

Committee(s): Police Committee	Date: 3 rd November 2016
Subject: Policing the City Bridges	Public
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol 48-16	For Decision
Report authors: Superintendent Helen Isaac	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information on the demand for and cost of providing policing services to the five vehicular and pedestrian bridges crossing the River Thames in the City of London. Following the Opinion received from The Remembrancer in September 2016, it is believed there is a case from statute for the Bridge House Estate (BHE) to fund the policing of Blackfriars, London and Southwark Bridges and a case also to support funding of policing services for Tower and Millennium Bridges. In considering the case for funding, this report concentrates in particular on the additional policing services provided to the City Bridges, which are largely demanded due to their location, structure and prominence as important thoroughfares across the River Thames.
- 1.2 The report summarises legal opinion on the case for funding over the last 100 years, considers the findings of a £224,000 business case for funding from the BHE made in 2011 and uses information gathered for an updated case for funding compiled in 2015. It refers to Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and Corporation of London data gathered for a recent report into the growing demand for policing services in response to welfare issues on City Bridges.
- 1.3 The report includes an estimation of costs incurred in particular through the provision of intelligence-led counter terrorism deployments on bridges, bridge patrols, and responding to calls over concern for the safety of individuals. It includes the cost incurred by the force through the permanent attachment of an officer to the Metropolitan Police Marine Support Unit (MSU), who respond to many of our concern for safety calls by boat in support of City of London Police (CoLP) officers. The cost of CCTV and ANPR cameras has been excluded from this latest report due to their inclusion in the wider Ring of Steel project, to be presented separately.
- 1.4 The cost of providing policing services to the five City Bridges, taking account of the available data, is estimated at £272,000 per annum.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members:

- 1) Note this report.

- 2) Approve a formal approach to the Bridge House Estate for annual funding of £272,000.

2. Background and historical context

- 2.1 In considering the obligations of the BHE, on the 14th December 1917 Law Officers concluded in a report, *“We are therefore of opinion that the Bridge House Committee have the duty imposed upon them “if they see occasion” to appoint watchmen and defray the cost of watching”*. With regard to Tower Bridge, the Law Officers concluded *“no obligation to watch or to pay for watching is imposed”*. The Law Officers refer to a ‘compact’ entered into by the Bridge House Estates Committee in 1895 and say *“[that compact] appears to have been based upon a good consideration to pay £2000 in respect of watching the several Bridges. That compact stands”*.
- 2.2 An Order of the Court of Common Council on 20th October 1938 declared that the amount of payment for watching bridges was fixed at £7000 per annum. A subsequent Order dated 16th December 1943 declared the amount be reduced to £5800 per annum. The last payment made to the Force was in 2004/5 when the contribution was £11,800. Material has not been found to suggest why the payment was not routinely increased with inflation, although using a historical inflation rates calculator, £5800 in 1943 would be worth approximately £246,500 in 2016.
- 2.3 In 2005, the Comptroller and City Solicitor reviewed the opinion expressed by Law Officers in 1917 and agreed with their conclusion.
- 2.4 In 2011 a business case was compiled by City of London Police (CoLP) in response to a letter from the Remembrancer, which invited the Force to bid for additional resources from BHE to provide security for the Bridges. This stated, *“Historically a contribution was made to the City of London Police from Bridge House Estates to pay for Watchmen to watch the Bridges. The primary objective of the Bridge House Estates Fund is for “the maintenance and support of London Bridge, Blackfriars Bridge, Southwark Bridge, Tower Bridge and Millennium Bridge” with any surplus funds being applied to charitable purposes under a Cy-Pres scheme.”*
- 2.5 The service overview in the current Service Level Agreement between City of London Police and Bridge House Estates, states the following:

“The City of London Police currently provide a service whereby officers are tasked to specifically patrol all the named bridges within the City of London. These patrols are provided by a combination of our mobile patrols, foot patrols and our Mounted Section.

In addition to the above the City of London Police has an officer on a full time basis to the Marine Policing Unit based at Wapping Police Station on the River Thames a short distance from Tower Bridge. The Marine Unit also provides a visible 24 hour presence on the Thames in support of the broader river community.”

