
The Social Value of Liverpool's N1 Night Bus Service

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Disclaimer

This report presents a high-level evaluation informed by survey data and indicative assumptions. It monetises tested outcomes providing evidence of social value but does not constitute a full Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis or comprehensive service evaluation.

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Executive Summary

The N1 Night Bus Service is estimated to generate approximately £542,000 in social value, equivalent to an indicative Social Return on Investment (SROI) ratio of 4.94:1.

From 8 December 2023, the N1 night bus service began as a year-long trial, connecting Birkenhead to Allerton Library in the Liverpool City Region (LCR). The Service is operated by Stagecoach and supported by Mersey Travel. The night bus service was launched after a successful campaign by the University of Liverpool and the Liverpool City Region Music Board. It demonstrated a demand for the Service that could create an array of benefits for its users and the Liverpool City Region.

The Social Value of the N1 Night Bus

This report, authored by RealWorth, seeks to explain the social benefits the night bus service brings to the Liverpool City Region through the lens of 'social value'. Social value is used in this report as a tool to demonstrate the benefits of the night bus service beyond economic viability to the social impact it has on the local community. Through analysis informed by social return on investment principles, RealWorth estimated **that for every pound spent, approximately £4.94 in social value may be generated.**¹

Further, without the N1 Night Bus, a significant proportion of users, particularly women, students, and night-time economy workers, would struggle to travel safely or affordably at night.

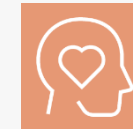
¹*It should be caveated that this study primarily considered changes in individuals wellbeing as a result of the Service, and this return doesn't consider benefits of the Service to wider society, which would likely increase the number.*



42% of respondents wouldn't have been able to travel on the evening surveyed without the nightbus



82% of respondents had improved confidence or peace of mind from travelling on the night bus



82% of respondents felt safer travelling on the night bus than other methods of travelling



56% of people who otherwise couldn't travel reported stronger social connections

"I used to walk to avoid having to pay for [taxis] so the night bus is literally a lifesaver"

This study provides indicative evidence that the N1 Night Bus Service creates significant social value, supporting the idea that investments in such services should be considered not just for their direct financial returns, but also for their broader positive impact on the community's wellbeing.

Introduction

Night Bus Summary

From 8 December 2023, the N1 Night Bus Service began ('the Service') as a year-long trial, connecting Birkenhead to Allerton Library in the Liverpool City Region (LCR). The Service is operated by Stagecoach, a major operator of bus services in the city of Liverpool and the surrounding region, and supported by Mersey Travel, part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA).

The service began after a successful campaign by the University of Liverpool and the Liverpool City Region Music Board. It demonstrated a demand for the Service that could create an array of benefits for its users and the LCR.

An Emphasis on Social Value

The purpose of night buses typically extends beyond economic viability to the social value that is created. Social value can be defined as:

"The relative importance that people and society place on changes to lives that are affected by the social, economic, and environmental influences of development."

In 2022, the LCRCA released its Social Value Policy and Framework. The document highlights the Authority's commitment to considering the social value created by an activity when making decisions on how to invest resources. It also reiterates the Metro Mayor's belief that the City Region has the potential to be the UK's 'social value capital'.²

²² <https://api.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/LCRCA-Social-Value-Policy-and-Framework-2022.pdf>

It is within this context that this report seeks to demonstrate the social value created by the Service.

Purpose of this Report

Shortly after the launch of the Service, RealWorth, a social value consultancy based in Liverpool and London, was commissioned to support the University of Liverpool in measuring and understanding the social impact the Service is having on its stakeholders.

The study conducted by RealWorth and the University of Liverpool surveyed users of the night bus to understand the social benefits they have experienced. This report presents the qualitative and quantitative findings of the study.

The Liverpool City Region Music Board intends to use the results of this report to demonstrate to the LCRCA that the benefits of the Service go beyond economic impacts, and the trial has made a substantial social impact on the lives of its users.

Structure of the Report

The remainder of the report provides:

- A background and context of night bus services and the Liverpool city region's evening economy
- A description of the overall approach
- A methodology for how data was collected and analysed
- The results of the survey
- A description and analysis of the social value created
- Conclusions

A Background to Night Buses Services

The History of Night Buses

Night buses are a mode of transport that operate during the night hours. They often provide a more limited service than a typical bus service during times of lower passenger volume, with fewer routes and less frequency.

One of the first night bus services in the UK was introduced in London in 1913 in response to the growing demand for late-night transportation. They were introduced to accommodate late-night workers, social activities, and nightlife, and expanded throughout the century in the UK. Night buses have since become commonplace in UK cities such as Glasgow, Manchester and Bristol.

Social Benefits

Night buses are often perceived as a loss-making operation. However, they offer numerous social benefits beyond economic viability.³ Firstly, they provide essential transportation for shift workers, emergency service personnel, and individuals involved in late-night activities, ensuring safe and affordable travel options.

Additionally, their presence typically supports social inclusion, enabling individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to engage in nightlife and community events. By serving as a reliable mode of transport during late hours, night buses also help reduce the risk of drunk driving and other

hazards associated with nighttime travel, offering a safer way for people to return home.

