

Safer City Partnership Strategy Group
Monday 16 November 2015

Public Protection Service (Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards) update

Economic Crime – The City of London Trading Standards Service working in partnership

- The City of London Trading Standards Service is continuing with two large investigations: Operation Addams and Operation Curie, with the assistance of the Tri-Regional Scambusters Team and support from the City of London Police. The investigations are into the fraudulent selling of alternative investment commodities such as diamonds, gold, wine and carbon credits. There are still over 500 victims involved and more than £1 million in consumer detriment, but the team anticipates a decision on the institution of legal proceedings in respect of Operation Addams during November 2015. The case is very labour intensive and alternative strategies for taking Operation Curie forward are being discussed.
- The City's Trading Standards Service is still participating in Operation Broadway, a joint operation with the City of London Police, the Metropolitan Police, National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, the Financial Conduct Authority and HM Revenue and Customs.
 - This operation is addressing the problem of "boiler rooms" that perpetrate these frauds and which are based at serviced and virtual offices within the City of London. The operation continues to be successful to date with multi agency meetings taking place every two weeks and deployments to businesses suspected of involvement in fraud happening on a regular basis.
 - Two training sessions were held in late September and early October 2015 aimed at Police Officers, Trading Standards Officers and officers from other agencies who haven't been directly involved in Operation Broadway. The sessions were designed to raise awareness of what Operation Broadway is trying to achieve and to generate further intelligence and ensure existing intelligence isn't lost. Both sessions were very successful with over 200 attendees.
 - Trading Standards Tri-regional Scambusters are committed to continued support of Operation Broadway during 2015/16 and discussions are taking place to look into a London-wide Trading Standards team being established to keep the pressure on mail forwarding businesses.
- Our new Trading Standards Manager who started work at the end of June 2015 has a strong view that the key to stopping consumer scams is to stop the transfer of money from the victim account to the fraudster and is starting to research into this area. The banks, it is felt, are a key partner to beating the fraudsters.

Street Trading

- There still appears to be limited demand for short-term licences, as foreseen in the City Street Trading Policy. There remains very little street trading activity in the City, mainly ad hoc occasional nut sellers on the south side London Bridge/Millennium Bridge. Six nut sellers have had their carts removed to date. A recent application made to the Magistrates' Court for the destruction of three of the carts was successful. Occasional Ice Cream vans have been sighted on London Bridge at weekends where they are positioned for a 'quick get-away' to avoid enforcement action. Only one report of ice cream trading has been received in the past month.

Late Night Levy

- The Levy came into effect on 1 October 2014. 70% of levy goes to City of London Police for activities involving improving the impact of Licensing on the night time economy, and 30% to the City Corporation.
- To date the Levy has raised £482K. Most renewals of fees (and hence raising of levy) occurred in August through to September and it is anticipated that on current projections an overall sum of £500K will be raised once current invoices have been paid to the end of September 2015. A minimum of £320k is to go the City Police.
- The City Police and City Corporation will provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure specifically targeted at issues associated with licenced premises open between 0001 and 0600. It is anticipated that a report on the operation of the first 12 months of the Levy and the associated expenditure will be presented to the Licensing Committee on 27 January 2016.

Safety Thirst

- 751 applications for 2015/16 were sent out to all previous applicants and the rest of those premises licensed in the City of which 41 were completed and returned to the Licensing Team. All but one of the assessments were completed by the end of August although there was a contingency for any necessary revisits/late applicants in September.
- The awards took place on 12 October 2015 in the Livery Hall where all 31 successful premises were given their Safety Thirst Award Certificate.
- Application forms had undergone a revision for 2015/16 making the application process easier. The criteria for passing the award have also been re-assessed. This assists in introducing different grades of premises award. The grades being a pass (which will also meet the requirements for a 30% reduction in the late night levy), commended, highly commended and an award for the best premises.

- Of the 41 applications, 31 premises passed the assessment, four premises were missing criteria during the assessment but did not pursue their application and six premises withdrew their application prior to the assessment.
- Of those 31 that passed, these are the categories they fell into:

Bar:	16 premises
Club:	2 premises
Events Venue:	4 premises
Pub:	7 premises
Restaurant:	2 premises

- The 'premises of the year' was awarded jointly to two premises, namely The Forge and The Brewery.

Noise Service

- The Pollution Team dealt with 84 noise complaints between 1st September and 16th October 2015 of which 94 % were resolved. In addition, they also assessed and commented on 159 Planning, Licensing and construction works applications and 88 applications for variations of work outside the normal working hours.
- The Out of Hours Service dealt with x complaints between 1st September and 16th October 2015 and response (visit) times were within the target performance indicator of 60 minutes in 85 % of cases, and often only 30 minutes.
- The Pollution Team was required to serve one Environmental Protection Act abatement notice and one Control of Pollution Act Notice between 1st September and 16th October.
- To date the City's response to the new 'Community Trigger' has not been required under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which can be sought by individuals affected by repeated incidents. The Pollution Team will be represented on the panel considering case reviews as they arise. The use of Community Protection Notices (CPN's) under this act appears to provide a potential remedy for premises causing concern (ASB) outside their building, e.g. due to patrons leaving and dispersing which was not previously available under other legislation. So far, this not been required.

Charity Collections on the street (Chuggers) update

Whilst there are rarely complaints, one was received in October. The complainant has been requested to provide more information on the extent of the activity at One New Change over the next month. To help the manager at One New Change, an information exercise with their tenants is to be arranged in early January concerning what can be expected over the way in which collectors operate, and what to do if there are problems.

The City Licensing Team and the City Police have recently considered the whole issue of chuggers throughout the Square Mile, and an evidence gathering exercise on the extent of 'chugging activity' in the City is to be undertaken jointly by City Police and City Corporation Officers for a week at the end of November. This will give a better appreciation of the level of chugging in the City, and will be reported to the next Safer City Partnership Strategy Group meeting.

In addition, a presentation from the Charity Commission about the work they do around safer giving, and the link with the 'Prevent' agenda and public awareness, is being arranged. The City Police and Corporation will then disseminate public information from this event concerning 'Prevent' and publicise other ways of donating.

Jon Aaverns
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5 November 2015