

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Streets and Walkways Planning and Transportation (for information)	22 nd February 2016 23 rd February 2016
Subject: Cloth Fair Noise Disturbance	Public
Report of: Director of the Department of the Built Environment	For Decision
<p>Summary</p> <p>Cloth Fair is located close to Smithfield Market and has ten residential units. The surrounding area has a busy night time economy consisting of bars, public houses, restaurants and a late night café in the vicinity. Unfortunately, overnight noise disturbances are often experienced by residents of Cloth Fair.</p> <p>In May 2015, the Grand Court of Wardmote asked for a resolution on the Cloth Fair noise disturbance to be sent to the Court of Common Council. This issue was considered at the Court of Common Council and the resolution was referred to the Planning and Transportation and Port Health and Environmental Services Committees. In July 2015, the Planning and Transportation Committee were updated that a report would be presented to Committee. In September 2015, at the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee, officers advised that a noise disturbance questionnaire would be sent to local residents and a report would be submitted to the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee and Planning and Transportation Committee for consideration in early 2016.</p> <p>Officers have now consulted occupiers in Cloth Fair for comments on the overnight disturbances and six options (including 'do nothing') to mitigate the noise disturbances experienced. The outcome of the consultation showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise disturbances are experienced at least three times a week; • The main source of the disturbance is taxis parking or idling; • An overnight point road closure was the most favourable proposal to mitigate the noise disturbance <p>Officers consider that the overnight point road closure is likely to discourage taxis parking or idling as the closure will make the street a less convenient place to stop. However as the street is still open, there is no guarantee that this proposal will be fully successful. It is therefore proposed to introduce the point closure initially on an experimental basis and if this is found to be successful, it can then be made permanent.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the Noise Disturbance consultation results • Approve the introduction of an experimental overnight point road closure in Cloth Fair. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Cloth Fair has a high number of residential units. Located in the area are a number of public houses, licenced bars and restaurants. Two minutes' walk from Cloth Fair is Smithfield Market and Farringdon Station can be reached in five minutes, these areas also have a busy and growing night time economy.
2. The City of London has received continual noise complaints from residents of Cloth Fair over a number of years. The disturbances have been investigated by Environmental Health officers but the disturbance did not amount to a statutory nuisance and therefore no formal action could be taken. However, informal intervention such as temporary signage was introduced but this has not resolved the nuisance.
3. In May 2015, the Grand Court of Wardmote asked for a resolution on the Cloth Fair noise disturbance to be sent to the Court of Common Council. Following this, the Court of Common Council considered the noise disturbances in Cloth Fair and referred the resolution to the Planning and Transportation and Port Health and Environmental Services Committees. In July 2015, the Planning and Transportation Committee were updated that a report on this matter would be presented to Committee. Further to this, at the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee in September 2015, officers advised that a noise disturbance questionnaire would be sent to local residents and a report would be submitted to the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee and Planning and Transportation Committee for consideration in early 2016.

Current Position

4. Officers have been advised that taxis parking or idling in Cloth Fair are the main cause of the noise disturbances. It is perceived that Taxi drivers are attracted to Cloth Fair due to the close proximity of the night time economy, accessibility to the Smithfield Café (24 hour) in Long Lane and the ease of parking opportunities.
5. Since no formal action can be undertaken through Environmental Health legislation, officers have reviewed the use of the highway and traffic measures to reduce or mitigate the noise disturbance.

Measures / Options & Questionnaire

6. Six highway options (including a "do nothing" option) have been investigated to mitigate the noise disturbances. These are summarised in the table below together with an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages.