Further, night buses provide economic and environmental benefits. They contribute to local economies by facilitating access to restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues, which in turn promotes nightlife and tourism. They also support the reduction of the number of cars on the road at night, helping to decrease emissions and alleviate congestion.

Key Stakeholders of Night Buses

While night buses are open to all, certain groups may benefit differently than others. Research suggests that night buses can be seen as a source of safety by women when considering travelling late at night. However, the safety of night buses can depend on factors like the bus route, the presence of other passengers, and the overall security measures in place⁴.

If night buses are equipped with features like ramps and priority seating, they can provide essential transportation for disabled individuals, who are more likely to use the bus than non-disabled adults and may have fewer options late at night⁵. Further, people who have never worked, long-term unemployed, and students make the highest proportion of trips using public transport and may benefit from more affordable, accessible transport at night.⁶

³ Plyusheva, A. and Boussauw, K., 2020. Does night-time public transport contribute to inclusive night mobility? Exploring Sofia's night bus network from a gender perspective. *Transport policy*, 87, pp.41-50.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Transport Scotland, Key Issues and Evidence. Available at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/social-and-equality-impact-assessment-seqia-nts-delivery-plan/2-key-issues-and-evidence/>

⁶ Department for Transport, National Travel Survey 2023, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2023/nts-2023-mode-share-and-multi-modal-trips>

The Liverpool City Region Context

The Evening Economy

Nightlife in the Liverpool city centre is vital to the LCR economy, significantly benefiting local businesses and community life. Iconic music venues like the Cavern Club, and destinations such as Bold Street, support a vibrant evening atmosphere. With about 50,000 residents in the city centre and amenities such as gyms and three universities, the area attracts people at all hours.

This activity has numerous benefits for the LCR. The nightlife sector employs over 125,000 individuals, accounting for 24% of the population and 48% of local employment as of 2022⁷. Further, residents and visitors contribute millions to the economy through nightlife activity, with 40% of in-person payments made between 7 PM and 4 AM in early 2023⁸, the highest across Britain.

Challenges Around Travel

Following the pandemic, Liverpool's evening economy suffered because fewer people were coming into the area⁹. At a public consultation in March 2022, this was described as problematic by venue owners, workers and event promoters, with a lack of late-night transport considered as one of many impacting factors.

A distinct lack of taxis in the city centre and extremely high prices were cited as reasons to avoid travelling into the centre at night. A further issue was raised in that night bus services are typically described in terms of economic viability, rather than as a public safety service. Late-night buses ran while the city hosted the Eurovision Song Contest in 2023, and after

the Liverpool City Region Music Board carried out a successful 18-month campaign, a trial for night bus services was announced.

The N1 Night Bus Service

The trial Service runs across two of the region's metropolitan boroughs, Liverpool and the Wirral, with the Service operating between Birkenhead and Allerton Library and stopping across the Liverpool city centre.

The Service, operated by Stagecoach, runs from just before half midnight and then every hour until around 5 AM every Thursday night/ Friday morning through to Saturday night/ Sunday morning. The Service helps late-night revellers and shift workers travel across the Mersey into the early hours of the morning every weekend by making travel easier and cheaper (with fares of £2 per journey).

Users of the Service

Between 3 December 2023 and 6 October 2024, the Service attracted 15,552 individual journeys. The user survey, carried out by the University of Liverpool and social value consultancy RealWorth, indicates the breakdown of users across the Service (explained further in the following sections):

- 50% identified as female, with 46% male and 4% non-binary
- 35% states they have a physical or mental condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more
- 40% of respondents were between the age of 18-24

⁷ Liverpool Bid Company, Liverpool's Night Time Economy, 2023. Available at: <https://liverpoolbidcompany.com/liverpools-night-time-economy-2023/#:~:text=In%20Liverpool%20in%202022%2C%20125%2C889,48%25%20of%20employment%20in%20Liverpool.>

⁸ Square Up, How to Make the Most of Liverpool's Nightlife Demand, 2023. Available at: <https://squareup.com/gb/en/the-bottom-line/operating-your-business/liverpool-number-one-night-time-economy>

⁹ Liverpool City Region, Liverpool City Region Plan for Prosperity Evidence Base, 2023. Available at: <https://api.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Plan-for-Prosperity-Full-Evidence-Base.pdf>



Image: Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram unveiling night buses for operation during the Eurovision song contest (source: LCRCA website)

Evaluation Approach

The purpose of this study was to understand the changes in people's lives caused by the Service. To do this, an approach informed by Social Return on Investment, or SROI, was used. SROI is a people-centric framework that allows for the analysis of the way people's lives change as a result of a project, programme or activity – in this case, using the Night Bus. It typically involves using a return on investment ratio to express the total social benefits in monetary terms. The method for this is explained later in the report.