- 2.6 A briefing note compiled in April 2015 by the Chamberlain's Department states that "following correspondence between the Chamberlain's Department and the City Police, the contribution ceased as justification was not provided to demonstrate what extra duties the Police were performing in relation to the bridges. BHE has not been used to relieve the City from public sector funding constraints and it was considered inappropriate to meet expenditure on general policing from the charity."

3. Current legal position

- 3.1 In appendix one, the Remembrancer sets out detailed Opinion dated September 2016 on policing of the City Bridges and the obligation on the Bridge House Estates to provide funding. This document concludes:

"The private acts governing London Bridge, Blackfriars Bridge and Southwark Bridge make it clear that an obligation to fund the policing of the bridges is cast on the Bridge House Estates. In respect of Tower Bridge, although there is no overt reference to an obligation on the Bridge House Estates to fund the watching or policing of the bridge, a case can be made that certain police resource attributable to policing Tower Bridge may be funded by Bridge House Estates. This can be inferred from the reference to the "maintenance and support" of the bridge by the Bridge House Estates provided for by section 65 of the Act. Such an approach seems to be taken by the SI 2004 No. 4017 in dealing with the Millennium Bridge."

4. 2011 business case for funding policing services

- 4.1 The 2011 business case concluded that four specific activities were undertaken by the Force in policing the City's Bridges:
- a) Day to day and pre-briefed patrol activity on foot and by specialist uniformed officers, such as the Dog and Mounted Sections, Support Group, Roads Policing Unit and the firearms department at an estimated cost of **£105,000** per year.
 - b) Permanent attachment of an officer to the Metropolitan Police Marine Support Unit with responsibility for policing the river Thames and checking the security of the bridges from the river at a cost of **£50,000** per year.
 - c) Staffing the London Bridge police entry point (during peak hours Monday to Friday, this was one of the Force's counter terrorism tactics at the time) at an estimated cost of **£37,000** per year.
 - d) CCTV cameras and ANPR cameras covering vehicle traffic and pedestrians entering and leaving the City using the bridges at a cost of **£32,000** per year.
- 4.2 The total annual estimated cost of policing the City Bridges in 2011 was **£224,000**.

5. Assumptions

Table 1: PC and PS cost assumptions

Rank	Band	Annual Costs			Monthly Costs	Daily Cost	Hourly Rate
		Low	Mid or Near Mid	High	Top of Band		
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Constables	1-11	39,777	50,443	57,975	4,831	242	34.51
Sergeants	23-26	60,141	61,897	64,671	5,389	269	38.49

Source: CoLP Finance Department

- 5.1 Table 1 above sets out the figures used to estimate the cost of policing the City's Bridges. For the purpose of these calculations, the cost includes national insurance and pension contributions. The highest band constable (£57,975 per annum) and sergeant (£64,671 per annum) costs are assumed in this report.
- 5.2 This report takes account of the most recent Opinion from the Remembrancer dated September 2016 and therefore assumes inclusion of all five vehicular and pedestrian bridges within the City of London in calculations, these being Tower, London, Southwark, Millennium and Blackfriars Bridge respectively.

6. Costs of policing the City Bridges

Table 2: Summary of estimated costs 2016/17

Function	Category of Cost	Costs (Top of Band)	
		Weekly	Annual
		£	£
Costing for tasked Counter Terrorism deployments on City Bridges	1 x Sergeant - 10 hours per week- at highest grade of rank	365	20,015
	4 x Constables - 20 hours per week - at highest grade of rank	2,761	143,572
Total		3,416	163,587
Costing for patrol of and response to calls for service on City Bridges	2 x Constables - 2 hours per day, 7 days a week - at highest grade of rank	966	50,247
Total		966	50,247
Costing for Marine Support Unit Constable	1 x Constable - annual cost	1,230	57,975
Total		1,230	57,975
Overall total		5,612	271,809

Source of costings: CoLP Finance Department

- 6.1 The position in 2016 is similar to 2011, with revised costs and activities summarised in table two above and explained in the text below. CCTV and ANPR costs included in the earlier report have been removed as these are included in the wider Ring of Steel project which will be for separate consideration. The current estimated cost of providing policing services to the five City Bridges is £272,000.

