

Alive After Five boosts city economy by £131m

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NEWCASTLE'S Alive after Five programme was worth an extra £131m to the city's economy last year, according to new figures.

The programme, which was devised by Business Improvement District company Newcastle NE1 Ltd, is designed to keep the city open in the early evening.

It works by extending retail opening hours until 8pm throughout the

year and is supported by free parking after 5pm at council-run car parks.

By maintaining a vibrant atmosphere it is hoped that Newcastle can hold its own against other modern European cities.

Since its launch in 2010, Alive after Five has helped generate an estimated £839m for the city's economy, with £131m generated last year.

The latest figures also show that the scheme encouraged an extra 2.1 million visits to Newcastle between 5pm and 8pm last year. Since 2010 an additional 13.7 million visits to the city have been made.

Stephen Patterson, director of communications at Newcastle NE1,

said: "Alive after Five has had a transformational impact on Newcastle's early evening economy.

"With the lights on, shutters up

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Stephen Patterson

and thousands of additional people in the city in the early evening, it is now a far more welcoming and vibrant experience.

"These results underline the significant impact Alive after Five has had, and whilst the scheme has been a huge success, we cannot afford to be complacent.

"As a city, we need to be relentless in delivering the best possible customer experience and improving the city's transport links at a regional, national and international level."

NE1 recently received the "Best BID in Europe" award at the 2016 EU BID Congress in Germany. The organisation was praised for its work

on the Alive after Five scheme.

The initiative has also been praised by local business owners from across Newcastle.

Ollie Vaulkhard, owner of the Vaulkhard Group, said: "Initiatives like Alive after Five pave the way to making our city a more accessible and welcoming place to be in the early evening.

"It keeps energy in the streets for people staying out after shopping to enjoy the many restaurants and bars the city has to offer, which has made a great deal of difference to the success of licensed premises."

Paddy Forster, owner, Patrick Foster Barbers on High Bridge, added: "This scheme has helped the city adapt to changing consumer behaviours and shopping and leisure habits.

"People get home from work and want to go out, so we stay open until 9pm four nights a week and our customers love having free parking near to allow them to pop in for a haircut.

"It is great for the city to have shops, businesses and leisure operators open in the early evening, it makes for a much more welcoming and vibrant place to live and work."