The approach to this study adhered to the Principles of SROI (shown on the right), and involved the following five steps:

- **Establishing scope:** this involved understanding the context of the Service, key stakeholders, and potential outcomes
- **Involving stakeholders:** this step involved surveying users of the Service to understand how using it had impacted their lives
- **Understanding outcomes:** this step involved analysing survey responses
- **Calculating SROI:** this step involved assigning a monetary value to the outcomes and establishing the extent to which the changes in lives were caused by the Service. This step is explained further on page 19.
- **Reporting the results:** this step involved communicating the social value created qualitatively and quantitatively, in an understandable and easily digestible way.



Figure: the 8 Principles of Social Value (source: Social Value International)

A Focus on Wellbeing

While SROI can be summarised as an aggregation of the economic value of the costs and benefits that arise from an activity, it also considers monetary values assigned to outcomes that don't have market prices, such as increased wellbeing.

The scope of this study allowed us to understand the various ways in which people feel about the Service, based on their individual experience. As such, the analysis primarily considers changes in people's wellbeing as a result of it.

Where possible and relevant, indicators that go beyond wellbeing are included to show the costs or benefits to society. However, a more in-depth study is recommended to understand the full benefits to society that have arisen from the Service.

This means that the social value reported in this study is likely to be undercounted but demonstrates the significance of the Service to individuals who have used it.

Furthermore, this report is indicative of the social value generated by the trial/pilot of the service, rather than a comprehensive social value assessment. If the full service were to proceed, a more detailed social value assessment could be conducted to determine the social value of the full service.



Figure: Liverpool city centre at night (source: Unsplash)

Survey Design and Methodology

To engage with the stakeholders of the Service, a survey was created by the University of Liverpool, with social value-related questions included from RealWorth. The survey was distributed through an online link to users of the Service, and results have been included from May 2024 to October 2024.

Identifying Outcomes

While some research has been done on the value of buses to society, more research needs to be undertaken specifically on night bus services.

To identify potential outcomes for survey questions, we used RealWorth's '11 factors of social value', based on the OECD factors of wellbeing which comprises its Better Life Index (shown on the right). Potential outcomes were agreed with the University of Liverpool and tested via a survey.

Survey Questions

It was identified that there were two primary areas in which individuals would benefit from the Service:

- Set 1: The Service enables individuals to do activities that they would not ordinarily be able to do
- Set 2: The Service provides benefits to alternative methods of travel (i.e. walking, cycling, and taxis)

RealWorth asked whether the user had felt that they had been impacted positively by the Service in each identified relevant area, with regards to the two sets.

Conditional Factors

As social value is defined as changes to people's lives, it was essential to establish whether the user had felt a significant change from the Service. Individuals were first asked if they felt the Service had made a tangible difference to their lives. Social value was not considered to have been created for those who believe the Service had not made a significant difference to their lives.

The concepts of attribution and deadweight are also significant in social value. Attribution is the process of determining how much of an outcome is due to the contributions of a specific organisation, while deadweight is the proportion of the value that would have occurred without the intervention.

Individuals were also asked if they would have made their journey without the availability of the night bus. Those who answered no to this question were then asked questions from Set 1. All respondents were asked questions from Set 2.



RealWorth's Eleven Factors of Social Value.
Based on the OECD Better Life Index
Dimensions of Wellbeing.

Survey Findings

A total of 274 valid responses were provided for the survey.

Of these users, 82% of respondents stated that the Service had a tangible impact on their lives.

44% stated they would not have made their journey without the availability of the Service. This demonstrates the ability of the Service to facilitate people to do activities that they wouldn't have otherwise done.



Figure: Public transport in Liverpool (Photo courtesy of University of Liverpool)

Benefits of Taking the Night Bus as Opposed to Other Forms of Transport

For this category, responses were taken from those who stated they would have made their journey regardless but chose to take the night bus instead, and that the Service had made a tangible impact on their lives.

Question: Does using the night bus affect you in any of the following ways (as opposed to other forms of night-time travel)?

Outcome	% of respondents (out of those who met the above criteria)	% of total respondents	Example Quotes
Improved confidence or peace of mind	82%	60%	"I used to walk to avoid having to pay for Ubers so the night bus is literally a lifesaver"
Improved feelings of safety	82%	59%	"It made me feel safer as a woman"
Financial savings	84%	61%	"low cost for going to work to earn money"
Improved feelings of environmental consideration	76%	54%	"Provided a greener way of travel at night"

Benefits Derived From Activities the Night Bus Has Enabled

For this category, answers were taken from those who stated they would not have made their journey without the availability of the night bus and that it had made a tangible impact on their life.

Question: Did the reason for your travel (e.g., a night out; work in the night-time economy; visiting friends and family; etc.), affect you in any of the following ways?

