

16th April 2026

Dear Candidate,

Hospitality & Night Time Economy - May Election policy asks

As Newcastle approaches pivotal all-out local elections, I write as chief executive of Newcastle NE1 Ltd, the business improvement district, on behalf of the city centre businesses we represent, to set out practical policy asks for the next administration.

NE1 represents 1,486 city centre businesses giving us a direct view of the pressures facing them and of the role hospitality and the night time economy play in the wider city centre offer.

It is one of Newcastle's most important economic and cultural assets, creating jobs, promoting footfall, supporting a vast supply chain, and defining the city's renown as a vibrant regional capital. But often, emerging policy is fragmented, excessively burdensome and fails to acknowledge the sector's importance to the city.

With that in mind, we are calling on the next council leadership to back the sector more clearly and more consistently in four key ways:

- Repeal the Late Night Levy. Newcastle remains the only destination in the North East where it is imposed, placing city businesses at a competitive disadvantage and adding further cost to venues already operating in a challenging environment.
- Appoint a cabinet member with specific responsibility for promoting and championing hospitality and the night-time economy, reflecting the sector's importance to the city's economy, identity and vibrancy.
- Work with licensees to develop a clear, long-term vision for Newcastle's hospitality and night-time economy, and ensure that this informs licensing and planning policy so that businesses are operating within a supportive framework.
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- Work with licensees to lobby central Government for reform of the business rates system, which is one of the most significant burdens facing hospitality businesses.

These are modest asks, but they would make a significant difference to businesses and send a signal about the kind of city centre economy the council wants to support.

As parties continue to develop their priorities ahead of polling day, we hope these points can help inform the conversation about the importance of hospitality and the night-time economy for the city.

I would welcome any comments you may wish to share on these issues and will be pleased to continue the conversation in the weeks ahead.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Patterson

Chief Executive, Newcastle NE1