Tasked counter terrorism deployments

- 6.2 Following the 2011 business case, the Force has moved on from entry point counter terrorism tactics and now has in place the scientifically developed and evaluated Project Servator. The Force has a permanent Project Servator team and in addition to this, other uniformed and covert departments deploy Project Servator tactics in teams around the clock as part of the tasking directed by the fortnightly meetings of the Force's Security Group.
- 6.3 Deployments to locations are unpredictable and intelligence-led, with teams directed to areas by the CoLP Counter Terrorism Co-ordinator. Security Group meetings consider these deployments and agree the locations against the intelligence and as high profile, high traffic and in most cases iconic locations for vehicles and pedestrians crossing into the City, the bridges regularly feature as tasked locations, depending on intelligence at the time.
- 6.4 Tasked locations have been extracted from 22nd February to 30th October 2016 and this data shows that on average, twenty counter terrorism deployments each week take place on City Bridges. These deployments are not always directed by a sergeant depending on the team involved, hence the difference in weekly hours between sergeant (ten hours) and constable (twenty hours) hours attributed. Deployment costs assume four constables, although depending on the team deployed this could be significantly more or slightly less, part of the unpredictable nature of the tactics. This activity equates to a total cost of **£163,587** per annum as shown in table 2 above.

Directed patrols and response to calls for service on City Bridges.

- 6.5 Although it is not possible to calculate the *exact* amount of time and cost spent carrying out patrols and responding to incidents on City Bridges, this figure has been calculated estimating two officers patrolling/responding on bridges for two hours per day, seven days a week.
- 6.6 Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data extracted for a year from 30th July 2014 to 29th July 2015 for a previous report on policing of the bridges showed a considerable number of calls for police services at City Bridges. Due to the need for a lengthy manual search of annual CAD data to sift out inaccurate location information and the time available for completion of this task, quarterly data from 11th October 2015 to 11th January 2016 was extracted and sifted to provide a more recent portrayal of calls from the last year for police attendance. This data has been multiplied by four for an estimated annual total and shows a similar demand for Southwark, London and Blackfriars Bridges when compared against the 2014/15 data captured for the 2015 report.

- 6.7 Due to earlier legal opinion excluding Tower and Millennium Bridges, the data for these was not captured and included in the 2015 report. However, the quarterly data shows that Tower Bridge experienced 48 calls for service, an estimated total of 192 for the last year and Millennium Bridge 18 calls, an estimated total of 72 for the year.
- 6.8 From the 2014/15 data Southwark Bridge had 67 calls recorded, including concern for safety reports, abandoned calls for assistance and concerns about suspicious circumstances being reported. From the quarterly data there were 24 calls equating to an estimate of 96 for the last year.
- 6.9 London Bridge is by far the busiest bridge in terms of calls for service, with 589 CADs in 2014/15, including concerns for safety, suspicious circumstances, violence and road traffic collisions. From the quarterly data there were 109 calls equating to an estimate of 436 for the last year.
- 6.10 Blackfriars Bridge saw 131 calls for service in 2014/15, with concerns for safety and suspicious circumstances again common reasons for police assistance being required. The quarterly data showed 39 calls equating to an estimate of 136 for the last year.
- 6.11 Sadly, City Bridges are an increasing draw for vulnerable people who may also be suffering from mental health issues. Officers are called to incidents on a regular basis following reports of someone having jumped into the Thames or considering or attempting to do so. There were 239 concern for safety CADs to City Bridges in the year 11th October 2015 to 11th October 2016, the actual figure as opposed to an estimate from quarterly data as less sifting was required due to the ability to search on a specific code for concern for safety CADs.
- 6.12 A 'concern for safety' CAD is a call for assistance where there is a concern for a person's safety and could be reported by a member of the public, member of the emergency services, by the individual themselves, or a friend or family member. In relation to the concern for safety CADs on City Bridges, the call could relate to a suicide, or attempted suicide. It could also relate to a person in crisis and in need of support, for example, if a passerby notices someone upset or distressed on a bridge and telephones the police, this would be recorded as a concern for safety. This may be totally unrelated to suicidal thoughts.
- 6.13 Officers are tasked throughout the week with carrying out daily patrols of the bridges to look for and where possible, interact with those who may be a cause for concern. When officers are involved in an interaction with an individual resulting in detention under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983, (either as a result of a concern for welfare call or through coming across someone on patrol), incidents are often protracted and involve the abstraction of at least two officers, sometimes for hours at a time, to wait with the individual for hospital transport and carry out a handover at the hospital, prior to being released to continue policing duties.