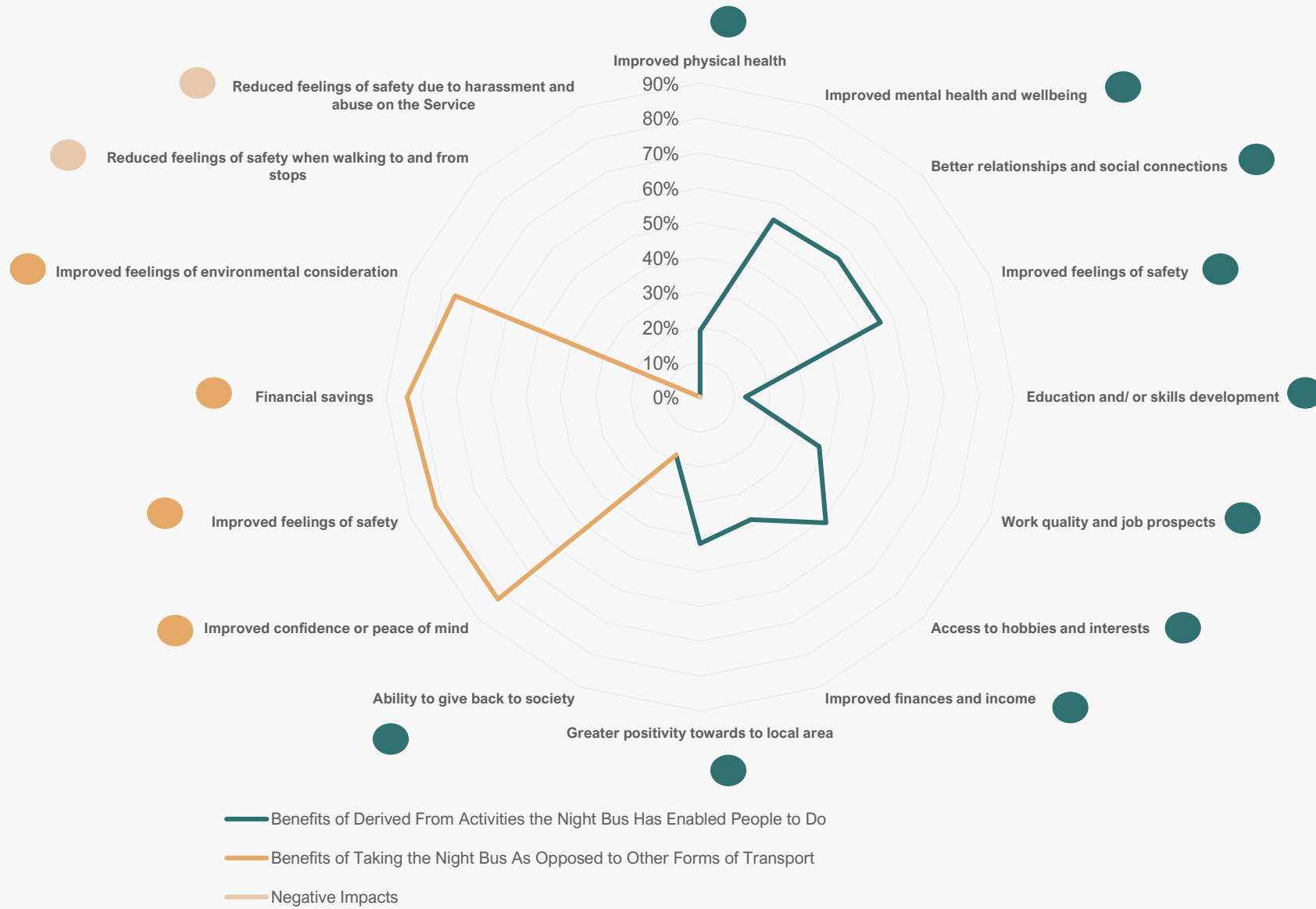
Outcome	% of respondents (out of those who met the above criteria)	% of total respondents	Example Quotes
Improved physical health	19%	18%	“It makes me feel much less isolated, something I’ve been struggling with since the pandemic”
Improved mental health and wellbeing	55%	18%	
Better relationships and social connections	56%	19%	“This has helped me to enjoy more nights out with friends giving me the opportunity to socialise”
Improved feelings of safety	56%	18%	“It has been beneficial as a musician, I’ve been able to go out and gig late at night and not have to spend all my pay on taxis.”
Education and/ or skills development	13%	4%	
Work quality and job prospects	37%	11%	“As a hospitality worker, it grants me the option to get home safely after work without the expenses of a taxi”
Access to hobbies and interests	51%	16%	“Crucial service to allow attending concerts and other events.”
Improved finances and income	38%	16%	
Greater positivity towards to local area	42%	15%	“It’s helped me travel more and get out more I used to worry about how I would get home as I don’t drive”
Ability to give back to society	18%	5%	

Negative Impacts

Accounting for social value not only considers the benefits of an activity but also whether it created any negative effects. We asked users of the Service whether they had experienced any negative impacts as a result of using it.

Two notable negative impacts were found, categorised as: reduced feelings of safety when walking to and from bus stops and reduced feelings of safety due to harassment and abuse on the night bus. However, in both outcomes, a small number of responses were recorded.