Optioneering Table

Measure	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option 1. Prohibiting	Can enforce against night	Prohibits everyone

parking and loading 24 hours and 7 days a week	time parking Can be implemented in 3 months	Difficult to enforce if drivers remain inside or close to vehicle and therefore unlikely to be effective
Option 2. Overnight (11pm 7am) point road closure by Cloth Court.	Less traffic, not used for through traffic Less likely to be used by taxis as a waiting area Can be implemented in 3 months	Reduced vehicle permeability May not deter parking in Cloth Fair
Option 3. Street signage to politely remind street users that it is a residential area.	Cost effective Targets issue Low impact, preliminary measure Can be implemented immediately	May have limited impact / may not deter parking Increase street clutter
Option 4. Reversing the one-way operation in Cloth Fair	Potential to discourage taxis Can be implemented in 3 months	May increase traffic May not be effective
Option 5. Night time parking prohibition in Cloth Fair	Can enforce against night time parking Targets problem times	Difficult to enforce if drivers remain inside or close to vehicle and therefore unlikely to be effective Against current parking policy. Committee consideration required. Large traffic signs required Implementation medium/long term (at least 12 months)
Option 6. Do nothing (leave situation as it is)	No change	No change

7. A questionnaire was sent out to all occupiers in Cloth Fair and the surrounding premises in October 2015.
8. A total of 24 responses were received (19 residents, 3 businesses, 2 other). A significant proportion (7 out of 10) of occupiers in Cloth Fair reported that they experienced overnight noise disturbance at least three times a week, and that taxi drivers are the main cause of the disturbance.
9. Option 2, the proposal to introduce an overnight point road closure in Cloth Fair by Cloth Court was the only one of the six options to receive overall support (6 out of 10 Cloth Fair residents' most preferred option). A summary of the consultation results is included in Appendix A.

Proposals and Implementation

10. In view of the consultation outcome. An overnight point road closure (between 11pm and 7am) in Cloth Fair by Cloth Court is recommended to reduce the noise disturbances. An outline plan is included in Appendix B.
11. A point road closure by Cloth Court is the most feasible location for the closure, as this would retain access to the residents' private off-street parking during the time of the closure. This would not be possible with a full length road closure at one end of the street. In addition, it will be necessary to extend the two-way working for all vehicles in Cloth Fair from Rising Sun Court to Cloth Court.
12. The closure would make Cloth Fair less convenient. Motor vehicles will be unable to use the street as a through route, reducing the benefit for taxi drivers to park or idle. However, as the street is still open it may not deter some drivers from parking there. For this reason, there is no guarantee that this proposal will be fully successful. It is therefore proposed to introduce the point road closure initially on an experimental basis (maximum period 18 months) and if it is found to be successful, can be made permanent after 6 months.
13. To be effective the closure would need to be physically enforced by bollards or another barrier. However, access for pedal cyclists will be necessary as Cloth Fair forms part of the approved Cycle Quietways. The closure would be operated by the City's street environment officers or other resources.
14. If Members approve this proposal, it is envisaged that the experimental closure could be implemented by May/June 2016. Monitoring will take place immediately and if successful the overnight point road closure could be made permanent from January 2017.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. The proposal is in accordance with the City of London Noise Strategy 2012-2016 to:
 - *“Avoid or reduce noise, and noise impacts, which could adversely affect the health and well-being of City residents, workers and visitors”*
 - *“Balance minimisation of noise and noise impacts with the need to improve and update City infrastructure”.*

Financial Implications

16. The total estimated cost to implement the closure is between £30K - £40K (depending on underground conditions). This can be met from DBE's Traffic Management Budget for 2016/17. A breakdown of the estimate is provided below.

Item	Cost
Works	£15K–£25K
Fees	£3K
Staff	£12K
Total	<u>£30K-£40K</u>

17. Revenue implications for the maintenance and operation of the closure can be contained within the Department of the Built Environment's existing budgets.

Conclusion

18. Overnight noise disturbance caused by taxi drivers parking, idling or waiting around in Cloth Fair is frequently experienced by residents. Local occupiers were consulted on six options and the preferred proposal (overnight point road closure) to reduce the noise disturbance is recommended for approval.
19. The point closure in Cloth Fair will make it a less convenient place for taxi drivers to park or idle, as the street will become a no through route during the time of the closure.

- **Appendices:**

- Appendix A: Consultation Outcome
- Appendix B: Proposed General Arrangement Plan

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