. Statistically, it's the emissions from transport causing the damage and there's great difficulty trying to persuade train companies to run services at night. People want to get a train instead of a bus because they know the journey time will be good, but at night, buses run really well. The government has cut bus fares significantly and is opening new services all the time, while delivering good night-bus services will be critical to supporting nightlife.
- Single-use plastics are much more of a problem at festivals because there's a lot of rubbish produced that builds up for several days, so it's a massive challenge. It shouldn't be like that in the city centre, because when someone is out in a permanent venue, they should be able to manage it. With the highest sales in Europe, multipacks will soon be gone from Ireland.
- The return schemes will launch on the 1st of February (2024) and local supermarkets will have a machine that people can put bottles and cans into and get money back. If people are being let out on the street, what are they being given for their pint glasses, plastic glasses that fold and crush or do you use deposit return schemes on plastic glasses that seem to work well?
- What is the logic of shutting Dublin Bikes at a certain time of night, did the insurers insist, was it precautionary or would they try extended hours?
- One reason to retrofit arts and cultural buildings is to reduce the amount of heating and cooling, resulting in less noise pollution.



INTRODUCTION

The Night Time Economy Summit took place on the 30th of November 2023 in the Project Arts Centre, Dublin. It was led by the Economic Development Office of Dublin City Council in collaboration with the Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste, supported by key stakeholders and hosted in alignment with the Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan. The aim of the summit was to bring together key stakeholders, industry experts, and representatives to discuss the significance of the night time economy in Dublin and explore its sustainable growth.

The summit commenced with Chairperson of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC, Cllr Tom Brabazon introducing the programme and aims as Chair of the event, followed by a welcome address by Cllr Hazel Chu, who attended on behalf of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, a keynote address by Jo Cox-Brown and a series of panel discussions with key individuals including Minister Ossian Smyth.

As part of introducing the summit and programme, Cllr Brabazon stated:

'The Night Time Economy is so important to Dublin, the insights shared will inform stakeholders regarding future policy formulation and strategies relevant to the night-time economy development in Dublin and further afield. Thank you in advance to the many stakeholders discussing how to enhance and develop Dublin's NTE on the panel discussions and sharing insights via keynote addresses on key themes.'

The summit sought to exemplify the NTE by incorporating various arts and cultural performances along with food experiences. This included collaboration with Project Arts Centre for the venue, Festival in a Van for the arts and culture performances, and local food enterprises and social enterprises: Third Space, a social enterprise café based in Smithfield; Rua Food, specializing in healthy sweet treats; Zaira, Lebanese cuisine with a Brazilian twist; and Sushi King based on Baggot Street. The event also sought to embed and demonstrate sustainability and circular economy principles by commissioning local food suppliers and Vytal, a sustainable packaging system for food and beverages, to provide reusable bowls to cater at the event, as well as utilising reusable lanyards and name badges.

During the summit, stakeholders shared insights, ideas and examples regarding the need, challenges and opportunities of developing the NTE in Dublin and further afield. This outcomes report provides an account of the insights shared by contributors along with an extensive overview of the summit. It will be disseminated to inform national government, policymakers, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Night-Time Economy Summit represented the 2023 iteration of the annual Dublin City Summit Series. The series is an initiative of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC). Each summit brings together key stakeholders including policymakers, elected officials, experts and practitioners to share insights in order to encourage greater collaboration, awareness and development regarding policy issues and challenges facing the city. After each summit, an Outcomes Report comprised of contributions is produced to support policy formulation, knowledge sharing and economic development. Previous summits in the series and the associated outcomes reports include Brexit Summit 2016, Infrastructure Summit 2017, Apprenticeship Summit 2018, Social Enterprise Summit 2019, Reset Summit 2020, and SoCircular 2022.

The summit was structured on four interlinked themes, which although not exhaustive, represent key elements regarding the development of the night-time economy. Each theme was the focus of a panel discussion. Panellists were asked to contribute regarding their context, insights, examples and recommendations on improving the panel topic.

The four themes and panel discussions were:

- Safety & Security
- Place & Mobility
- Policy & Regulations
- Sustainability & Circular Economy

The Night-Time Economy Summit programme was:

Introduction - Cllr. Tom Brabazon

Welcome Address - Cllr. Hazel Chu

Keynote Address - Jo Cox-Brown

Arts / Cultural Performance - John Cummins

Panel 1 Safety & Security - Frank Lambe, Gerard (Gerry) Farrell, Anthony (Tony) O'Donnell, Jo Cox-Brown. Moderator: Cllr Tom Brabazon

Panel 2 Place & Mobility - Liz Halpin, Deirdre Scully, Anne Graham, Tim Graham. Moderator: Anthony Flynn

Arts / Cultural Performance - Lapree Lala

Panel 3 Sustainability & Circular Economy - Aidan Sweeney, Fiona Collins, Sunil Sharpe. Moderator: Mary Mac Sweeney

Panel 4 Governance & Regulations - Sabrina Dekker, Megan Best, Anna Walsh, Minister Ossian Smyth. Moderator: Norman Thompson

Arts / Cultural Performance - Sister Fenix

Networking & Reception

This outcomes report provides an account of the insights shared by contributors and an extensive overview of the summit. This report and the Night-Time Economy Summit were collaboratively supported by and developed in alignment with:



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Dublin City
Development Plan
2022-2028



Give Us
The Night



DUBLIN
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RUA



WELCOME ADDRESS

In opening the Night Time Economy Summit on behalf of Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste, Councillor Hazel Chu claimed it was an honour to be at the event and was delighted to welcome everyone – panellists, colleagues, and other councillors. Before passing over to Jo Cox-Brown to deliver the keynote, Cllr Chu expressed the great pleasure of working with Ms Cox-Brown on a number of projects and that it was amazing to have her present.

Cllr Chu described the night-time economy as incredibly diverse, dynamic and important to Dublin. It involves numerous stakeholders, sectors and an immersive and engaging array of all kinds of cultural, hospitality, sport, health, education, retail, festival and entertainment activity. This activity, which takes place during the approximate hours of 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., is an intrinsic part of living, working, visiting and learning in the city. She explained how it contributes to the economy, societal development, the promotion of culture and heritage and ultimately, to the unique identity of Dublin.

She suggested, 'Although we appreciate that Dublin has a renowned night-time economy, we also know that it needs to be nurtured, developed and improved. We want our night-time economy to be one that is inclusive, accessible, safe, sustainable and equitable for residents, businesses, participants and visitors alike. We want our night-time economy to be one for all those who live, work, visit or learn in our city.'

Councillor Chu was delighted to sit on the NTE National Task Force put together by Minister Catherine Martin's Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in 2020.

She highlighted the funding for soundproofing, NTE events and NTE officers around the country, with Dublin interviewing for a night-time advisor soon. She was encouraged to see the great progress over the last few years, made possible by people at the summit contributing to various parts of the city.

She outlined how the Lord Mayor, her fellow councillors, Dublin City Council and numerous stakeholders would be discussing how we develop and nurture the different aspects of the night-time economy. The summit underscored the power of collaborative discussions on enhancing night-time activities and experiences while considering and incorporating the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders. With insightful panel discussions led by industry thought leaders, policymakers and topic experts, Cllr Chu referred to their significant expertise and experience.

While engaging in meaningful conversations about the challenges and opportunities associated with Dublin's night-time economy was the aim of the event, she felt she would be remiss in not mentioning the chaos of the previous week and the challenges faced as a city since then. What she found heartening was the various people gathered at the event who were interested in helping to build the NTE. She concluded, 'Dublin is something that is important in all our hearts. Dublin is our city so we need to make sure it's kept vibrant and safe. We need to encourage as many people as possible to be part of it, so thank you for coming here today to be involved in the discussion and please encourage everyone to visit our great city in the coming weeks.'



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Founding Director and CEO of [Night Time Economy Solutions](#), Jo Cox-Brown is an expert on the UK High Streets Task Force with over 16 years of experience in night-time economy management.

Ms Cox-Brown expressed delight in seeing so many people gathered. She introduced herself as the founder of Night Time Economy Solutions, having worked in night-time economy management for over 16 years. While working for Mars Chocolate as head of gang and plantation management, Nottingham was designated the most dangerous city in the UK after dark for gun and knife crime. Mars proposed that Ms Cox-Brown's experience of dealing with gangs and plantations around the world and her love of nightlife and organising raves and festivals in her spare time would make her an ideal loan to Nottingham city centre as its NTE Manager. Describing it as the best decision she ever made, Ms Cox-Brown went on to become the NTE Manager for Manchester city centre, paving the way for the incredible work Sasha Lord is doing across Greater Manchester. She now runs her own company, working globally to help cities and towns become safer, more inclusive and diverse after dark. She also works with incredible businesses, festivals and big nightclub groups, like Broadwick Enterprises and Boiler Room, supporting them to grow safely.

Ms Cox-Brown remarked that she had the absolute pleasure of working alongside the Irish Government, Dublin City Council, and Sunil Sharpe from Give Us The Night over the last four years. 'It's been incredible to watch the team grow, learn, campaign for and put in place really splendid and ground-breaking projects for Ireland. This includes the 11 NTE Advisors in core towns and cities, late-night events, pilot

programmes, funding for nightclubs and late-night venues, a programme of cultural events over the summer, €800,000 in funding to support arts centres and cultural spaces to open later, and the ever-hopeful extended licensing hours.’ She believed these initiatives need to be congratulated and the trajectory is positive, but there is still so much to achieve until there is equity with the daytime economy. She was really excited to see what happens next and considered conversations such as these to be a vital part of any growth strategy.