Outcome	% of total respondents	Example Quote
Reduced feelings of safety when walking to and from stops	≤1%	“Still have to walk from the stop / wait at the stop alone which I don’t feel safe doing”
Reduced feelings of safety due to harassment and abuse on the Service	≤1%	“I feel safe on the bus but as expected I have been harassed at the stop by men thinking I’m drunk and vulnerable”



"It has improved my life as now I can confidently say that I feel comfortable and completely safe outside after midnight."

"I can afford to go to Liverpool for a gig/ night out."

"It's saved my monthly wage so much; it used to cost nearly 3 hours of my wages to get home from work and now it's so much more convenient. It has definitely given me more peace of mind financially!"

"It makes me feel much less isolated, something I've been struggling with since the pandemic."



"This has helped me to enjoy more nights out with friends giving me the opportunity to socialise."

"It's meant peace of mind staying out after midnight and knowing I can get home safely and not have to pay astronomical taxi fares. It's also a much more environmentally friendly way to travel which is a priority for the planet."

"Boss."

"I won't use taxis as I don't like to be alone in a vehicle with a stranger. I'd rather walk. I always feel safe on a bus."

"Crucial service to allow attending concerts and other events."

"Feel so much safer getting home at night or travelling out at night and has saved me a fortune, used to walk to avoid having to pay for Ubers so the night bus is literally a life saver."

Limitations of the Study

In response to the question, *“Does using the night bus affect you in any of the following ways (as opposed to other forms of night-time travel)?”*, participants could select *“improved accessibility.”*

This option was intended to assess whether people with disabilities experienced fewer barriers when using the service compared to other transport modes.

However, due to the high proportion of affirmative responses and the absence of a clear definition of “accessibility,” it is possible that the question was misinterpreted. Consequently, these responses were excluded from the results.

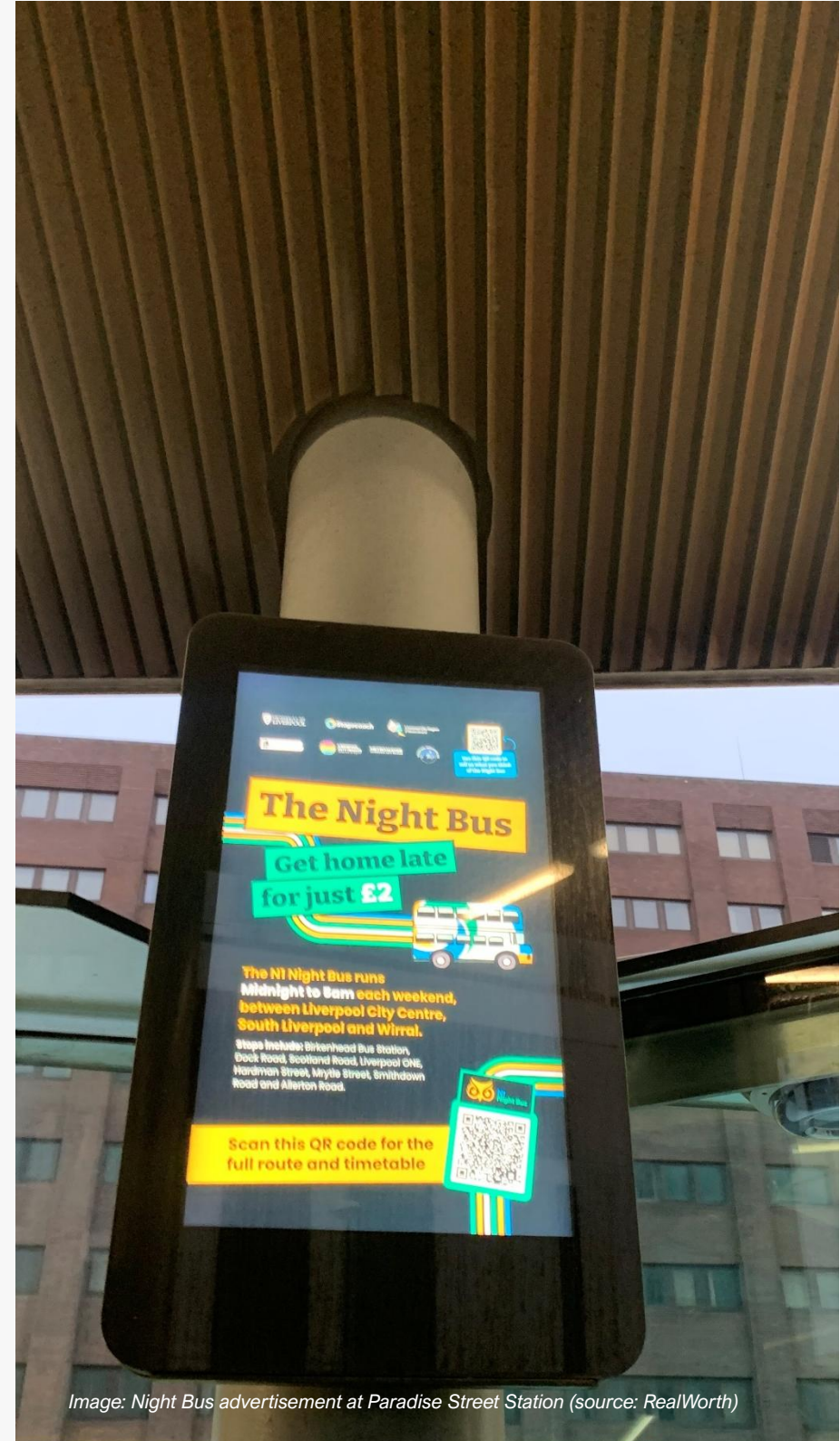


Image: Night Bus advertisement at Paradise Street Station (source: RealWorth)

Estimating the Social Value

Social Return on Investment

To calculate the social value created by the service, we used an approach informed by the Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology endorsed by Social Value International.

