

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee Planning and Transportation Committee Open Spaces Committee	1 May 2012 TBC TBC	
Subject: The City of London Noise Strategy 2012 - 2016	Public	
Report of: Director of Markets and Consumer Protection	For Decision	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The City of London Corporation published a draft Noise Strategy 2012 – 2016 for public consultation in early February 2012. This draft strategy was previously presented to your Committee in January and subsequently for information to both the Open Spaces and Planning and Transportation Committees.</p> <p>The strategy considers four key areas: mitigating noise from new developments; reducing noise from transport, servicing and street works; dealing with noise complaints and incidents; and protecting and enhancing tranquil areas reflecting the concerns of residents, workers and visitors to the City of London.</p> <p>A total of sixteen written responses were received to the recent public consultation, primarily from residents or on behalf of resident groups in the City. Where possible, the final noise strategy has taken account of their comments. Where comments have not specifically been included, this is because the suggestions are not currently feasible within the current UK statutory framework, or they concern detail likely to be dealt with during implementation. Suggestions received will also be shared with the Department of the Built Environment to develop joint working with Planning Officers and certain suggestions will also be incorporated whenever possible into a Code of Practice for Licensed Premises.</p> <p>Overall, there was support for the mitigation of noise from construction activities and the protection of ‘tranquil’ public spaces in the City. There was concern expressed at noise from people associated with the ‘night time economy’ and the need for better joined-up working across the Corporation and other agencies. Four respondents suggested that there should be greater control over helicopter noise which is exempt under current legislation and that the City should lobby emergency services with the aim of reducing their use of sirens whenever possible.</p> <p>The list of actions proposed in the Noise Strategy will help ensure that the City Corporation fulfils its statutory obligations for noise management, as well as seeking to improve the health and well-being of the City’s residential and business communities.</p>		

Recommendations

I recommend that your Committee approves the attached Noise Strategy 2012 – 2016 (Appendix 1), subject to any amendments that arise following discussion by Members.

Main Report

Background

1. In September 2010, a report was presented to your Committee outlining social survey work that had been undertaken to assess attitudes to noise in the City of London. This survey indicated that noise is an issue of concern for both City residents and workers and an overwhelming majority would like to see action to reduce it. That survey and its findings laid the foundations for the development of this Noise Strategy.
2. A draft of this Noise Strategy was brought before your Committee on 24 January 2012 and it was agreed that the strategy document be presented to this, the May 2012, Committee subsequent to any amendments resulting from either internal discussions with other City Corporation officers and in response to a public consultation process.

Current Position

3. Noise is part of the every day experience for residents, workers and visitors to the City of London. For some people noise can be invigorating and an essential element of a lively City. However, it can also be a source of annoyance and disturbance, affecting people's health and well-being.
4. The City Corporation has a statutory obligation to investigate complaints of excessive noise, to use its functions as a planning authority to minimise noise from new developments, and as a licensing authority, to minimise noise from entertainment.
5. The City Corporation's Pollution Team already has its own Code of Practice for Construction and Deconstruction (demolition) Sites, but this needs to be incorporated into a more wide-ranging document that covers other noise issues.
6. There is growing interest in the protection and enhancement of relatively tranquil spaces in urban areas and this is reflected in both the London Plan and the draft National Planning and Policy Framework, both of which require local authorities to aim to identify and protect such areas of relative tranquillity.

The Noise Strategy

7. The City of London Noise Strategy 2012-2016 considers four key policy areas:-
 - mitigating noise from new developments,
 - reducing noise from transport, servicing and street works,
 - dealing with noise complaints and incidents, and
 - protecting and enhancing tranquil areas.

8. The strategy reflects the concerns and desires of the residents, workers and visitors who were questioned about the City's noise environment and takes account of comments received in discussion with other City Corporation Departments and the comments received during the public consultation process.
9. It combines the main areas of work that the City of London is already undertaking as part of its statutory obligation to manage and mitigate excessive noise but it also makes recommendations for improving the way that the City controls noise and makes proposals for protecting and enhancing areas of relative tranquillity.
10. The strategy balances the needs of the Business City and the City Corporation to undertake noisy works (particularly construction sites and streetworks), with the expectations of residents and neighbouring businesses who wish for disturbance to be minimised. Actions in the strategy include working with the Department of the Built Environment, utilities companies and others to facilitate longer working hours for servicing and street works as well as minimising disturbance from noise.
11. Finally as stakeholders, discussions have taken place with the Department of Built Environment and Open Spaces Department and their comments have been incorporated into the final version of the strategy. Their views will be sought and reflected in future delivery plans for the Noise Strategy.