Ms Cox-Brown revealed that the NTE, operating between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., accounts for approximately 4.1% of any area’s economy and 27% of the workforce. Thus, it’s a sector that cannot be ignored and needs proper investment, care and attention to grow in a healthy and sustainable way. She pointed out that anyone who has ever been to Dublin or any Irish city will affirm, we have an incredible and vibrant nightlife, but one that stops early in comparison to our EU and global competitors and where perception and reality are somewhat fractured. She painted the scene as people coming to Ireland expecting a vibrant and modern nightlife and instead, as the sun sets on the Liffey and darkness descends over the 700-odd pubs, late-night bars and nightclubs as they fill with people looking for a great night out and last orders, they finish at 12.30 or maybe 2.30 if we’re lucky. ‘In comparison to other EU cities, such as Lisbon, Barcelona and Paris that operate nearly 24 hours, this can leave people out on the street hunting for more, which in turn, can lead to violence, vulnerability, antisocial behaviour and illegal parties.’ She emphasised that this reduces our economic potential and viability by, for example, negatively impacting the ability to draw income from big-name stars, many of whom might perform until six o’clock in the morning if given the opportunity, attracting thousands of people from around the world.

Ms Cox-Brown asked about those people coming to Dublin who don’t drink or visit for personal or religious reasons and those who increasingly work at night. While the diversity of after dark has seen some attention and there have been some incredible changes in transport towards 24-hour services in Dublin and Cork, these need further attention. She also advised that we prepare for the impending NTE revolution characterised by huge shifts in how people use towns and cities at night. As we’re somewhat playing catch-up at the moment, she wonders what’s going to happen in three or five years’ time.

During COVID-19, the NTE saw a retraction but like anyone pulling a bow, we'll see it move forward at excessive speed in the near future. It's bouncing back in a really different way and is the only part of the economy in true growth, at approximately 6%, despite closures and difficult trading conditions, so being prepared to welcome the future is essential.' Ms Cox-Brown therefore urged participants to take the themes of the summit seriously – safety and security, place and mobility, policy and regulation, and sustainability and the circular economy. She said we can no longer afford to treat the NTE as the naughty, more complicated sibling of the daytime economy by just dealing with its problems. Rather, we must recognise it for the valuable contribution it makes to an area's vibrancy and prosperity both in terms of income and employment, and design it in anticipation of the likely problems before they occur by learning from the past. She cautioned that we can't afford to make the same mistakes as before, where we're playing catch-up in trying to design the problems that we could have designed out in the first place.

More people living in cities creates a tension between businesses, governments, stakeholders, police forces, transport providers and others. People are drinking less year-on-year and traditional pubs and clubs are closing – some because of increased costs, lack of demand as times change, or regeneration; some because cities naturally ebb and flow; and some because overly restrictive legislation and a lack of mediation in the NTE mean that we're forcibly closing some venues. Ms Cox-Brown explained that this is impacting how young people party. Globally, there is a 50% increase in illegal raves, parties and unlicensed venues, which is putting young people at risk, and a 30% increase in festivals. The global drugs survey showed a 20% growth year-on-year in the use of drugs in young people, with one in twenty aged 18 to 25 now taking recreational drugs on a regular basis as a rite of passage. Conversely, this cohort is drinking 20% less year-on-year. She also cited an increase in the sobriety movement and conscious clubbing, with [Resident Advisor](#) reporting an approximate 30% rise in conscious clubbing last year.

There is a need for people to be able to come into towns and cities safely and one of the reasons pressure points often build in cities is because we cannot get people in and out fast enough. Ms Cox-Brown outlined that changing working trends in the gig economy, with more people than ever becoming self-employed and working global hours, particularly in non-traditional NTE settings, means we need to provide for those people in terms of 24-hour transport, hospitality, services and shopping. She referenced the growth in healthcare, warehousing, financial and legal industries at night, saying that these people aren't used to

working and being in NTE settings unless they're going out and that we need to learn how to handle these people alongside the existing NTE.

Ms Cox-Brown asked if we are prepared for the global trend shifts towards experiential events, raves, festivals and night markets and if we have the spaces to enable this to happen. She noted the death of retail, empty properties on the rise, and a revitalisation of new and empty high-street properties into creative hubs and workspaces, giving the example of Gravity in London attracting 30% more footfall than the Debenhams before it. She also spoke about the 'meanwhile' spaces cropping up across the world, such as the one she set up to support 30 young people operating in one space. They have the opportunity for six months to see if they can run a business before they move onto other spaces, all based around creative industries. There is also a huge increase in the consumption of electronic music, which has grown 20% year-on-year, and yet there aren't necessarily the spaces for that to grow at the moment, hence the rise in raves and festivals.

'Mid-scale and independent cultures, specifically-led dining by new cultures and people who are immigrating to Ireland are wanting to set up food businesses, but they don't know how, maybe because of the language barrier or different policies to their home countries, and this can lead to challenges.' Interactive arts and culture is on the rise. Canada is seeing big growth in the 'other ship,' which is a health, spirituality, community and wellness centre being established right across towns and cities. Young people are flooding to these centres that operate 24 hours a day, offering breath work, yoga, and ice baths. Ms Cox-Brown wondered if we are ready for this big shift into wellness.

Ms Cox-Brown brought up the topic of big technical innovations, such as virtual reality, asking if we understand how those are going to impact our cities at night. She works with a big nightclub group that plans to bring a DJ into one space and then port them into other global venues to cut down on transport and travel. She deemed these to be exciting moves that we need to prepare for.

In practice, she stated, it means we need to have a very clear vision and bring all stakeholders along with this united vision for a city at night to thrive. This involves setting up a working group to oversee the NTE, working in partnership, combining knowledge, data, resources and finances, and engaging in serious discussions on key topics. She acknowledged that we need to agree that sometimes we will disagree, but that we need to work together to find common

ground and have these difficult conversations now or it will break down our relationships in the future. 'There needs to be a strategy that we're held accountable for to the general public, stakeholders and each other to move forward. That vision needs to be harmonious and coexist with commercial, residential and cultural developments. We need to embrace things like agents of change and look at how those would be handled consistently and fairly in planning and operational environments.' Something Ms Cox-Brown noticed in every town and city that she works with is that we do not work consistently or necessarily fairly in both the planning and operational stages, and that really does need to change.

She emphasised the importance of alignment and the need to align the stakeholder vision, strategy and policies to support the presence of a thriving NTE, knowing that culture needs to be at the heart of any regeneration and footfall as it adds diversity to a thriving economy and strengthens the economic foundation. She advocated that we set up cultural and NTE boards with allocated budgets for every major town and city to support the appointed NTE Advisors to successfully implement their roles, ensuring that there's an offer fit for users and non-users. This is very important because wherever she works, there's a proportion of people who don't use their towns and cities at night because they don't feel safe, it's not accessible or there's no offer for them.

She suggested a research-driven approach to ensure we deliver what people want and what the trends tell us. As we regenerate, we need to make sure not to push out arts and culture in an unhealthy way but to create a space where they can thrive. She cited [Broadwick Enterprises](#) that has a number of very successful nightclubs and works closely with landowners to make sure their cultural spaces are not dislodged as and when new developments are being built. The team talks to residents to make them aware of exactly what they're moving into.

Ms Cox-Brown spoke about the need to invest in local areas to create a specific offer because the days when people were happy to turn up in cookie-cutter places that all look exactly the same are gone and they want places that give them a unique flavour. In creating NTE businesses, she advised thinking about the uniqueness of the business and its offering. 'We need to create a supported environment for artists, creatives, freelancers, musicians and performances so that there are very clear pathways for growth inclusive of grassroots as well as established and emerging professionals.'

She stressed that we need to ensure a place is fit for purpose during the day and night by creating place management strategies. In the audits she performs by walking around cities at night, Ms Cox-Brown shared examples of unreadable signposts in black and silver, the yellow glow of the doom lights that evoke the Grim Reaper and dark alleyways. Describing this to councillors and police forces who have never walked around an area they're responsible for at night-time, she wondered why they're not auditing it by looking at it with fresh eyes. She proposed taking businesses and residents on the walk too, referring to a night-time audit and walk with the police, council, statutory services and businesses in Westminster, where 75% of women expressed feeling unsafe at night. 'The women explained why they felt unsafe in the area and everyone said it was the most eye-opening walk they'd ever taken in their lives as they looked at the area afresh. How many times have we audited Dublin or Cork to see what's really happening at night-time?'

Ms Cox-Brown recommended taking into the key summit themes that every city needs to be perceived as and actually be safe and secure, that every city and business operating at night needs to be operating sustainably and within the circular economy, and that we need effective policies and regulations, as licensing plays a critical and essential role in ensuring a safe and responsible operation of businesses at night-time.



John Cummins, Poetician



L-R: Gerry Farrell, Tony O'Donnell, Frank Lambe, Jo Cox-Brown, Cllr Tom Brabazon

PANEL 1: SAFETY & SECURITY

- *Frank Lambe, City Recovery Manager at Dublin City Council with responsibility for the inner city.*
- *Gerard (Gerry) Farrell, Operations Director of business representative group DublinTown that represents over 2,000 businesses and is responsible for marketing Dublin as a vibrant destination.*
- *Anthony (Tony) O'Donnell, Chief Superintendent based in Kevin Street Garda Station, a role which has provided him with years of experience in safety and security.*
- *Jo Cox-Brown, Founder of Night Time Economy Solutions.*
- *Moderator: Councillor Tom Brabazon, Chairperson of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, Dublin City Council*

After praising the performance of poet John Cummins, Cllr Tom Brabazon opened proceedings for the first panel discussion on safety and security by asking the contributors to introduce themselves and their organisations.

Frank Lambe works in area management of the city centre as the City Recovery Manager, a title bestowed as a result of COVID-19 but an ongoing process. While this role involves managing the basics, such as public lighting and cleaning, a very important part of it is coordinating and working with business representative groups, the Gardaí and all of the other agencies to make sure the city centre is as attractive as it can be.

