

Committee(s): Markets Board	Dated: 3 October 2024
Subject: Market Constabulary Uniform	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	Not applicable
What is the source of Funding?	Not applicable
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Not applicable
Report of: Ben Milligan Markets Director	For Information
Report author: Stephen Dolamore Billingsgate General Manager & Superintendent	

Summary

Following a letter from the City of London Police Authority Board Chairman to the Chairman of the Markets Board dated 13 January 2024, outlining concerns in relation to the appearance and uniform of the 'Market Police', a review of the current uniform was requested by the Markets Board.

Concerns were raised in the letter relating to similarities to the uniform worn at the markets with the City of London Police, in particular the use of the red and white chequer band worn round Constables' hats. The two uniforms are very different with the uniform of the Constabulary consisting of white or blue shirts, black trousers and high vis outerwear. Some members of the team wear a flat peaked hat. The City of London Police uniform consists of black shirt and trousers and a helmet or peaked cap. The uniform of the Police is marked identifying the wearer as being a member of the Police force. The amount of equipment a Police Officer carries is also considerably more than a member of the Constabulary. Following the raising of this issue the chequer board worn around Constable's hats was permanently removed.

This report give background into the evolution of the functions, powers and associated uniforms of the market Constabulary and highlights the changes that have taken place over time. It addresses feedback received from the most recent tenants survey which asked if City of London employees are appropriately uniformed and easily identifiable. There has been a drop in agreement from 88% to 78%.

The Market Constabulary have evolved over time with changes coming as a result of the introduction and later removal of Police powers. This has resulted in a move to more standard security, enforcement operations and providing first aid when required. With the removal of market byelaws and the associated powers the need for a Market 'Police' has been replaced by a need for a team of security type officers to enforce each market's Working Manual/Code of Practice. An element of this review has been considering standardising the uniform across the three markets and

will be one of the outcomes, providing a next stage in the ongoing evolution of the Market Constabulary, and to support our people in their duties.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The three markets have employed market constabulary staff for many years to help enforce the byelaws that existed at the time and provide security for the markets. Initially staff were sworn in as a Constable, but this ceased in the mid-1970s. The Constabularies followed the same police rank structure i.e. Inspector, Sergeants and Constables.

2. At that time staff, dressed like policeman, wearing police style blazers or tunics, wore badges stating, 'Market Police'. With early links to the City of London Police a similar uniform was adopted including wearing the red and white chequered band. Billingsgate Constables were given powers under the Road Traffic Act, and Smithfield Constables were given powers to enforce littering and dumping of waste around site. Constables were issued warrant cards following attestation and items of equipment such as handcuffs to assist in their duties. However, all byelaws relating to the markets ceased in 2012 and were replaced with a Working Manual/Code of Practice which outlines operating requirements of tenants at each market and these items were no longer relevant.

3. All three sites have over the past few years adopted different styles of uniform, and tunics or blazers are no longer worn.

4. These modern uniforms are now centred around high visibility clothing. Peaked caps are still worn but they can be difficult to source. New staff at New Spitalfields Market are not given a peaked cap but are given the choice of alternative headwear such as a baseball hat or woolly hat with a CoL crest.

5. 'Market police' badges are not now worn at any site.

6. Inspector pips are no longer worn by Security Managers.

7. Warrant cards issued following a Constable attestation at Billingsgate and Smithfield are no longer issued following the removal of the market byelaws.

8. At Billingsgate hand cuffs were introduced between 2000 and 2001 but withdrawn in 2005 there is no record of why they were considered necessary. We have no exact date but stab vests were introduced around 2017.

9. At Smithfield no Market Constabulary identification is worn on uniform now.

10. At Smithfield epaulettes showing officer number have not been issued to any staff for over 5 years. Warrant Cards issued following a Constables assentation are no longer issued following the removal of market byelaws. Stab vests are no longer issued, we have no definitive date but last known 2010.

11. At New Spitalfields Blazers and tunics were removed during 2005. 'Market Police' was removed from items of uniform and equipment during 2006 and replaced with Market Constabulary. Peaked caps have not been issued since 2015 and staff given the option of no hat or a baseball hat in summer or woolly hat in winter. High visibility vests with multiple pockets (tactical vests) were introduced during 2018.

