

<b>Committee(s):</b> Streets and Walkways Sub Committee	<b>Date(s):</b> 11 December 2012	
<b>Subject:</b> Mitre Street – Anti-Social Behaviour (Noise) Complaints: A Highway Authority Response	<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Built Environment	<b>For Decision</b>	
<b><u>Summary</u></b>		
<p>Residents in the Mitre Street area requested that Officers investigate the replacement of single yellow line parking on Mitre Street with double yellow lines. Residents hoped that this would address the occurrence of anti-social behaviour in the area associated with the night-time economy.</p> <p>However, following local public consultation, it was found that removal of parking after the hours of parking control, as requested by residents, will cause difficulties for other stakeholders such as the Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School and St Katherine Cree Church, and may not necessarily resolve the noise issue.</p> <p>It is considered that any response from the City of London in its capacity as Highway Authority will not offer a satisfactory solution to the noise issue at Mitre Street.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>I recommend the Streets and Walkway Sub Committee retain the current waiting and loading restrictions at Mitre Street including the existing mixture of pay &amp; display, disabled and motorcycle bays (i.e. do nothing).</p>		

## **Main Report**

### **Introduction**

1. Residents in the Mitre Street area have complained of late-night noise disturbances resulting from the night-time economy for a number of years. There is an increasingly active night-time economy in the Leadenhall Street and Mitre Street area; an inspection of the immediate area on 18 May 2012 identified eight licensed premises as listed in Appendix 1.

### **Background**

2. Mitre Street is a local access road between Creechurch Lane and Aldgate, near Leadenhall Street, at the eastern end of the City of London. The location of Mitre Street can be viewed in Appendix 2.
3. The area consists of a mix of land uses including offices, bars, restaurants, pubs, cafes, a school (Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School), two places of worship (St Katherine Cree Church and the Bevis Marks Synagogue) and residential dwellings.
4. International House, located at 1 Mitre Square, has an approved planning application for a 37,655 sqm office redevelopment with a 297 sqm shop, café or restaurant. Demolition of the existing structure is due to commence shortly.

## **Current Position**

5. The area currently has a mixture of pay & display, disabled and motorcycle bays. There are “at any time” restrictions (ie double yellow lines) on some sections of the road to prevent obstructive parking but otherwise parking is unrestricted against single yellow lines after the hours of control.
6. It has been suggested that visitors to the night-time establishments often park in nearby Mitre Street and Creechurch Lane after the hours of parking control (7am to 7 pm, Monday to Friday), causing disturbances when arriving / leaving (e.g. congregating around parked cars playing loud music, talking / laughing loudly etc).
7. Residents suggested that implementing tighter parking restrictions on Mitre Street may discourage anti-social behaviour. Officers agreed to investigate the feasibility of replacing single yellow line parking on Mitre Street with double yellow lines.

## **Research and Investigation**

8. In order to establish the extent of the issue, data was gathered from three sources:
  - (a) A public consultation was conducted between 26 March to 15 April 2012 where 85 questionnaires were distributed to all residents and businesses in the area shown in Appendix 2. A copy of the questionnaire is also available in Appendix 2. .
  - (b) A night-time parking survey was conducted over two Friday and Saturday nights by the City’s Parking Enforcement Team. These were undertaken over the weekends of 5-6 May and 11-12 May 2012. The detailed observations from these surveys are available in Appendix 3.
  - (c) Reported noise incidents were obtained from both the City’s Environmental Health (Noise Team) and the City of London Police. These were analysed and are presented in Appendix 4.
9. In addition to determining the validity and extent of the noise problem, the public consultation in March / April 2012 aimed to establish support for the removal of parking after the hours of parking control (7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday) by converting the single yellow line along Mitre Street to double yellow lines.
10. The proposed introduction of double yellow lines would mean that night-time economy visitors would have to park elsewhere. Equally, residents and their visitors would not be able to park here at any time.
11. However, loading and servicing would not be affected. These would continue to be permitted on both single and double yellow lines that are not governed by loading restrictions (single / double kerb blips).
12. The investigation of this issue and associated proposal was coordinated with the wider waiting and loading review of the City since treating Mitre Street in isolation could result in vehicles parked here being displaced to other nearby streets causing the problem to migrate elsewhere.
13. An area wide approach was employed to ensure that waiting restrictions at Mitre Street were reviewed concurrently with those at Creechurch Lane, Bury Street and Heneage Lane. This need was recognised by several respondents in the public consultation.