Gerry Farrell defined DublinTown as being funded by businesses of the city centre to promote the city and ensure that people have an enjoyable time when

they come into it. With a particular focus on the night-time and evening economy, Mr Farrell is the Purple Flag coordinator and is also involved in some of the festivals and events run by DublinTown as well as those held in conjunction with Dublin City Council, Fáilte Ireland, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, the Gardaí and many other city stakeholders.

Tony O'Donnell is the Chief Superintendent for the South Central Division that stretches south of the River Liffey to UCD and from the coast to Bluebell. The city centre, which is the Dublin City Council area, falls under the North Central Division and his colleague Paddy McMenamin. Mr O'Donnell is the commander for the area, responsible for its policing and for one of four regional communication centres (Garda Síochána DMR Control Centre), which is based in Heuston Station and deals with approximately half a million 999 calls or calls for service per year.

Cllr Tom Brabazon asked: What are some of the major challenges and opportunities you've seen in connection with the NTE regarding safety and security?

Jo Cox-Brown commented that women's safety is increasingly becoming a priority. Globally, over 50% of women approximately say they don't feel safe in towns and cities at night-time. The safety of LGBTQI+ people is also on the increase, and Ms Cox-Brown recently wrote the first NTE strategy for Cardiff for the LGBTQI+ community because of increased attacks on them. 'Unfortunately, as we saw with the riots in Dublin last week, we're increasingly seeing people from ethnic communities or global majorities not feeling safe at night-time. When it comes to safety, we need to be thinking about minority groups and how we keep them safe at night-time.'

She highlighted that we need to be thinking about the Gardaí, giving London as an example. Her company delivered the first-ever 'policing the NTE' training course because the Metropolitan Police said their staff didn't feel safe policing at night-time – they were often encountering problems and didn't know how to deal with them and were being accused of issues such as sexual assault against women, racism or homophobia. The training has been rolled out to 4,000 officers across the UK. 'In London in particular, and I expect it's the same in Dublin, we were seeing that officers do not feel necessarily safe, numbers are reduced and therefore it is an issue. We need to keep those that are keeping us safe, safe too.' Ms Cox-Brown stressed that we should think about how we keep our venues

and those who operate them safe and how we help them to operate safely. She mentioned the vulnerability and anti-sexual-harassment training that her company rolled out to some NTE venues across Ireland in 2022, the importance of policies to keep people safe and looking at safety from the total aspect of it.

Mr Farrell referred to the huge challenges and some of the issues of the previous week crystallising some of those challenges. Going back to Ms Cox-Brown's point, he is part of the local Community Safety Partnership, a multiagency group that features the Gardaí and is a pilot scheme looking at the northside of the city. DublinTown conducted a survey about women's perception of safety in addition to an annual public perception survey with Red C of a 1,000+ focus group about what people like or don't like about the city and what brings them in and keeps them out. 'For years, the number one issue was always around either safety or access and they marry into each other. In the last few years, we've been trending down, and I think some of that is a hangover from COVID-19 in that people developed new patterns of behaviour and weren't coming into the city centre. The perceptions of the city centre were very negative and while it takes a long time to develop a habit, it takes less time to break it.'

Acknowledging that we haven't fully reintegrated people back into the city centre due to changes with working from home, for example, Mr Farrell said our perceptions of safety aren't great even though those perceptions don't always mirror the reality. He appreciated that might sound strange in the context of what happened the previous Thursday, but from talking to Mr O'Donnell and his colleagues and reviewing crime statistics, he believed that we're dealing with quality of life and perception issues more so. Commenting on the reality that one assault is one too many, generally speaking, by any international standards Dublin is a very safe city.

Mr Farrell praised several great events held over the previous months with the Gardaí, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Dublin City Council and Fáilte Ireland, such as the band Shakalak playing in Capel Street, switching on the Christmas lights amidst a large number of families, and the women's World Cup homecoming event on O'Connell Street that attracted a fantastic crowd with young children coming to see their sporting heroes. He referred to Ms Cox-Brown laying out brilliantly in her opening address about the different challenges and how they don't marry. He thought that nightlife and the city at night tend to get forgotten, that we still have a very nine-to-five attitude, and for what happens afterwards, the people who work and

travel in those economies don't feel safe, even if there isn't any great reason for that.

He spoke about looking at things with fresh eyes, as is happening with the Purple Flag and the Community Safety Partnership. While he appreciated that some initiatives are long-term, such as having a metro in 2040, there are a lot of quick wins that can be achieved without having to go through the planning process, such as improving lighting and creating attractive and flexible spaces. He gave the example of the 'light night' events in Leeds, where they have light-up seesaws for the enjoyment of people of all ages. 'There are simple things we can do that aren't hugely expensive and don't require very detailed or drawn-out planning permission. That is beginning and maybe if there's any kernel of positivity we can get out of the horrible events of last week, it's that it might focus attitudes on what can we do and do quickly to make sure people feel safe and welcome coming into their city.'

Cllr Brabazon noted that Dublin does feel safe and that he counted 24 Gardaí in uniform on a walk from Capel Street to O'Connell Street, which was very reassuring.

Mr O'Donnell referred to perception versus reality as touched on by Mr Farrell. Without hanging his hat on crime statistics due to the possibility of various interpretations, he clarified that recorded or reported crime (assaults or public order offences) was down on 2019 before COVID-19. 'But there is a perception of safety and there are communities such as LGBTQI+ and females that have genuine concerns. In Ireland, we have diversity and ethnic liaison officers communicating with those social groups to give them encouragement and reinforcement. We have initiatives in certain locations and venues where the details of those officers are available to support them.'

He was thankful that none of his Gardaí were afraid to go out at night but to Ms Cox-Brown's point, since the summer time they had brought out more pros or specialist units, such as the public order and mounted unit. This was more of a PR campaign to show capacity and capabilities as opposed to an immediate need. He cited the photo opportunities with the mounted unit in St Stephen's Green, which attempted to link in with other stakeholders to provide that reassurance piece.

Mr O'Donnell identified the main challenge in the NTE since COVID-19 as how to get people out safely given that all the premises close together at two or three o'clock. With only ten 24-hour bus routes and twelve Nitelinks in operation, until the BusConnects programme expands, all those people together at the one time are difficult for the Gardaí. 'We see great opportunity if the new legislation ever comes in with the liquored licensing to get staggered opening. We would be in favour of people coming in and enjoying themselves, but if we could disperse them over a longer term, it would benefit us.' Pointing to the fact that a lot of workers and trade in both the daytime and night-time economies takes place in December, Mr O'Donnell confirmed there would be an enhanced presence on the streets that would be kept under review for the rest of 2023 to safeguard that as much as possible.

Ms Cox-Brown stated she would be happy to chat to Mr O'Donnell about staggered licensing as it worked effectively in Nottingham, where no premises on the same street closed within half an hour of each other. There was an instant reduction of 14% in violence against person crime and antisocial behaviour due to the way they could distribute people out across the city safely and get taxis and buses, so she lauded the vision.

Mr Lambe remarked that the city council was very much involved in basics such as public lighting, with the continuous public lighting upgrade process, and keeping the city centre clean, with the enhanced cleaning regime. He indicated that there's a lot more we need to do and that no one agency can do everything in relation to the NTE, saying it is about aligning the council's efforts with the Gardaí and the business community. Picking up the point about an audit, Mr Lambe said we need to know what we mean by NTE and what the challenges are at night-time for people in the city. Dublin City Council did an audit a few months prior about how the city was perceived and how the city was at night, somewhat focused on public lighting and lighting generally. 'It was an eye-opener to see some simple things that could be done that wouldn't take an awful lot, such as businesses leaving on their lights behind the shop window shutters at night to keep the streets bright for people walking through them.'

The council plans further audits to identify the big challenges faced in the city, but there is a whole range of things it's currently involved in. There is a process to recruit an NTE Advisor, which is really important to develop a strategy and implement a series of plans. Mr Lambe reiterated the importance of working together, outlining cooperation with the Gardaí and the reactivation

of the 'Better City for All' initiative from a few years ago that will bring focus to the challenges in the city and what needs to be done to address those. The council also works with the Dublin City Centre Business Forum, and the supports that the council gives to the hospitality industry in the city by way of licensing outdoor furniture, for example, is significant. 'Seeing that animation on the city streets and people in the city lends to the feeling of safety, as it's safety in numbers, and a busy city is a safer city and something we need to aim for.'

Cllr Brabazon mentioned that when Dublin was twinned with San Jose (as a sister city), one of the initiatives in their version of DublinTown was having volunteer escorts trained and vetted by the local police to escort people from venues to public transport nodes. He said that it seemed to work very well to get people into the city and might be something to look at.

Mr Lambe confirmed that Dublin City Council had begun to explore the idea that there's a lot of private security working with the hospitality industry in the city at night, some of whom are employed by the council. 'We could see these people as more than just security – they could be ambassadors to help people move around the city and offer assistance and guidance because it's an untapped resource that we could maybe do more with.'

Ms Cox-Brown cited the cities of Nottingham, Bath, Manchester and Chester, where her company set up safe spaces or safe buses in areas of high footfall. They put in trained volunteers, security staff and medics working alongside partners. These places are for people to go to if they don't feel safe, if they need first aid, if they've drunk too much or if they're suffering from a mental health condition. 'We're seeing those spaces are taking about 30 people off the police or A&E every night. They cost around £80,000 to run and are generally saving about £2 million in resources every year. They've been really successful around the UK and I think Dublin should consider something similar.'

Another idea mooted by Ms Cox-Brown was student street angels. In Manchester, over 100 students were recruited to go out onto the streets and deal with young people, becoming ambassadors to not only carry flip flops and water but also to talk to them about issues such as alcohol, drugs and mental health. Her company gave 10 training courses to the ambassadors in these topics and dealing with conflict, describing how young people were able to talk to their peers about these types of issues. She elaborated that it's helped the

ambassadors to secure jobs afterwards, with a lot of them going into the police force, ambulance service or healthcare systems as a result of getting that experience. She proposed it as something we could absolutely think of for Dublin and other Irish cities, as an excellent way of supporting young people to gain employment and skills.