- 6.14 Data from the RNLI report 'River Safety in Central London,' shows that 25% (117) of the Tower Lifeboat Station's 255 bridge incident calls in 2015 were for City Bridges. This is a sobering figure as the City stretch of the river forms only a small proportion of the 16 miles of Tidal Thames covered by the Tower Lifeboat Station. RNLI data for the current calendar year is available to the 7th August and shows that 47% (85) of their 182 bridge incident calls have involved City Bridges. Proportionally to 7th August, this figure (85) is already 77% of all calls received for City Bridges for the whole of 2015. It should be noted that these calls were calls for service and there may not have been any real risk of someone jumping; this does however help to illustrate the demand on policing services at City Bridges, as calls will inevitably have involved a policing response from CoLP officers.
- 6.15 To add another level of context to the RNLI data, statistics from the Corporation of London's high harm and high vulnerability analyst have been collated and are presented for illustration in table three below. This data is an accumulation from various sources, but is primarily police data from CADs (calls received from members of public or victims) and intelligence reports submitted by officers. Each CAD and intelligence report has been reviewed by the analyst to ensure the data collection is accurate.
- 6.16 This data includes only incidents of suicide or attempted suicide and does not include the remainder of the picture i.e. those calls to the bridges to deal with people for whom there is a concern for safety, which may be a person in crisis or a cry for help. These other calls would not be classed as an attempted suicide or suicide and will vary from overall concern for safety CAD data for this reason. The incidents in table three range from completed suicide attempts resulting in death, to people saved from the river and those involving successful intervention before someone was able to jump in.

Table 3: Suicide and Attempted Suicide within the City of London Attributable to City Bridges

Data Collection Period	Attempted Suicides Within the City of London Attributable to City Bridges
April 2014-March 2015	41
April 2015-March 2016	46
April 2016 to 5th September 2016	52

Source: City of London Corporation

- 6.17 This data is useful in illustrating clearly the impact of bridge related demand on the CoLP. Used with other data sets it paints a vivid picture of an increasing demand, with suicide and attempts from five months of data for this year already higher than the last full year.
- 6.18 From quarterly data, an estimated total of 932 calls for service on the five bridges occurred over the year to 11th October 2016, an average of 2.55 per

day. This is not dissimilar to the actual number of 2.11 calls per day quoted in the 2015 Policing the Bridges report, but is slightly higher, taking into account that the earlier report did not include data for Tower or Millennium Bridges.

- 6.19 The police response to these calls and the increasingly protracted nature of many of these, combined with the tasked daily foot, mounted and mobile security patrols on bridges leads to the conclusion that the cost of two PCs for two hours per day, seven days a week would be a reasonable estimate for this activity, at a total cost of **£50,247** per annum.

Permanent attachment of an officer to the Metropolitan Police Marine Support Unit

- 6.20 The force continues to attach an officer to the Marine Support (MSU) at a cost of **£57,975** per annum. The MSU has responsibility for policing the River Thames and checking the security of bridges from the river and will inevitably be called out to assist CoLP officers in the event of someone jumping or threatening to jump from one of the City Bridges. The prime purpose in continuing this attachment is to ensure the security and safety checks around City Bridges continue as an essential part of our policing response, at the cost of providing one officer to this specialist team.

7. Conclusion

Recent legal opinion agrees with the historical view that a case is made in statute for funding of the policing of London, Southwark and Blackfriars Bridges by the Bridge House Estate. The Opinion dated September 2016 concludes there is also a case to support the funding of the policing of Millennium and Tower Bridges. Demand data for the five City Bridges has been considered and whilst the overall number of calls for police service is reasonably consistent, there has been a marked increase in the number of people either committing or attempting to commit suicide from City Bridges, with an associated impact on police resources. Estimated costs for three specific areas of policing activity on City Bridges have been calculated, these being; patrol and response to calls for service, tasked counter terrorism deployments and an officer attached to the Marine Support Unit, with the total cost of policing estimated at £272,000 per annum.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members:

- 1) Note this report.
- 2) Approve a formal approach to the Bridge House Estate for annual funding of £272,000.

Appendices

Appendix one: Policing the Bridges and allocation of costs to the Bridge House

Estates: Opinion

