

Committee(s)	Dated:
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee – For Information	21 May 2019
Planning and Transportation Committee – For Information	24 May 2019
Subject: Update on Street Trading Enforcement for the City’s Bridges.	Public
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Summary

In May 2018 funding from Bridge House Estate was approved for a temporary post managed within the Markets and Consumer Protection Department for a dedicated Licensing Officer at a cost of £100k over a two-year trial period. The officer has been in post since November 2018 and is dedicated to carrying out enforcement activities on the City’s Bridges, particularly those bridges, parts of bridges and adjacent areas which are normally within the jurisdiction of neighbouring Local Authorities.

The neighbouring boroughs have now delegated authority to the City to enforce within their boundaries.

The purpose of this report is to update members on progress with enforcement in relation to illegal street trading on the City’s bridges.

A full review of effectiveness and future funding will be carried out prior to the end of the two-year trial period.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report and that officers will be undertaking a full review prior to the end of the two-year trial period.

Main Report

Background

1. Illegal street traders within the City of London are being proactively enforced by the City's Licensing Team with successful prosecutions and seizure of goods. This has resulted in very limited activity by both peanut sellers and ice cream vans in the City since late 2017.
2. There are, however, ongoing issues with illegal traders (peanut sellers, ice cream vans and sellers of other paraphernalia) on the City's Bridges which is especially prevalent on Millennium Bridge (Southwark south side) and Tower Bridge (Tower Hamlets north side and Southwark south side).
3. City Officers until recently had no enforcement authority on the south side of Millennium and London Bridges and any part of Tower Bridge although they are owned, funded and managed by the Bridge House Estate and this had reflected poorly on the image and reputation of the City.
4. Tower Bridge, which receives circa 830,000 visitors per annum to the exhibition regularly had six peanut sellers (2 on the south and 4 on the north) 7 days a week and attracts ice cream vans, souvenir, paintings and jewellery sellers. Security staff at Tower Bridge had regularly moved these traders on but as they have no powers they return once security have left. In addition, at peak seasonal times they attract other undesirable elements such as gamblers and pickpockets which are reported to the Police who have attended but they disperse immediately.
5. The City's position has always been that illegal traders on City bridges is not acceptable as it is a security and safety concern with having mobile carts containing gas bottles and congestion on narrow pavements. There are also health issues as they attract pigeons and other vermin who deposit their droppings on the structure and pavement accelerating the deterioration and increasing the maintenance liability.
6. To enable enforcement, section 101 agreements were negotiated and secured with Southwark on 23rd May 2018 and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) on 2nd April 2019 and delegated powers of enforcement passed to City Officers.
7. A dedicated City Bridges Licensing Officer funded by the Bridge House Estate has been in post since November 2018 and is supported by existing resources in the Licensing Team to provide enforcement 7 days a week.
8. This report therefore presents an update summary of progress on the first 6 months for the period November 2018 to April 2019 of the two-year trial of a dedicated Licensing Officer on the City's Bridges.

Current Position

9. From November 2018 the following City Bridges and their environs receive daily inspections for illegal street trading activity: Blackfriars, Millennium, Southwark, London and Tower Bridges. The Thames Path between Blackfriars and Tower Bridge including Peters Hill and Old Billingsgate are included as are some City locations occasionally frequented by traders such as St Pauls Cathedral and Water Lane. The inspection times are programmed to align with peak trading times and are flexible to respond to trader activities and times of peak visitor activity such as weekends, evenings, special events and bank holidays.
10. In the same time period, there have been 11 peanut receptacles seized (8 on Tower bridge, 2 on the south side of Millennium Bridge and 1 on London Bridge). 25 peanut sellers have been moved on occasions where Police were not available to assist with seizure or where officers were assisting security staff on private land. All 11 seizures will be followed by prosecutions and in addition 3 prosecutions have been supported by CCTV evidence. Officers have also disrupted 79 illegal gambling operations.
11. Relationships with other partners have been strengthened with intelligence flowing between City of London Police, Tower Bridge Security, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Border Force, TFL Traffic Enforcement, LBTH and LB Southwark.
12. As a result of the persistent enforcement activity, the areas now able to be enforced by City Officers remain relatively clear of traders with displacement now affecting the areas surrounding the Tower and Tower Hill tube station. Joint operations with City and LBTH officers have been conducted over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend and subsequent weeks and more are programmed.
13. The current spend on inspection and enforcement funded by the Bridge House Estate to date is summarised as follows:

• Licensing Officer	£19k
• Additional resources for operations	£5k
• Equipment (Bodycams)	<u>£2k</u>
	£26k

Additional support has been provided from existing resources within the Department of Markets and Consumer Protection.
14. There have been significant challenges in delivering the outcomes detailed in this report in that the traders are organised and work together to identify the location of the Licensing Officers current activity and will take the opportunity to trade e.g. if the officer is undertaking a seizure on Tower Bridge the traders will be aware and will attempt to trade on Millennium Bridge. This will be monitored and reviewed as the pilot develops.

Proposals

15. This report does not introduce new proposals but outlines progress on existing commitments.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. This workstream links to two Corporate Plan aims 'Contribute to a flourishing society: people are safe and feel safe' and 'Shape outstanding environments: our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained'.

17. This work links directly to the Markets and Consumer Protection Business Plan top line objective 'The Licensing Team will undertake enforcement against illegal street traders, especially on and near City bridges.'

Implications

18. To enable a sustained long-term solution to the issue of illegal street trading on the City's Bridges, a larger and permanent resource may be required to deliver the appropriate level of enforcement to deter the numerous, organised and opportunistic traders. This will be the subject of a further report and request for funding from the appropriate committees in due course.

Conclusion

19. Following the success of the Licensing Team in enforcing illegal street trading within the City of London the City has now taken the opportunity to deal with the issues on the City's Bridges.

20. Delegated authorities are now in place for City Officers to enforce in specified areas within the boundaries of Southwark and LBTH.

21. A dedicated City Bridges Licensing Officer has been in place since November 2018 to effectively enforce on the Bridges and be a single point of contact working closely with LB Southwark, LBTH, TFL, HMRC, Border Control, Open Spaces, DBE and City of London Police to apply longer-term control.

Back Ground Papers

- Illegal Street Trading Report – PHES 4 July 2017
- Illegal Street Trading Report – PHES 21 November 2017
- Illegal Street Trading -Item 20(B) – Court of Common Council 8 March 2018
- Funding for Enforcement Officer for City's Bridges – P&T 8 May 2018

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