Cllr Brabazon asked the panellists if they saw technology as having a role to play.

'Absolutely,' responded Ms Cox-Brown, noting that Night Time Economy Solutions is working closely with the SafeUp and Where You At apps that enable people on Bluetooth to find their friends or report issues. The Safer app allows women to walk home safely and have a guardian with them at all times, either on the phone or via text. With lots of other similar apps emerging, Ms Cox-Brown felt technology will play a really big part in people's safety at night-time. She urged cities to adopt one technology for their city and share it broadly to support people.

Mr Farrell took up a previous point about not quantifying the value of the NTE for a long time. There is no monetary or employment value attributed to the NTE, so DublinTown is looking at things like demand for public transport and the amount of passengers. He brought up the example of a similar SOS bus in Belfast, where they quantified how much that saves their A&E department. 'If we're able to quantify all these things, justify the spend and coordinate that, if we have the council, business figures and transport companies all sharing that information, that's using technology and data so we can advocate properly for the NTE.'

According to Mr Farrell, it's not just about people going out dining, drinking and dancing, it's about people working in all sorts of sectors, such as the Gardaí, hospitals, hotels, service industry and technology, which are becoming more 24-hour focused. He thought that all these people deserved a quality experience, public transport and connection into those areas. Even though Dublin has spread out so far and had such urban sprawl, people have a civil right to be able to come in and enjoy their city. He believed that the more we can quantify and justify that focus and spend, the better. He hoped that the NTE Advisor joining as a city council staff member could advocate for that and be a real focal point for drawing all of it together.



L-R: Liz Halpin, Deirdre Scully, Anne Graham, Tim Graham, Anthony Flynn

PANEL 2: PLACE & MOBILITY

- *Liz Halpin, Head of Dublin at [Fáilte Ireland](#). Ms Halpin is a senior marketer with extensive experience across a range of marketing and sales disciplines, in both business-to-business and consumer markets.*
- *Deirdre Scully, Acting City Planner for [Dublin City Council](#). Ms Scully has years of experience in city planning and the development of policy, most recently the new [Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028](#).*
- *Anne Graham, CEO of the [National Transport Authority \(NTA\)](#). Ms Graham is a chartered engineer and prior to her current role, she served as the NTA's Director of Public Transport Services.*
- *Tim Graham works across stakeholder engagement and marketing for the [Dublin Place Brand](#). The role of the Place Brand and [Dublin.ie](#) is to attract people to come and live, work, invest or study in the Dublin region.*
- *Moderator: Anthony (Tony) Flynn, Assistant Chief Executive for planning, property development, culture, recreation and economic services at [Dublin City Council](#).*

Tony Flynn opened the panel discussion on place and mobility. Born and raised just behind the Convention Centre, he is very familiar with the city and has often walked home when the last bus has long gone. He welcomed the panellists, all of whom he knows well and deems very professional in the operations they run from a national and international perspective.

Liz Halpin works in Fáilte Ireland, which is responsible for tourism development on a national level. Charged with a particular area of Dublin, her team works closely with Dublin City Council, DublinTown, the NTA and others

in the summit, as well as businesses and cultural institutions on the ground to maximise the opportunity of tourism for Dublin and to make sure that visitors have a brilliant time, go home and tell everybody, and come back again.

As the City Planning Officer for Dublin City Council, Deirdre Scully oversees the professional and planning staff in the council as well as heritage, conservation and archaeology. Born and bred in Dublin, she has worked in the council since 2010, mainly in policy. 'We've just finished doing the most recent City Development Plan for 2022 to 2028 and for the first time, that plan has a dedicated chapter on culture. In both the economy and culture chapters, because of that close relationship, there are strong references, policies and objectives as regards supporting the NTE, and looking at how the key issues in relation to making it work in the city need to be addressed.' She viewed this as a good starting point but doesn't think the work is all done. She understood that there is a lot more we need to work on over the next few years, and looked forward to the appointment of the new officer and to seeing what implications they have for planning policy.

Anne Graham leads the National Transport Authority which is responsible for transport planning and delivery on a national basis through contracts with operators for delivery of services. The NTA receives a lot of government funding to put services in place and through the BusConnects plans for Dublin, the authority has an ambition to deliver a lot more 24-hour bus services right through the city and elsewhere. Ms Graham said she would talk about the challenges faced in recent years in relation to that. 'Our ambition is to deliver much more in terms of public transport to assist the NTE, but also those that work early and late shifts that may not necessarily be working in the NTE as the cultural economy but are supplying services in our city.'

Tim Graham works for the Dublin Place Brand, which sits within Dublin City Council, to promote the city and region as a place to work, invest, study and live. It's about creating a reputation so people want to come to the city and the NTE is very much part of that. 'It's about what the city does, as that's what resonates with people and the NTE is a big draw to those who want to live and work here. Getting that right and everything around it, including transport, mobility and safety is very important to create that reputation.'

Mr Flynn asked how important effective place and public realm design is to support NTE activities.

Ms Scully affirmed it as vital, because the public realm is the spaces between the buildings and whatever activity someone engages in when coming into town. Whether going to a night-time course, to see a show or to meet friends in a bar, everybody always moves through public space. How that space is managed, how friendly or attractive it is, how people get off the bus and get to where they're going, and how the experience is are all crucial, because that's being part of Dublin. 'We all love walking down Henry Street when the markets are up and running with the atmosphere and buzz you get, that's enjoyment for free. If people need to feel that sense of belonging and being part of something bigger, we need to use our public realm for that.'

According to Ms Scully, planning the spaces to host the type of public events previously mentioned is an essential part of making a city work for its people. She illustrated how College Green is being reinvented with the future application to change how that space is used. She described how we need places to gather, hang around, relax and wait for people while being able to do that in a way that's comfortable, attractive, pleasant (not too hot or windy), well-lit and, critically, that people feel safe, secure and overlooked. She acknowledged that a lot of that comes down to design but also to how we plan and use these spaces over a period of time, advising that it's something that needs to be looked at very carefully at each stage from the original concept to make sure it's where people want a public open space. She stressed that there's no point in having windswept open spaces that nobody ever goes through as it's not going to serve anyone. It's about putting it in the right place where you get the highest number of people, bearing in mind if the surface is done right, if there's enough lighting, if the trees are in the right places, and if it's going to feel too dark or be pleasant when we get those few really hot days.

Mr Flynn questioned how the panellists thought Dublin compared from a place-making point of view with other cities on the international stage and what tourists felt about their visits to Dublin.

Ms Halpin remarked that generally, people are satisfied when they come to Dublin. In a 2022 survey, about 84% claimed they were really satisfied with the offering, which she described as a great place to start. Noting what Ms Cox-Brown said about the expectation of having a vibrant city centre and nightlife, she would see that reflected in Fáilte Ireland's research in that sometimes not everything stays open as long as you would expect. 'I think Dublin has a perception of having a great nightlife with lots to see and do at night. One of

the challenges we have is to expand the night-time offering so that there are lots of activities that are reflective of a diverse market and include things for people regardless of their particular interest.’ For example, if someone isn’t keen on going to a pub, there should be lots of cultural offerings or other things to do.

Ms Halpin felt the animation of the public space was really important for visitors as well, using the example of music as something we’re associated with and asking how we gather all the vibrant opportunities to interact with visitors to elevate our offering. While we’re in a strong position, she believed there are plenty of things that we can continue to do, so Fáilte Ireland is working very closely with lots of partners at the summit on the NTE. She concluded that everything we can do to work together to ensure that we enhance the offering is extremely worthwhile.

Referring back to panel one and the transportation piece, Mr Flynn asked if there were any examples, from the NTA point of view, of how private transport companies and government could collaborate to improve mobility options to support the NTE.

Ms Graham focused on public transport first, repeating the ambition to deliver a network of 24-hour buses and the challenges in that. As the national taxi regulator, the NTA not only regulates the industry but also tries to support it to develop and grow. ‘The challenge we have is that the taxi industry was hit and suffered a loss during COVID-19 that hasn’t quite recovered yet. However, even in Dublin, we’re only down about 4% on pre-COVID-19 numbers in terms of drivers, so we have recovered but we’re not quite back to pre-pandemic levels. That does apply pressure on the availability of taxis, particularly at peak hours, which is night-time and the Christmas period.’

She emphasised an issue for the taxi industry now as the willingness of drivers to work at night-time, which is around business as well as how safe they feel operating at night-time. In NTA surveys with taxi drivers, there’s a significant proportion that will never work at night again. They would have worked at this time before but won’t in the future, because they can make a good living during the daytime economy, so they’re not interested in the NTE at all. There’s therefore a big challenge around encouraging and growing the taxi industry in the night-time space.

Ms Graham named fares as one of the things the NTA can look at, clarifying that the last fare increase placed more of an uptick on night-time fares to encourage greater activity in this period. While the NTA hasn't seen increased passenger numbers, when it did checks and compliance to assess the pinch points coupled with customer surveys, the availability of taxis in Dublin was reasonably good, although it did become a challenge, particularly at peak times (night-time and Christmas). She was aware of the need to grow the industry as much as possible and is trying to find ways of incentivising it, but safety and security at night-time also impinges on those actually delivering services.

Mr Flynn recounted that it was really interesting because we've all come out of functions and venues at the wrong time, when there's a huge amount of people and not enough taxi supply to bring you home. It's a huge challenge with regard to how people can be coaxed back into that business again. He continued, 'In relation to the NTE and the Dublin Place Brand, how do you think Smart Cities and Dublin City Council can support Dublin's reputation at home and internationally with regards to it being a really good place to come?'