Consultation Comments

12. The consultation process took place from February to the end of March 2012 with the information about the noise strategy consultation being placed on the front page of the City Corporation's web site with a link to the strategy document inviting comments and suggestions. Articles about the consultation were placed in Members' Briefing, City Resident and emails were sent to a consultation list held by the Town Clerk's Department of 1366 City workers and over five hundred City residents including residents associations for Castle Baynard and Barbican Estate. Internal discussions were held or comments were received from the Highways and Planning divisions of the Department of Built Environment, Open Spaces and Community and Children's Services Departments.
13. In total, 82 separate comments from sixteen written responses were received from workers, residents, and on behalf of a residents' organisation in the City. In general, the respondents considered that the Noise Strategy was a sensible step forward in positively considering the impact of noise and providing a focal point to 'join up' the various City Corporation services that have a role in reducing the impact of noise and enhancing the local environment.
14. Most respondents supported the strategy in clarifying City policies on the issue of noise. The highest number responses included at least some concern of the impact of premises licensed to sell alcohol, the noise impact of both the day time and night time economies and a perceived need to align planning with licensing decisions. There was a suggestion that we should have a 20mph

speed limit on all City roads, to smooth traffic flow and reduce noise as well as air quality. This latter suggested benefit has however already been discounted in our Air Quality Strategy 2011-2015.

15. The matter of sirens from emergency services was mentioned several times as were helicopters which remain, at the moment, outside of the scope of current local authority control. Streetworks, construction and servicing of premises were sources of noise causing concern which suggests that the balance between the needs of residents and the functioning of the City economy remains an area for active consideration.
16. Other more general comments included the impact of skateboarders, car alarms, building alarms, the potential use of active noise monitoring, the responsiveness of our services, and finally, one respondent suggested we need to be more 'joined up' including consideration of action to reduce noise emissions from our own fleet of vehicles.

Changes to the draft noise strategy

17. The final draft of the Noise Strategy incorporates comments received during the internal, Committee and public consultation stages including:
 - a re-write of the summary and introduction to take account of the Planning & Transportation Committee views
 - a change to the main strategy commitments in the 'Introduction' to make a specific commitment for the Corporation to provide joined-up regulation on environmental noise issues and to take account of this strategy in policy development and delivery of its various activities
 - collation of the lists of policies and actions into a tabulated format in an appendix, with time frames for completion
 - minor changes to the text to take account of responses that were submitted during the consultation period
 - a commitment to review the 'Quiet Hours' policy in respect of Streetworks and
 - actions from the draft strategy have been consolidated to ensure that as far as possible there are no overlapping items.

Proposals

18. I therefore propose that the attached Noise Strategy is published, subject to any amendments agreed by Members at this Committee meeting.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. A City of London Noise Strategy will support the following goals of the ***City Together Strategy***:
 - To continue to minimise noise pollution.
 - To minimise any aspects of the emerging night time economy, which are detrimental to the City.

- To continue to minimise noise from new developments, transport and entertainment premises in a way that is consistent with promoting the economic development of the City.
20. The production of a Noise Strategy fulfils the requirement in the former Department of Environmental Services Business Plan 2011/12 to produce a City Noise Management Strategy and associated action plan.

Conclusion

21. The City has produced a Noise Strategy designed to reduce the impact of noise on the health and wellbeing of City residents, workers and visitors. The strategy fulfils the requirements of the Government's Noise Policy Statement for England in considering a framework and action with respect to tranquil areas within the City.
22. Subject to comments received at Committee, the final noise strategy will be published in May 2012 and will be subject to review in 2016.

Background Papers:

Draft City of London Noise Strategy 2012 – 2016

Appendices:

City of London Noise Strategy 2012 - 2016

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