Current Position

12. Concerns were raised in the letter relating to similarities to the uniform worn at the markets with the City of London Police, in particular the use of the red and white chequer band worn round Constables' hats. The two uniforms are very different with the uniform of the Constabulary consisting of white or blue shirts, black trousers and high vis outerwear. Some members of the team wear a flat peaked hat. The City of London Police uniform consists of black shirt and trousers and a helmet or peaked cap. The uniform of the Police is marked identifying the wearer as being a member of the Police force. The amount of equipment a Police Officer carries is also considerably more than a member of the Constabulary. Following the raising of this issue the chequer board worn around Constable's hats was permanently removed.

13. The market constabulary were consulted on the various options of uniform available to staff and of the 20% who responded they were marginally in favour of a slightly less formal uniform. The two areas that displayed the biggest difference were headwear and trousers. A small majority favoured a 'cargo pant' style as opposed to more formal trousers. The additional pockets being cited as more useful. The need for these could be offset by the introduction of tactical vests (as worn at New Spitalfields currently) across the markets and retaining a more business like formal trouser. The peaked caps worn at Smithfield and Billingsgate can be hard to source but do provide a ready identifier to the Constabulary.

14. Following consultation with colleagues within the security industry it has become apparent there is a trend in the industry to move towards a less formal and more customer service orientated uniform in buildings and locations which see a high footfall of the general public. Polo shirts and chinos type trousers are becoming more common as this is considered to present a more welcoming appearance with security personnel often the first point of contact for visitors. When faced with more confrontational environments it is considered a more formal uniform provides the wearer with more authority when dealing with challenging situations. This can be the case at the markets. The markets Constabulary are required as part of their duties to move through different positions both internal and external and during all weather conditions so providing the necessary equipment and uniform is paramount.

15. At Billingsgate there is a stock of stab vests available to Constables which were purchased some time ago and are worn by longer serving members of the team or new starters who are the right size. They can give the wearer a false sense of security and could actually lead to Constables putting themselves at risk. Now the team have all received SIA and conflict resolution training they are much more aware of how to handle and diffuse difficult situations reducing the need for equipment like this. By risk assessing any potential situations alternative mitigation can be identified. To date there have been no recorded incidents where a stab vest was needed or could have reduced the risk.

16. Following consideration of the matter, consultation of staff and advice received from security industry professionals the three Constabularies will continue to wear a formal uniform with peaked caps, shirt and ties and more formal trousers. All these items provide a clear signal to market users of the status of the Constabulary. With most of these items being worn at each market already this will be achieved with a minimum of change and can be done by the end of the current financial year. Withdrawing stab vests at Billingsgate and introducing tactical vests at Smithfield and Billingsgate to provide additional space for equipment. This will be supported by a risk assessment. This style of uniform speaks to the need to maintain the wearers authority when the situation demands it and with the training the Constables receive they will continue to provide the customer service side of their role.

Key Data

17. The review looks to achieve parity across the markets by equipping the Constabulary with uniform and equipment to enable them to best serve the tenants, their staff and customers and the Corporation's staff.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – The proposal will assist in the markets Constabulary to provide an excellent service to the tenants, their customers and visitors by ensuring that the Constabulary are always visible and able to provide any assistance needed. Equipping the Constabulary correctly will help to provide a safe and secure environment for the markets to flourish as public spaces.

Financial implications None

Resource implications None

Legal implications None

Risk implications None

Equalities implications There are no proposals in this plan that would have an impact on people protected by existing legislation.

Climate implications None

Security implications None

Conclusion

18. The uniform and naming of the Market Constabulary have evolved over time with changes coming as a result of the introduction and later removal of Police powers resulting in a move to more standard security operations and enforcement. With the removal of market byelaws and the associated powers the need for a Market 'Police' has been replaced by a need for a team of security type officers to enforce each market's Working Manual/Code of Practice. The Market Constabulary are distinct from both City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police in appearance and duties. The Constables have to deal with a wide range of issues and situations and the position of Market Constable is supported by not only the training they receive and the experience they have but also the uniform and the impression it creates. The uniform currently worn at the three markets is not uniform. By addressing this and creating consistency with easy to recognise uniforms that give the right level of authority to the wearer we can support the Constabulary to deliver an outstanding service.

Appendices

- None

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