Mr Graham stated that a huge part of Smart Cities is about data and technology. 'Looking at the data, and not just the economic data, is essential. We need to look at the whole aspect, at what brings people into the city and mine as deeply as possible, using that data and comparing it to other places as well.' He said it was also about bringing in applications and new technology ideas from different places, citing a collaboration and support of an Artificial Intelligence Ireland event that had a lot of ideas from around the world. For example, in Malaysia, they have 'park easy', which is real-time information that tells you exactly where you can park, and there are applications where you can carpool and travel together, so it cuts down on cars and pollution levels. Smart Dublin conducted a pilot project with an autonomous bus a few years ago that was travelling up and down the quays, which worked very well. While still a while away, Mr Graham described how we might get the bus without a driver in a few years' time, and that these are the things we need to think about.

Mr Flynn remembered the driverless bus in the docklands, saying it was interesting because sometimes it can be a leap of faith to jump onto a driverless bus, but that we've all done it on trains and metros in London and other cities. He acknowledged that AI in the future will probably form a significant role in relation to how it will support and assist the NTE environment. Mr Flynn asked the panellists for their key recommendations in relation to improving the NTE place design and mobility for Dublin into the future.

Mr Graham admitted that we could all come up with various ideas but that the most important thing was collaboration and stakeholder engagement. He believed that talking to different people could be expanded to communities too as that's where ideas will come from. Referring to a UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) conference he attended about culture in cities, someone from Portugal had set up an 'ideas hub' to bring in lots of people. They received some brilliant ideas, which could be piloted to see where they might lead to, advocating 'it's what innovation is all about'.

Ms Graham clarified that the NTA just wanted to deliver what it set out to deliver, which is more mobility and access to services on a 24-hour basis. She reiterated the challenge of getting resources and drivers, given the full economy, and trying to attract people into transport and mobility delivery both on the public transport and taxi sides. From the NTA perspective, the goal is to deliver as many services as possible, to make those services as accessible as possible and to allow passengers and drivers to feel as safe as possible. Going back to the issues of the previous panel and based on NTA research, Ms Graham agreed that women don't feel as safe on public transport as men do at different times of the day and similarly at stopping places and bus stops. She acknowledged the big job in getting the mobility up to a level that the city deserves to support the NTE and to make it as safe and secure as possible for all communities.

Tied to this, said Ms Scully, is the issue of the type of uses and where they're put, particularly high-number uses and the relationship of that to public transport and connectivity. One of the things that came from the last Development Plan was the idea of 'cultural clusters', but it was about looking at that in a wider sense and the use of the NTE, how we position that within the city and what type of relationship it has with the residential population. She asked if we should go down the road of identifying busy locations where we allow ultra-late-type uses to develop while nominating other streets as quiet zones where we don't want 10 people singing at four o'clock in the morning.

Ms Scully hoped that the NTE Advisor would work with the councillors and Strategic Policy Committee to review how space within the city is managed and establish the relationship between where these uses are, where new uses we'd like to see enter and grow are, and how that connects with where we're investing in the public realm. This includes widening footpaths and creating spaces for taxis to pull in to avoid the three o'clock in the morning crazy congestion in places like Exchequer Street, which can be very hard for people to manage and get where they need to go. It's about ensuring the services and connectivity

so that when someone leaves somewhere, it's a short walk to a wide range of public transport and not just one route. There's a quality service available close by so that if their friends are going in different directions, they can all safely exit the city in a way that they feel comfortable and is efficient so they can get home quickly.

In building on what Mr Graham and Ms Scully both contributed, Ms Halpin conveyed from a tourism perspective that Dublin has a real breadth of offerings but not everybody knows about it, even Dubliners themselves. 'We have a very defined footprint of where we typically go around the city and it's; how do we open up new parts of the city for people to explore, and how do we disperse visitors so that the benefit of tourism is extended beyond that hotspot in the city centre?' She wouldn't underestimate the importance of front-of-house staff, people on the ground and Dubliners themselves, because part of a visitor experience is the whole authentic experience of Dublin, so what's right for the resident will benefit the visitor. She promoted the huge opportunity to work together to make sure that everyone plays their part given the different interests in Dublin in terms of responsibility, with everyone wanting it to be a huge success.

Considering what was discussed in panel one and seeing the synergies with panel two, Mr Flynn was sure that by panels three and four, the wheel would be in motion in relation to how we can all come together and make positive and significant change to support the city, both the daytime and night-time economy, to make it sustainable and comfortable, allowing everybody to access what they want and be where they want to be at any time of the day or night.



Lapree Lala, Dancer



L-R: Aidan Sweeney, Fiona Collins, Sunil Sharpe, Mary MacSweeney

PANEL 3: POLICY & REGULATION

- *Aidan Sweeney, Head of Enterprise and Regulatory Affairs and Head of Dublin and Eastern Regional Policy at Ibec (Irish Business and Employers Confederation). Mr Sweeney has special responsibility for public procurement, infrastructure delivery, EU and international funding, housing, city development and spatial planning.*
- *Fiona Collins, recently appointed Night-Time Economy Advisor with Cork City Council. Ms Collins has a wealth of experience in the night-time economy, given her longstanding involvement in the Guinness Cork Jazz Festival and other key initiatives.*
- *Sunil Sharpe, nightlife campaigner and a key voice in the night-time economy sector. Mr Sharpe founded Give Us The Night, a group of professionals operating within the night-time industry campaigning for positive changes to nightlife in Ireland.*
- *Moderator: Mary MacSweeney, Executive Manager of Culture, Recreation and Economic Services in Dublin City Council.*

Lauding the dance performance by Lapree Lala just before the panel discussion commenced, Mary MacSweeney led the third panel in exploring policy and regulation in greater detail. She welcomed panellists Aidan Sweeney from Ibec, Fiona Collins as the 'hot off the press' NTE Advisor for Cork City and Sunil Sharpe of Give Us The Night who regularly contributes to debates on culture, music and the NTE.

Pointing to the fact that the summit had entered the night-time economy (just after 6 p.m.), Aidan Sweeney introduced himself as the Head of Enterprise and Regulatory Affairs for Ibec, with responsibility for businesses in the Dublin

Eastern region. Ibec has been involved in the work of Dublin City Council and the NTE Working Groups, while Mr Sweeney chairs objective two of the [Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan](#), which includes the specific action to support the NTE for Dublin.

As the new NTE Advisor for Cork City, Fiona Collins had only been in the job for four weeks so she admitted that it was all brand new and that she was on a learning curve in working with Cork City Council. She hoped that her background in corporate events and role as Chair of the Guinness Cork Jazz Festival would lend a certain amount of experience to the new position, saying she was very much looking forward to getting stuck into it.

Sunil Sharpe revealed that he wears a few hats and had missed the start of the event due to teaching young musicians and DJs, a necessity for someone in his area to survive and forge a career but something he also really enjoys doing. Equally, he said that he loved being involved with the Give Us The Night campaign, which was established in Dublin in 2004. 'The campaign never really stopped but it went a bit cold for a number of years until we felt there was both industry and political will there to re-examine our licensing laws.' From the early days of being a one-issue campaign, Give Us The Night has broadened the scope of what it does a lot more. Its crusade for some type of working group, which the government thankfully also thought was a good idea, led to it helping form the NTE Task Force over three years ago. From then onwards, the group worked closely with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media as well as Dublin City Council. Mr Sharpe heralded the start of the NTE and its international recognition of activity that starts at 6 p.m. and runs through to 6 a.m. 'It does strike me that a lot of our conversations about NTE are around danger rather than joy and we did get a glimpse of some of that joy and creativity that comes out through night-time culture. Besides some of the important stuff, that's where I'd love to see the conversation going more in the coming years.'

Ms MacSweeney picked up on this good point, saying that policy and regulation development often looks to minimise harm rather than create a framework that enhances enjoyment and creativity, all the things we hope to see in our NTE. In the context of Ibec's role to support a wide range of businesses with different interests and seeing the threats and opportunities within the NTE, she noted that some of the earlier panels reflected that there can be contradictions in what is good for one business may not be good for another. She asked Mr Sweeney, 'Day to day, how do you support the evolution of good policy to help the businesses

that you have the ear of, so you know the kind of issues they're facing in the medium- and long-term? What is the role you play as a support business organisation in helping shape that environment?'

Mr Sweeney attested to the very big and broad definition of the NTE – anything between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. 'It's about slowly trying to migrate policy-makers away from thinking that Dublin closes down on a Friday and doesn't reopen, it's going 24/7. There are sectors of the economy, essential workers, and people working around the clock who also participate in the NTE, so it's a lot broader than just the cultural aspect.' In saying that, he emphasised common issues such as 24-hour buses or better street lighting, which is for everybody. According to Mr Sweeney, the second reason the NTE is so important is because multinationals and big companies are trying to retain people, so quality of life, vibrancy, and being seen to be inclusive and safe are all crucial. The question is how do we make sure that the NTE supports that, because it will ultimately support the wider economy.

Having seen other issues and in supporting businesses, Mr Sweeney recommended not to purely focus on the individual businesses. Taking the fantastic venue and the food and drink provided at the summit, he pointed to all the suppliers across the country that were involved. Going back to an earlier speaker's point about the value of the NTE, he advised not to only think about the direct jobs, because it's the indirect jobs that power the economy and the experience economy is vast and right across the country and that's what's important. Referring to some successful modelling done in London around this, he indicated that unfortunately, our CSO data is trickier to navigate and access, but that if you take the security guards, doormen and everybody involved in the NTE, the amount of jobs in terms of total economic value is important.

'We want to try to navigate the policy and regulatory environment as best as possible because it's not all the responsibility of the city council as there are numerous players. We want to tackle the cost base and make sure the regulations are fit for purpose and that they can do it. Separately, it's how do we then balance up and bring a sense to it that some of our policies that one government department or body might be developing will actually run up against issues like the NTE.' Mr Sweeney maintained that it's far broader than just the alcohol licensing, a debate that Ibec has been involved in, so it's across the board.