SROI identifies the changes to people's lives caused by experiences such as new homes and supportive jobs, good quality facilities, a thriving, friendly community, feeling safe in all environments, and many other influences. These are known as 'outcomes.'

Outcomes are then monetised by selecting indicators (units of measurement) and proxy values (the monetary valuation of the indicators) and identifying the total number of people to have experienced the outcome, creating a gross total value.

The return-on-investment calculations are completed by adjusting the gross value by analysing the extent to which:

- the value would have occurred without the intervention (deadweight),
- other parties were involved in the impact on stakeholders (attribution),
- the effects diminish over time (drop-off) and
- the intervention pushes the factor and its impact elsewhere (displacement).

Estimating the Users

Estimating the number of individual users was necessary to assess social value. As of October 2024, 15,552 night bus journeys were recorded; however, anonymous payment meant individual users could not be identified.

This study, therefore, estimated 3,349 users using journey data and self-reported survey information on usage frequency. As this method relies on assumptions and self-reported data, the estimate should be considered indicative rather than precise.

From Survey Results to Social Value

The survey results provided us with a sample of the number of people who experienced the range of outcomes by using the Service. We could use this sample to estimate the total number of people using the Service to experience each outcome by extrapolating it across the estimated 3,349 users.

Once proxy values had been assigned to the outcomes, we could then estimate the total value of each outcome based on the number of users who felt it.

The values presented should be interpreted as indicative estimates based on survey responses and modelled assumptions.

Estimated Value of the N1 Night Bus Service

The total social value created by the N1 Night Bus Service that has been measured in this study is estimated to be around **£542,000**.

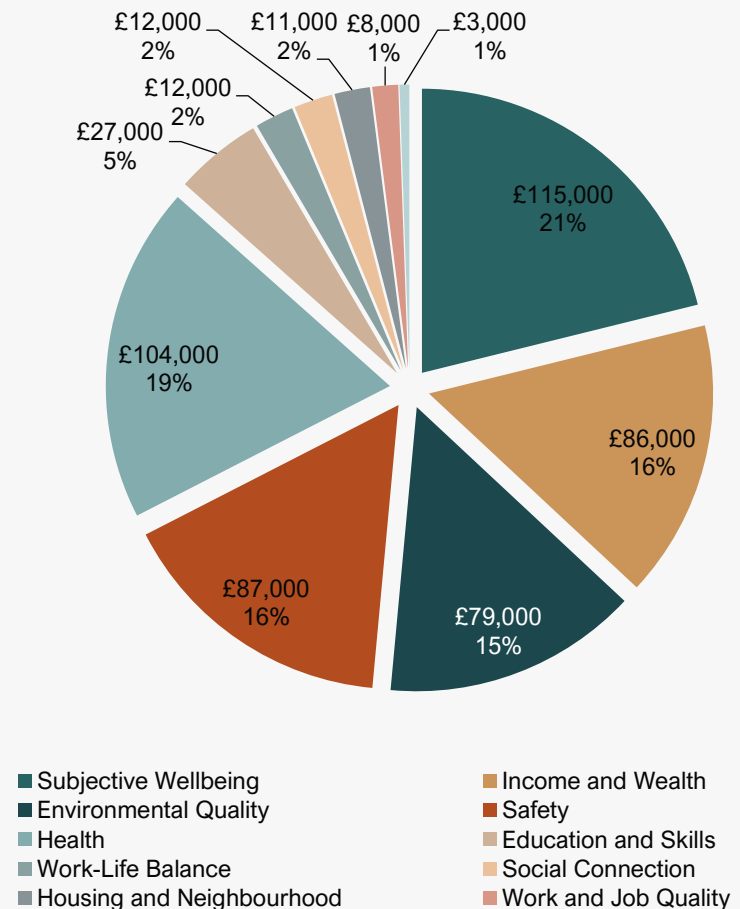
This equates to approximately **£161** amount per individual user, and **£34** per journey.