## **Summary of Results**

14. Detailed analyses of the data above are discussed in detail in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 respectively.
15. The public consultation clearly demonstrated an inherent conflict between residents and businesses in the area with regards to noise issues from the night-time economy. This can be explained by (a) the majority of businesses in the area are offices whose operation does not co-exist with the night-time economy and (b) certain businesses are part of the night-time economy and their patrons may be affected by any increase in parking restrictions.
16. All residents reported suffering from noise often or sometimes, as opposed to the majority of businesses who did not suffer from noise disturbances. Consequently, residents were more likely to think that increased parking restrictions will help address the situation, and are therefore more in favour of the proposal.
17. While the school and places of worship were sympathetic towards the plight of residents, they did not support the proposal for more stringent parking restrictions at Mitre Street in whole.
18. The night-time parking survey appears to support the notion of an active night-time economy in the area, particularly on “special occasions” such as Bank holiday weekends. There was also correlation between the night-time parking survey and a reported noise incident on the 7 May 2012.
19. The analysis of reported noise incidents shows that while noise complaints have been reducing over the years, noise disturbance remains a concern for residents in Mitre Street. Seventy five percent of noise complaints are attributed to a commercial or an entertainment nature.
20. Residents are frustrated that little is able to be done to help address this issue. Based on their discussions with officers, these frustrations are similarly echoed by the City’s Environmental Health (Noise) Team and the City of London Police.
21. One of the complications faced by the Environmental Health Team is the difficulty in establishing whether the noise threshold has been breached such that enforcement action can be considered. In addition, the nature of the noise (loud talking / laughing) is not enforceable under current legislations.
22. The only other recourse is therefore for the incidents to be reported to the City of London Police as anti-social behaviour. However, the City of London Police may not have the resources to attend site immediately due to other priorities (sometimes only able to follow-up with informant later in the day.)

### **Proposal**

23. The consultation shows that noise is a problem for residents. However, there is no overall support for the consulted proposal to convert single yellow lines to double yellow lines. Instead, any such response would create parking complications for other stakeholders particularly the Sir John Cass’s Foundation Primary School and St Katherine Cree Church whose parents or parishioners will no longer be able to park in Mitre Street in the evenings and at weekends.
24. It should also be noted that the consulted proposal may not be effective in reducing all noise unless parking controls are also introduced to prevent night time parking at pay & display, disabled and motorcycle bays that are currently in place.

25. Based on the above, it is therefore proposed that the current waiting and loading restrictions at Mitre Street (including the existing mixture of pay & display, disabled and motorcycle bays) be retained i.e. do nothing.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

26. Issues relating to the night-time economy are recognised in the Core Strategy (page 16):

“The City is a safe place to live and work, but must recognise and address increasing concerns about global security. More locally, growth in the night-time economy is leading to concerns about anti-social behaviour. The challenge is to address these global and local concerns, whilst maintaining an attractive and accessible environment”.

27. The results of this investigation suggest that reliance upon parking control alone as a means of mitigating the impacts of the night-time economy are unlikely to yield success.

### **Implications**

28. There are no financial, legal, property or human resource implications from the “do nothing” proposal.
29. A key risk associated with the proposal is that residents of Mitre Street may continue to suffer the effects of noise especially with the increasingly active night-time economy in and around the Mitre Street area.

### **Conclusion**

30. There is an inherent conflict between the needs of residents and businesses in the Mitre Street area on the issue of noise from the night-time economy.
31. Removal of parking after the hours of parking control, as requested by residents, will cause difficulties for other stakeholders such as the school and places of worship and is not recommended.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Licensed Premises in the Leadenhall Street and Mitre Street Area

Appendix 2 Consultation Questionnaire

Appendix 3 Results of Night-Time Parking Survey

Appendix 4 An Analysis of Reported Noise Incidents

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