

Committee(s) Port Health and Environmental Services	Dated: 29 November 2022
Subject: Contactless payment trial at Tower Place Public Conveniences	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	4, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment	For information
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Summary

Following discussions with your committee in 2021 officers undertook to investigate the viability of contactless payment facilities for the Corporation's staffed public conveniences. Officers were able to conduct a brief trial during November and December 2021 at Tower Place toilets to assess the cost and operational effectiveness of a contactless payment system.

After reviewing the data, Officers felt that more extensive data was required to account for seasonal fluctuations as well as the impact of Covid on usage.

Usage data from Tower Place toilets during the trial period indicated that 38% of visitors used contactless payment. This report proposes that a similar contact system is installed at Paternoster Square toilets.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Agree to continue accepting contactless and cash payments at Tower Place public conveniences and introduce contactless payment alongside cash at Paternoster Square public conveniences.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation has two staffed public conveniences operating at Tower Place and Paternoster Square. There has been a 50p charge for entry

since 2010. Payment is taken by a coin turnstile barrier at the entrance, change machines are provided for notes, £2 and £1 coins. RADAR key holders can enter free of charge.

2. Society is using less cash with many retail, transport, and hospitality venues no longer accepting any cash payments. The use of contactless payment systems accelerated during the pandemic as it was seen as a more hygienic method of payment. Staff at the Corporation's toilets were receiving more requests for contactless payments post pandemic.
3. The Corporation has implemented contactless payment systems at other sites where the adoption has been successful. Several other local authorities have already implemented contactless entry for their public conveniences including Brighton and Hove, Lambeth, York, The Scottish Borders and Welsh Coasts.
4. Following discussion at this Committee, officers were asked to conduct a trial in 2021 to determine the viability of contactless as a payment method for the Corporation's public conveniences. An initial two-month trial was conducted and was extended for a further ten months to provide a more extensive set of data to account for seasonal fluctuations as well as the impact of Covid-19 on usage.

Current Position

5. During the 12 months of the contactless trial, officers ran cash and contactless entry in tandem at the Tower Place conveniences to track usage and record anecdotal feedback.
6. Throughout the course of the trial the split between contactless and cash entries varied. Some months showed contactless entry above 40%, peaking at 47% however the average split for the trial period was 38% contactless entry and 62% cash entry.
7. As part of the trial of contactless entry at Tower Place the Corporation used its existing barrier maintenance provider, Hi-Tech Washrooms, to install a unit for a one-off cost of £2,500 along with an annual service and maintenance cost of £2,000. As part of the operation of the contactless payment, there is a 5% transaction fee on all revenue.
8. Separately the service currently pays £18,000 per annum for the cash collection and banking service provided to the current cash barriers by another contractor
9. The cost of contactless payment facilities at Paternoster Toilets would be very similar to the cost of those installed as part of the trial, namely £2,500 installation costs and annual service and maintenance of £2,000.
10. Whilst the 5% transaction fee will reduce slightly overall revenues, Officers anticipate that this will be offset by the additional users who currently are unable to use the facilities due to a lack of payment method.

11. The trial demonstrates there is demand for a cashless option but there remains sufficient usage of cash to suggest that at present, moving to a fully cashless solution would cause considerable inconvenience.

Proposals

12. It is proposed to continue accepting contactless and cash payments at Tower Place and introduce contactless payment alongside cash at Paternoster Square public conveniences. This will require the installation of two additional contactless readers at Paternoster Square, the costs of which are outlined above and will be covered from local risk.

13. Adding contactless will enable our facilities to be more accessible, increasing usage levels over time. Officers will monitor usage levels of cash versus contactless and report back to this committee should the balance of usage get to such a point where the removal of cash entrance needs to be considered.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. Strategic implications – This project supports the Corporate Strategic Plan outcomes four, that communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need, and twelve, that our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.

15. Financial implications – In addition to the costs detailed above, contactless entry would increase accessibility to public conveniences and also bring entry systems up to date and in line with modern methods of payment. The introduction of contactless payment could also mean the facilities generate more revenue allowing more people (those who do not have cash) to use the facilities.

16. Resource implications - None

17. Legal implications - None

18. Risk implications – None

19. Equalities implications – A Test of Relevance has been carried out for this project which concluded that a full Equalities Impact Assessment was not required as there is no change to the current provision and there are no adverse impacts on anyone with any of the protected characteristics. Should any further change to this provision be considered going forward (such as removing the cash option) this will be revisited.

20. Climate implications - None

21. Security implications – None

Conclusion

22. The trial of contactless payments at the City's attended public conveniences in Tower Place has showed that it is a welcome form of payment used by around 40% of visitors. The implementation at Paternoster Square will make the facilities more accessible and bring them in line with modern payment methods.

Background Papers

- None

Appendices

- Table of contactless income against cash

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Appendix 1 - Table of contactless income against cash

		Contactless	%	Cash	%	Total
Tower Mens	Nov-21	1099.00	43	1441.56	57	2540.56
Tower Ladies		874.00	36	1532.42	64	2406.42
Tower Mens	Dec-21	1179.50	47	1313.43	53	2492.93
Tower Ladies		886.00	44	1123.66	56	2009.66
	Jan-21	TRIAL ON HOLD				
Tower Mens	Feb-22	1042.00	44	1334.66	56	2376.66
Tower Ladies		967.00	33	1988.94	67	2955.94
Tower Mens	Mar-22	1805.00	45	2177.94	55	3982.94
Tower Ladies		1432.00	41	2034.74	59	3466.74
Tower Mens	Apr-22	2621.50	38	4328.16	62	6949.66
Tower Ladies		2363.50	30	5571.49	70	7934.99
Tower Mens	May-22	2662.50	45	3246.62	55	5909.12
Tower Ladies		2836.50	38	4643.52	62	7480.02
Tower Mens	Jun-22	2969.00	46	3497.37	54	6466.37
Tower Ladies		3022.00	35	5504.22	65	8526.22
Tower Mens	Jul-22	2014.50	37	3493.11	63	5507.61
Tower Ladies		2218.50	27	5895.48	73	8113.98
Tower Mens	Aug-22	2523.50	42	3550.77	58	6074.27
Tower Ladies		2532.00	33	5168.23	67	7700.23
Tower Mens	Sep-22	2419.50	42	3371.65	58	5791.15
Tower Ladies		2787.00	39	4301.18	61	7088.18
Tower Mens	Oct-22	3597.50	45	4420.56	55	8018.06
Tower Ladies		3237.50	36	5762.94	64	9000.44
Total to Date	TOTAL	47,089.50	38	75,702.65	62	122,792.15