Ms MacSweeney remarked that Ms Collins' role was part of a policy context where one of the actions of the National Task Force was a local government pilot to appoint NTE Advisors. While Dublin's role was yet to be filled, she knew there was a lot expected in terms of how Ms Collins' role would help people understand what can and can't be done, asking her, 'With some of the signposting around people who have ideas and want to do things in Cork, how do you see your role helping people navigate that policy and regulation context of a city environment?'

Ms Collins said she sees the NTE Advisor roles as being a coordinator, going into the city council and putting together a steering group. While some of the other NTE Advisors had begun this process, she hoped it would start in Cork within the following two weeks. In the meantime, Ms Collins had been talking to people to gather their thoughts about the NTE, be they student groups (there's a huge amount of students in Cork), venues or people working in safety. She was pulling all the information and ideas together to then set up a steering group followed by an action plan that would start after Christmas. 'The nice thing about this is that it's a pilot scheme so we're going to try new things and see what sticks, and when the new licensing laws come in, we'll work with those as well.'

Noting that there was so much to offer in Cork with its very vibrant NTE, no different to Dublin, Ms Collins wanted to build on that, add some more venues, and make it safer and accessible. As far as she saw it, you should be able to walk down Patrick Street at two o'clock in the morning the same way as at two o'clock in the afternoon. She envisaged her role as growing and expanding on what's there and bringing everything together so that at the end of the two years, they can say this is what they've done and how can it be built on again. 'I think every city is unique, there are things that are going to work in Cork that wouldn't work in Dublin and likewise in Buncrana or Kilkenny, and there's going to be stuff that works in those places that won't work in Cork. Hopefully, there will be things that overlap, that we can build that policy on, and see where things work and don't work and keep moving those things on.'

Ms MacSweeney pointed to the thinking that the pilots will share the learning and for those councils that don't have a pilot, they'll be able to learn as well. She highlighted Mr Sharpe's unique role as both a contributor to policy and regulation through the National Task Force and implementation group and a worker within the NTE. Having also worked in other cities, Ms MacSweeney was very interested in what we could learn from elsewhere, asking Mr Sharpe if there

were things he encountered that he thought could possibly be done in Ireland and practical things he'd seen within a policy and regulatory context that we should consider.

'All the time,' was Mr Sharpe's reply. He felt it was worth stressing that we can learn a lot from ourselves from the past because there's a lot that was working with nightlife. He advocated being very careful that we don't overstate the reinvention or reimagination of nightlife and alienate those currently within the NTE who are doing a very good job. 'There's lots of people doing really good things. If you go back a couple of decades, probably around the turn of the millennium, we had a good chance to change the licensing laws. Whenever it got to actually reforming them, it never happened and we've been waiting a long time. It would appear the changes are imminent and I hope they are.'

Mr Sharpe saw examples every month and sometimes on a weekly basis if he was playing abroad. He emphasised one major difference between Ireland and the UK in that the local authorities here don't have the same control over the NTE, whether that's licensing, transport or policing, so that does leave us at a bit of a disadvantage. He advised that moving into the future involved developing relationships with the heads of some organisations like the NTA, and getting more hands-on involvement from public representatives and ministers in some cases if we're to talk about late-night transport as well.

He acknowledged that it was very difficult to get people to work at night. As raised in the last panel, he believed that safety and transport are intrinsically linked. While nobody had 'cracked it', he couldn't state strongly enough how the perception of safety in the city, and not just in Dublin but all around the country, is impacting our ability to attract drivers and people who actually want to work in late-night transport. He said it was a big problem and that a lot of taxi drivers didn't come back after the pandemic, noting some vicious attacks on some of them and the years put on older drivers, something he worries about despite some of the campaigns.

Reverting to the licensing point, Mr Sharpe alluded to the press launch for the pre-legislative report from the Justice Committee two weeks prior, where Michael McDowell referred back to a proposal or inclusion within the update to the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2005. This was the built-in ability for local authorities to take more of an active role in licensing. Mr Sharpe felt that's where we could start to bring that joined-up thinking together in terms of how our overall strategy becomes more forensic and proactive vis-à-vis where we

want nightlife to be. He conveyed that it was very complicated at the moment, as we have a dysfunctional licensing system as it is, and that we need to simplify things, part of which will be giving local authorities a more hands-on role. The only problem was that a lot of industries don't quite know what they think about that, which has to be respected too, but Mr Sharpe suggested it was a conversation for the future.

Ms MacSweeney clarified that a lot of work was happening, led by the Department, to bring the different agencies together to tease out a lot of these issues, and it was great seeing progress being made. She mentioned Ms Cox-Brown's keynote speech laying out that a lot of UK cities are far more advanced than we are and that generally, we're at an earlier stage of development. Nevertheless, she was interested in what Mr Sharpe said about not just looking to others, but looking back to times when there were certain practices in place that supported activity that isn't being supported now. In thinking again about the businesses and opportunities, Ms MacSweeney asked Mr Sweeney if there were particular things that come up, for which we could have a stronger policy or regulatory context that would help unlock some of the opportunities he would see for the NTE.

More people living in the city was Mr Sweeney's answer. Calling a spade a spade, and while giving all due respect to licensing, he said that pubs are closing and footfall is down, and it's not going to resolve itself on its own. He noted how Dublin has more density per square kilometre than any other city in Ireland, and when benchmarked against Paris or UK cities, the difference is a very hollowed-out city and similar in Cork. 'The fact is we don't have enough people on the doorstep, so micro-NTE activities, and we're relying on just transport-oriented development while we need to have that sustainability back into it. I think that's one of the critical things that's in the power of a local authority to do, with zoning and things like that, although it's difficult to activate land use.' Mr Sweeney acknowledged that it was a fine balance because it comes up against housing versus nightclubs so how do you have that balance, remarking that choices would have to be made.

Other things he highlighted were having better event strategies and coordination as well as a lot of events happening around the city. He commented that when people complain to the city council about the marathon, for example, even though it doesn't run the event, the council informs them that it's the NTA, Gardaí and other bodies involved. 'The local authority is in a very difficult position because it's your city and you're trying to explain the powers on it, so

that coordinator role is going to be so key.’ Businesses want to know who to talk to about this, who is going to open a venue and what’s the attractiveness. Mr Sweeney outlined the business angle covering issues like where employees can go for a cup of coffee or break if they’re working in the NTE – where can they go safely and are there coffee shops that are 24-hour? With a different mix of commercial activities in the Grafton Street and Henry Street areas, for instance, there needs to be alternative things to balance it out. He thought that too much of the debate was on the nightclubs and not on everything else around it, such as the staff working in the NTE because it’s all connected.

From the Ibec perspective, it’s about policy certainty and how to do it, but we’re also going to have to factor in the tremendous amount of cost rises placed on businesses operating in the NTE, like any other business, particularly around the labour market changes the government is imposing. According to Mr Sweeney, that’s going to dramatically change the operating base of a business, so we’re going to have to think about other things we can do to alleviate those pressures, whether we can do something creative around the commercial rates system or look at tables and chairs and other licensing that local authorities might have. It’s trying to be practical in those sorts of areas, maybe on things like inspections and red tape so that we have a better compliance model and make it easier. He recommended being creative about those types of measures. In comparing the NTE Task Force the government produced and the work of the subcommittee of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, he called the latter far more ambitious in terms of what it wanted to do for Dublin. What’s key, he added, was how we actually activate some of those areas.

Ms MacSweeney confirmed that the recommendations of the National Task Force were still being implemented, so while it was learning from European and other models, it was probably too early to determine the changes it was producing. However, she believed the local government pilots were a great practical example of the difference it was making. With earlier reference to night-time markets being supported and great collaboration with DublinTown and the Purple Flag initiative, she described the collaborations, relationship building and stakeholder engagement piece as an evolving space. She asked Ms Collins how she foresaw her work in looking to the Cork environment, trying to map out the stakeholders, finding a way to structure the whole engagement and involvement, and getting those stakeholders contributing to her local commitments and action.

Ms Collins stressed that she was always happy to have a conversation about the NTE, and she was there to help. She revealed that Cork had a 30% increase in people living in the city centre over the last four years. There were some really good initiatives where outdoor dining added to what was already there, so she was lucky enough to be able to just build on that and see what might work. It was about having all those different conversations, making lots of notes, collating the information, trying to work with the data and then seeing what could be done to improve it. She saw it as lots of small wins over the two years that will hopefully lead to a big win, where NTE Advisors are put in place country-wide, and to people coming to that particular area and having a positive and authentic experience (that Ms Halpin talked about) that lends credence to the NTE as well.

Speaking about people living in the city and the neighbourhoods that are there, she asked what can we do to advance their experience of living in the city so they feel that it's welcoming and they can go out and do things in the evening. Cork has a lot of European visitors who don't always want to go to the pub and are looking for a café culture that's open late at night. There are only a few venues that have late-night openings, so this is something that Ms Collins wishes to grow to give a different experience of what you can have within the city centre. She gave the example of the Crawford Art Gallery, one of the main galleries in Cork, which stayed open until 11 p.m. on culture night, at which time it was still full.

In talking about growing grassroots venues, Ms Collins mentioned Cork's Electronic Music Council and the hope that a representative would become part of her steering group. Bringing in Ms Cox-Brown's reference to the increase in dance music, she said it was about seeing what we can do with the different elements and what sticks. 'Once people believe in it, it will grow. Then you'll have the cafés and experiences, where people can go out and do something late at night or find healthy food at two o'clock in the morning. We have to start where we're at and see what we can do to grow it.'