The areas in which value is created and how they create the value are categorised below:

Feature	Social Value
Benefits derived from activities the Service has enabled people to do	£198,000
Benefits of taking the Service as opposed to other forms of transport	£352,000
Negative impacts of taking the Service	-£7,000
Total	£542,000

Social Value by Factor

The total value created can also be broken down by the factor of social value which is created. This can be seen below:



Key Outcomes

The below table provides a breakdown of the key outcomes:

Area	Anticipated Change	Factor	Social Value
Benefits of taking the Service as opposed to other forms of transport	People have improved confidence and peace of mind from using the Night Bus	Subjective Wellbeing	£105,000
Benefits of taking the Service as opposed to other forms of transport	People are more physically active as a result of the Service	Health	£89,000
Benefits of taking the Service as opposed to other forms of transport	People have improved financial wellbeing from travelling through a cheap means	Income and Wealth	£86,000
Benefits of taking the Service as opposed to other forms of transport	People have improved wellbeing regarding their safety	Safety	£82,000
Benefits derived from activities the Service has enabled people to do	People have improved wellbeing regarding the environmental impact of public transport compared to other forms of travel	Environmental Quality	£79,000
Benefits derived from activities the Service has enabled people to do	People can undertake activities which improve their education and skills	Education and Skills	£27,000
Benefits derived from activities the Service has enabled people to do	People can undertake activities which improve their physical health	Health	£15,000
Benefits derived from activities the Service has enabled people to do	People have an increase in accessibility to hobbies	Work-Life Balance	£12,000
Benefits derived from activities the Service has enabled people to do	People undertake activities which make them feel safe as a result of the night bus	Safety	£12,000
Benefits derived from activities the Service has enabled people to do	People have improved better relationships due to doing activities they otherwise couldn't	Social Connection	£12,000

As shown in the table, the most significant outcome of the Service is that users have improved confidence and peace of mind, attributed to using the Service. Users also have increased wellbeing related to their finances, from being able to travel affordably. Further, people experience improvements in wellbeing from using public transport compared to other forms of travel.

In terms of benefits derived from activities the Service has enabled people to do, users have utilised it to undertake activities that improve their physical health, which has in turn had benefits to them. Further, people have developed new skills and knowledge from being able to access educational opportunities.

The Service has also created social value by providing opportunities to pursue hobbies, create or enhance social connections, and make people feel positive towards their area.

Social Return on Investment

Merseytravel has estimated that the Service has a gross cost of £110,000 per annum.

Based on an estimated social value of £542,000, the service is associated with an indicative SROI ratio of **4.94:1**. This means that for every £1 spent, the service may generate around £4.94 in social value.

Example Impact Calculation

The below table shows an example taken from the Impact Map used to calculate the total social value of the service:

Stakeholder	Change	Factor	Outcome	Proxy Value	Value of Outcome	Indicator	# of People Experiencing the outcome	How long the outcome lasts	Adjustments	Total value
Bus Users	People have improved confidence and peace of mind from using the Night Bus	Subjective Wellbeing	People have improved wellbeing through feeling Safe	The average weighted value of a QALY for mental health improvement related to Safety	£126*	Number of people who have improved wellbeing through feeling Safe	2,009	1 year	Medium deadweight; low attribution	£105,195

*This is a net value that has been adjusted according to significance of the outcome

For example, through the survey, it was identified that 60% of the users felt improved confidence and peace of mind when taking the Service, as opposed to another form of transport. When this sample was applied to the total number of users, it was assumed that 2,009 users of the overall Service felt this outcome.

The proxy that was used to show this change was the average weighted value of a Quality-Adjusted Life Year (QALY) for mental health improvement. A QALY is a measure of the state of health of a person or group in which the benefits, in terms of length of life, are adjusted to reflect the quality of life, and has been applied to RealWorth's 11 factors of wellbeing to establish the value of a change in someone's life in these areas.

Adjustments

This value was then adjusted based on the extent to which the outcome would have occurred without the activity, that other people or organisations participated in the impact, and the diminishment of the outcome significance over time. Adjustments include:

- For the benefits derived from activities the night bus has enabled people to do, a high attribution was placed, as the outcome itself was largely created by the activity, as opposed to the Service.
- For both activities, the value of a wellbeing outcome was reduced, given that it is unlikely that an individual would receive a year's worth of wellbeing from the service.

This process was then applied to each outcome to create a total social value.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study provides a compelling case for the value of the N1 Night Bus Service in Liverpool, indicating an estimated social return on investment (SROI) of **4.94:1**. This suggests that **for every £1 spent, around £4.94 worth of social value may be generated**. This SROI does not include wider economic impacts, reduced policing costs, reduced congestion, or environmental benefits beyond self-reported wellbeing.

The findings highlight several ways in which the service contributes to the Liverpool City Region (LCR). Beyond providing transport, the service is associated with improvements in subjective wellbeing, including increased feelings of safety, improved access to employment, and greater opportunities to socialise and participate in cultural activities. These outcomes contribute to wider community benefits, particularly within Liverpool city centre's vibrant evening and night-time economy.

The study also identifies some negative experiences, including isolated reports of harassment and feelings of vulnerability when travelling to or from bus stops late at night. While these issues were not widely reported, they point to areas where further improvements, particularly around safety and accessibility, could enhance the overall user experience.

In the context of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's commitment to incorporating social value into decision-making, these findings suggest that night bus services can deliver benefits beyond traditional measures of economic performance. Considering these wider social outcomes alongside financial costs may support more informed transport investment decisions.