As someone with a unique perspective of providing entertainment within the music industry, Ms MacSweeney asked Mr Sharpe what his wish would be if there were things that could be changed to make it easier for him to operate, connect with audiences and grow different types of offerings.

Something Mr Sharpe had noticed for the last five to ten years was a growing divide between the demographic of people that went out. While he put a lot of

that down to the cost of living, it often seemed to be a very young cohort that were socialising and, as a result, older people felt that nightlife was raucous and wild and they didn't want to be involved in that. He also referenced the plentiful bad press around nightlife in general, which was very off-putting. He acknowledged that we need some new venues, but not at the cost of existing ones. He remembered his early days of going out and speaking to older family members, such as his gran's sister who was a dancer at the main venues, when there was a lot more talk of going to some new place. Part of this has been replaced by social media, but that word on the street and the idea that you'll miss out unless you get down to the big opening night or whatever it might be to see what it's like is lacking. Mr Sharpe could only remember one or two instances in the last few years where a new venue had opened, which was quite unusual, saying we have a culture of places shutting down rather than opening.

He took up Mr Sweeney's nod to other issues, with insurance one of the big ones everyone agreed on and making it prohibitively expensive to run an entertainment or cultural venue. While some of the arts and cultural venues are lucky to get funding, even they find it very difficult. 'Anyone that can manage in the city centre already has a more successful or bigger food or drink business that props it up. However, you don't have the 'trailblazers' who came up in the days of the dancehalls into the disco era and nightclubs, bringing ideas from the United States and the UK back here. Today, it's very hard for those creative thinkers to bring colour and pizzazz to nightlife and invariably, it goes back into the hands of the people already running nightlife. But it's not their main consideration, so, as a result, the offering has narrowed.' He advised that we need to streamline the process, because for a lot of operators it's not only about the costs, it's the hassle of having to do that all the time that is a problem and an ongoing discussion.

Tying into the contributions about small wins and night cafés, DublinTown will hopefully work on a pilot in the city centre. Mr Sharpe remarked that the only place you could get a late coffee was in Starbucks at St Stephen's Green, which was gone. If you look at places to let, quite often the preference is for a café or restaurant. While there's been a proliferation of cafés, none of them are open at night so he said it'll be interesting to see how that goes. Mr Sharpe highlighted that he needed to hear from the minister and the NTA about the idea he was floating to support free travel for night workers. He viewed it as a start that would make it easier for night workers and employers, because a lot of the conflict arose when workers could only get home by taxi but who would pay for that? These were small wins to work on and improve.

Ms MacSweeney asked the panellists for their final thoughts on potential opportunities for the NTE.

Mr Sweeney believed the NTE has a tremendous ability to support the wider economy and society, and that it would be fantastic to have it vibrant, safe and inclusive. Picking up on Mr Sharpe's point about zoning for coffee shops, he posed the challenge we're going to have and something the city council can support, as looking at the residential zoned land tax and other things to see if venues are going to start disappearing because of government policies. He suspected that some venues would naturally come back as housing, which is great, but where would the alternative venues be?

The second thing Mr Sweeney touched on was the need to resource the OPW venues and national galleries and address staff issues if they want to actually open later, saying the more things we can do to support different options so people can shop and then go out, for example, the better. As a final thing, he explained, 'With the NTE Task Force, you have the economy but you forgot the business community. A lot of policies are good for workers but we don't see anything from a business, employer or trade union side, so that's what we really want. Everybody has a stake in getting this right, it's not just about publicans, it's the bigger picture because it's about us being able to retain staff and operate at different times of the day, move around safely, and support the vibrancy of incoming tourists, that's the real goal here. It shouldn't be the case of it narrowing, so let's build a proper alliance to get this done.'

Ms Collins totally agreed with the alliance because it was great to be able to bring the many different aspects of the NTE together and work on that. It was really positive and she was relishing the chance to make it work as much as she could in Cork. 'There's a huge chance for us to set a benchmark almost for where our NTE is. We're far behind the UK but I don't see a reason why we can't get there quickly over the next two years to see what's working. There's massive potential so I'm looking forward to that.'

Mr Sharpe light heartedly admitted that Give Us The Night probably had itself to blame somewhat with its campaign pushing for the NTE because as soon as it brought the economy into it, the political parties started taking an interest, but maybe at the cost of the cultural and social benefits in the conversation too. At the symposium held by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media a few years back, it was classed as 'night-time culture.' In general, he said, it's about the ecology and experience

at night and whether we feel comfortable being out at night. Sometimes it seemed like a lot of the people making decisions about night-time were looking at it through their younger selves, and what it was like when nightlife was far more lawless than it is now. He thought it had calmed down an awful lot and without getting too deep into the policing area, Mr Sharpe worried that some areas in Dublin city centre are not policed as much as they need to be. The current plans talked about there being enough policing in the city to get us up to and during the Christmas period, but he wondered what happens after that.

He observed that it's really important the NTE isn't scapegoated when certain incidents happen, because there are more deeply rooted issues than just police resourcing. He accepted it wasn't easy for the Gardaí or for anyone in this conversation, believing that the election is crucial as is consistency from public representatives. 'It's great to come along to meetings like this and put up a tweet here and there, but come and speak to the Task Force. Talk to the players like Mr Sweeney and Ms Collins and those who are in there doing it right now. Try to have an ongoing picture of what's really going on rather than rushing a policy together in the run-up to the election.'

Regarding moving forward, Mr Sharpe felt there was a considerable chance to integrate more international communities into nightlife in the way that they should be. He continued about the opportunity to work on our integration policy when it comes to nightlife as well. He emphasised that a lot of our music culture is rooted in black music, something that we can be proactive on to bring that night-time culture to where it can be in the future.



L-R: Ossian Smyth TD, Anna Walsh, Megan Best, Sabrina Dekker, Norman Thompson

PANEL 4: SUSTAINABILITY & CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- *Sabrina Dekker, Climate Action Co-ordinator with Dublin City Council, is responsible for the implementation of its Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024. Ms Dekker holds a PhD in Environmental Policy from the School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy at University College Dublin.*
- *Megan Best, CEO of Native Events, an enterprise dedicated to transitioning the cultural sector towards a more sustainable, circular model. Ms Best is also curator and host of the Green Room on Dublin City FM, a programme about the environment and the cultural sectors.*
- *Anna Walsh is Director of the Theatre Forum and Co-Founder of the Green Arts Initiative in Ireland. GAIL supports arts organisations with practical advice on reducing their carbon footprint and overall environmental impacts.*
- *Ossian Smyth TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Public Procurement, eGovernment and Circular Economy. Minister Smyth has plentiful experience in the sustainability sector, having recently overseen the creation of a circular economy fund to help transition to circular economy using levies from incineration, landfill and single-use products.*
- *Moderator: Norman Thompson, Senior Economic Development Officer in Dublin City Council.*

Norman Thompson explained that Dublin City Council had tried to embed sustainability and circular economy in the summit, with examples shared by Cllr Brabazon, but it wanted to feature it on the agenda to learn a lot more from experts about sustainability and circularity and how it is really relevant to the

NTE. Mr Thompson encouraged the panellists to introduce themselves and their professional contexts.

Despite describing herself as a jack of all trades and master of none and not necessarily an expert on circular economy and the NTE, Mr Thompson pointed out that Sabrina Dekker had been involved with the recent Climate Action Plan and Eat the Streets, which have key night-time aspects.

As CEO, Megan Best described Native Events as working across Ireland's creative industries in developing resources, guides, training, workshops, carbon footprint calculations and reporting for large and small organisations and state and semi-state bodies. Native Events also produces events, festivals, markets and conferences with sustainable and circular principles threaded throughout, including that week's UCLG Culture Summit. The company hires out renewable energy solutions for temporary events and installations as well as circular furniture, décor and branding. Ms Best is also Director of [Julie's Bicycle EU](#), a sister company that works with larger organisations in the arts and cultural sphere to develop policy and strategy and deliver impactful training programmes for creatives. Previous to that, Ms Best was part of the Body and Soul Festival, a real forerunner in sustainability in the festival scene in Ireland and the winner of three 'A Greener Future' awards for sustainability.

Anna Walsh introduced herself as the Director of Theatre Forum, a performing arts membership organisation that comprises the venues, arts centres, theatres, concert halls, production companies and artist members that make up the night-time cultural economy. She said the forum had a very pragmatic approach to green arts and sustainability since 2018, when working with [Creative Carbon Scotland](#), and more recently Julie's Bicycle EU and Ms Best's team on projects such as greening venues, greener touring and evolving practices for arts organisations and artists to become more sustainable in their work, operations and productions. Ms Walsh confirmed future collaboration with both Julie's Bicycle EU and the [Theatre Green Book](#) in the UK, which is a resource for sustainable operations, buildings and productions in the arts and cultural sector.

Mr Thompson would revert to the topic of tangible resources that could help businesses or stakeholders embed sustainability later.

As Green Party TD for Dún Laoghaire and Minister for Circular Economy, Ossian Smyth TD noted that some of his party colleagues, such as Cllr Clare Byrne and

Cllr Donna Cooney, were on the NTE Task Force and Cllr Hazel Chu pushed it when she was Lord Mayor, so he was interested in the theme. He was aware that there are far fewer nightclubs than before and none in his constituency (there used to be several), so things had changed and he was keen to see how we can fix that.

Mr Thompson thanked the Minister for making the time to attend the summit given his busy government schedule. While some people might perceive them as buzzwords, he asked the panellists to simply explain their contexts regarding sustainability and circular economy and the NTE.

The first thing that popped into Ms Dekker's head was to ask what do you really need and whether you really need that thing or not. Clarifying that Dublin and Cork cities are part of the EU Mission for Climate Neutral Cities, Dublin City Council attempted to submit a pilot city application in the first round and had just resubmitted one. It was looking at energy usage and transport in the north-east inner city and Dublin 1. On circularity and working businesses, she queried what the waste product is that can be used by another business later on. Looking at it more holistically, as Mr Sweeney spoke about in the previous panel, she wondered where the connections are, how these link to each other, and how renewable energy systems and battery storage feed businesses at night. 'Do we reduce pressure on the energy system, because while people are out on the streets enjoying themselves, they're not using energy and increasing their home energy bill. However, there's an energy increase there so how do those play against each other and how do we balance that out?' According to Ms Dekker, in looking at the inner city, it was about how we can create a sustainable circular energy system there, possibly denoting it as a positive energy area of the city. If there are renewables on the rooftops of certain buildings, then there's storage, so those businesses can save money by using that in the evening. She quipped about kinetic dance floors as an argument for more dance venues.

From the work with the Green Arts Initiative for arts centres, venues and theatres, such as the Project Arts Centre, Ms Walsh outlined the biggest issue concerning sustainability for these organisations as energy usage and efficiency. The largest carbon impact for production companies making the work that is presented on stages and at festivals across the country is typically their accommodation and transport costs. Often forgotten, for audience members and those attending huge concerts, small gigs, late-night events or festivals, such as the Guinness Cork Jazz Festival, she said transport is the main issue. 'As an extension of that, the availability of affordable and frequent 24-hour public

transport is required to underpin the night-time and cultural economy,' she concluded.

Mr Thompson announced that underpinning the whole circular economy space was the first of its kind, whole-of-government circular economy strategy that certainly lends itself to the NTE as well as the daytime economy. He asked the minister to elaborate on the strategy and its relevance to the NTE.

Minister Smyth suggested that circular economy is just about keeping our resources and money in circulation locally and not thinking about dumping things and waste. It ties in with the idea of shopping locally and going out locally as opposed to travelling a long distance to a big city or stadium. He described this as pro-community, with people physically coming together rather than sitting at home watching Netflix. 'I think nightlife is fundamentally environmentally friendly and efficient because you're using a building that would otherwise have been empty and perhaps you're using buses to get home that would otherwise have been resting in the garage. The whole thing should be environmentally friendly if we do it right.'

What comes up time and again when the minister talks to people who do go out (the stakeholders) is that transport is the main thing we've got to fix. Statistically, it's the emissions from transport causing the damage and he said there is great difficulty trying to persuade train companies to run services at night, remembering the same great debate about the underground when he lived in London. The reason people want to get a train instead of a bus is because they know the journey time is going to be good and they won't get stuck in traffic. At night, however, buses run really well and fast. The Minister mentioned that the government has cut bus fares significantly and is opening new services all the time, and proposed that delivering good night-bus services will be critical to making nightlife.

Mr Thompson wondered how our NTE compares with the equivalent in London, Europe or further afield. Due to her involvement with Julie's Bicycle EU and other international initiatives, he asked Ms Best for her insights on this, specifically with regard to sustainability and circular economy adoption.

'Pretty bad' was Ms Best's answer, reiterating the previous panels' output that we are quite far behind in this space. She gave the example of regulation in Amsterdam that outdoor events in the city centre have to be connected to the grid and aren't allowed to use generators any more (at a minimum, you can use

generators with Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) but they're planning to phase that out in the next year or so). She described this as streets ahead of where we are now. Another example was Manchester, where they bought a stock of reusable cups for their markets and events supported by the city council and built a trailer as a mobile washing unit for those cups that moves from event to event. She depicted this as circular economy embedded in event production right from the very beginning.

Ms Best circled back to the night-time economy or any economy or society and the impacts on circular economy and sustainability. She outlined the work done in previous years around festivals on a greenfield site or in an urban space, showing that a lot of the waste coming out of them is single-use packaging for food. 'We've done a huge number of waste characterisation studies at festivals both in Ireland and the UK and food packaging is a serious issue, not necessarily in terms of carbon emissions, because waste processing isn't actually a huge carbon emitter, but in biosphere integrity, novel entities and plastic-centering our oceans. Single-use in the first place is anti-circular economy, so there's that to consider as well.'

Mr Thompson connected it back to the experience and place, especially for overseas tourists coming to Dublin and the unpleasantness of seeing an abundance of rubbish from single-use plastics and so on. He asked the Minister to expand on the initiatives targeting single-use plastics and the return schemes, which are obviously very relevant in the NTE.

Minister Smyth believed single-use plastics to be much more of a problem at festivals, as he saw during his attendance at Body and Soul earlier in the year. 'By being away from home, without restaurant crockery or pint glasses, for obvious reasons, there's a lot of rubbish produced at festivals. Everybody's waste builds up for several days, so it's a massive challenge.' He remarked that it shouldn't be like that in the city centre, because when someone is out in a permanent venue, they should be able to control and manage it.

The Minister confirmed that the return schemes will launch on the 1st of February (2024) and that local supermarkets will have a machine that people can put bottles and cans into and get money back. He pondered that if people are being let out on the street, what are they being given for their pint glasses – plastic glasses that fold and crush or do you use deposit return schemes on plastic glasses that seem to work really well? He admitted that a lot of people might be too careless or drunk to bring plastic glasses back but it just takes a

small number of people to clean up all the streets, 'These schemes have been very successful where they've been tried and I'd like to see more of them'.

With the Green Arts Initiative Ireland having developed a few programmes specifically targeting venues, helping them to embed sustainability, Mr Thompson asked Ms Walsh if there were plans to develop further schemes or to roll that out to more venues.

Ms Walsh understood that this would become formalised in the launching of the Ireland edition of the Theatre Green Book in the early part of 2024. 'A lot of the advice and expertise and what Ms Best is talking about is practically applied to lots of festivals and organisations that Native Events and Julie's Bicycle EU work with, so this is a resource that we're adapting and making Ireland-specific. It deals with all of the issues around waste and production, including sets, lighting and energy usage in rehearsal rooms.' She noted that, apparently, one of the biggest audiences that produces plastic waste is at pantomimes and school shows, because everybody arrives with a packed lunch and a plastic water bottle.

With the highest sales in Europe, Minister Smith confirmed that multipacks (like the 24 tiny bottles that children take to school each month) will soon be gone from Ireland.

Mr Thompson praised the small steps that are helping to address this, asking for other possible examples of innovations around embedding sustainability and circular economy principles, or resources that a local business can tap into to help embed circular economy principles or become more sustainable in the city.

Circling back to transport, Ms Dekker recalled that when she moved to Dublin and learnt to cycle, she was terrified. Reflecting on the minister's comment about buses being quicker, she spoke about living in Singapore, where the night buses had bar stools. The principle was to deal with the noise pollution by containing everyone at the party destinations of Clarke and Robinson Quays. She suggested having a chat with the NTA and was sure that plenty of pubs could upcycle bar stools so people could safely continue the party on their way home.

Ms Dekker highlighted another interesting initiative in Salt Lake City, where they looked at how to design the city and transport network around people who might be leaving venues inebriated. This was thinking about it from a different perspective, starting with how safe do we make this and going

forward from there to design it so that it's simple for people. To the point about recycling, she said it should be easy enough for somebody who's slightly inebriated to know where to put something and if that's done, then it's perfected for everybody else. On cycling, because it's such a quiet time of night, she proposed making Dublin Bikes 24/7 as an easy win for everyone.

Minister Smyth wondered what the logic in the decision was to shut Dublin Bikes at a certain time of night – did the insurers insist on it, was it just precautionary or would they try extended hours out as a pilot?

Mr Thompson indicated that Dublin City Council would take that feedback on board.

Ms Best agreed, mentioning other European cities like Berlin or Amsterdam, where the cycling infrastructure is phenomenal, really well-lit and easy to navigate.

Mr Thompson asked if there were any other key supports or resources that could help.

Ms Walsh believed there's a responsibility on Dublin City Council toward the number of arts and culture buildings under its control, management, leasehold or other arrangement. She specified that those buildings have not been updated or upgraded to the energy standards they should be operating at and that this must be a priority for every city council and local authority. Ms Walsh proposed it as a big capital investment programme in every arts centre, arts building and cultural institution around the country. This was not only important for those organisations in their own sustainability and to attract and keep future audiences, but also to set an example. 'There's absolutely no reason why the 70-odd funded arts centres around the country aren't shining lights for sustainability and energy efficiency in their areas. Maybe it's a request to public expenditure to support that capital spend, with the additional benefits that when you upgrade a building on the sustainability measures we're talking about, it also inevitably makes that building more accessible to more people right across the community, cheaper to run, and an attractive place for younger audiences that will attend shows in the city centre in the future.'

Minister Smyth noted one reason to retrofit these buildings as reducing the amount of necessary heating and cooling, resulting in less noise from fans at night and less noise pollution, which is another complaint.

Mr Thompson reiterated that the summit was all about bringing different stakeholders together to share insights, ideas and recommendations, which would then be disseminated to various policy-makers, including Dublin City Council. In finishing, he sought final thoughts in terms of enhancing sustainability and circular economy within the NTE context.

In listening to the earlier panel and thinking about it from the perspective of her job, the UCLG conference, and the role of culture and climate action, what came to Ms Dekker's mind was how do we have a just transition to the NTE? As a non-drinker and somebody who usually wants to be curled up with a blanket and cup of tea, should she have the inkling to go dancing, Ms Dekker said she would like to do that and be able to go somewhere afterwards where she can sit down with a hot chocolate or coffee. 'It's nice to see more bubble tea places open up, which speaks to my Asian heritage and the reason I bring up the heritage piece is whose NTE is it? Are we speaking to the cultural values that people have? I appreciate that it's only the start.'

Cllr Brabazon closed the summit, thanking all of the speakers, moderators, panellists, Project Arts Centre, Festival in a Van, the artists and performers, local food businesses, the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, and the teams in the Economic Development Office and Dublin Place Brand Office.



Senita Appiakorang, Sister Fenix