Overall, the results indicate that the N1 Night Bus Service contributes meaningful social value to its users and the wider community. As such, investments in late-night public transport may play an important role in supporting safety, social inclusion, and the vitality of the city's evening economy.

Appendices

Appendix A: RealWorth's Methodology

The Basis of our Work

We use the methodology developed by the world-leading Social Value organisation Social Value UK / Social Value International. This means that the methods we use and the reports we generate are robust, credible and defensible. It also allows for external accreditation and benchmarking if required. More information on the methodology can be found [here](#).

RealWorth has had a long-standing involvement with Social Value UK. One of our founders has been a Council member since 2015. RealWorth also convenes the national SVUK cross-discipline Thought Leadership Group on maximising social value in the built-environment which aims to develop and share best practice on social value across the sector.

We have developed and refined SVUK's approach to improve its relevance to real estate development and have established:

- A bespoke library of relevant indicators and proxy values
- A standardised method of data collection and management which allows reporting by factor (crime, health, education, employment, etc), stakeholder group and beneficiary / recipient
- A robust method of calculating the social value of pro-environmental factors associated with development
- A precedent library of development approaches and features which have been found to generate lasting social value



RealWorth's Approach – An Overview

Taking a Long-Term View

Our approach is designed not just to provide a forecast of social value at a “snapshot” in time, but to establish a framework for the ongoing monitoring and reporting of actual social value that is created in the occupation / implementation phases. We often are asked by clients to help them develop a simple post occupation / implementation evaluation and reporting framework. This allows all stakeholders to understand and report on the actual impacts and take corrective action where shortfalls occur against original plans.

Monitoring actual impacts (for say 5 to 10 years after implementation) has the additional benefit of building strong and lasting relationships and dialogue with affected stakeholders in an affordable, effective and efficient manner. This often provides a sound basis for shaping our clients’ long-term interactions with their stakeholders by providing better understanding of their impacts to a wider number of people.

Our Methodology

Unlike the “desktop” approaches used by some other social value practitioners, our method is evidence based. Wherever possible we use actual accounts from the people who will or have already experienced change as a result of an intervention (policy, project, etc). This approach requires a degree of consultation and field work. Our work supports and complements the informal and statutory consultation processes. We help to shape and influence the consultation and engagement processes including the convening of a number of Theory of Change Workshops to supplement the other consultation arrangements.

We assess the degree to which change has occurred (whether positive or negative) both in terms of the significance of the change, and the numbers of people that experience the change. Our studies rely on field work which collects information from people who are affected by the intervention (project, programme, etc.) and/or those who have an insight into the desired effects of the intervention.



RealWorth's Eleven Factors of Social Value. Based on the [OECD Better Life Index Dimensions of Wellbeing](#).

Our approach allows the social value of an intervention to be made explicit through evidence, and then monetised to show the value relative to the amount of investment. Using evidence about how people experience change, we translate environmental and social value into economic benefits. For example, value arising from employment outcomes is classified as a social value and monetised to create an economic benefit in the same way that savings in CO₂ are monetised to create an economic benefit (albeit using different indicators and proxies). This provides an overall social value and a return on investment (ratio) which can be used by decision-makers in a variety of ways to make better and more informed decisions. These decisions take into consideration impacts that are not normally considered in the traditional market-based approach to financial return on investment.

The work we do complements and supports traditional market-based techniques and gives decision makers more accurate information upon which to base their decisions.

Following the SVUK approach, the information collected about how people experience change is used to create an Impact Map which contains the following information:

- Stakeholders (groups of people, organisations or entities that experience change, whether positive or negative, because of the activity/intervention that is being analysed). Typical stakeholder group might include residents, employees, visitors, beneficiaries of charities or other third sector organisations, and people living close to the intervention.
- Inputs (the cost of the project including capital investment, the monetised value of volunteers, and any other in-kind contributions)
- Outputs (the number of units of delivery where applicable)
- Outcomes (the stated or predicted changes to stakeholder's lives)

Each of the outcomes are categorised against factors. These are topics that affect stakeholder's lives including crime, health, wellbeing, training and skills, employment savings & revenues to stakeholders and green and restorative space.

The outcomes are then monetised by identifying an appropriate indicator (the unit of measurement), and then applying a suitable monetary value (or proxy) to each indicator.

The values are then multiplied by the numbers of people affected (from the survey returns / field data / Theory of Change workshop / etc) and the amount of time the influence of the project / intervention was likely to stay with them to produce a gross value for each outcome.

The gross values of each outcome are then adjusted by analysing the extent that:

- The value would have occurred without the intervention (deadweight),

- Other parties were involved in the impact on stakeholders (attribution),
- The effects diminish over time (drop-off), and
- The intervention displaces the activity and its impact elsewhere (displacement).

Indicators and proxies are typically taken from a wide range of sources including local and national government statistics, research bodies and think-tanks, and representative or accreditation organisations. Ecological value is derived from databases compiled through work on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. All the sources that RealWorth use are license and royalty free and are publicly available.



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