

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Port Health and Environmental Services	5 May 2015
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Noise Strategy Update of Action Plan	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
Director of Markets and Consumer Protection	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>The City of London Noise Strategy was agreed by your Committee in May 2012 and considers four key areas: dealing with complaints of excessive noise; minimising noise associated with new developments; reducing noise from transport and street works and protecting areas of relative tranquillity. Brief commentary is given on progress regarding some key areas from the actions proposed in the Noise Strategy to 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>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	
I recommend that your Committee approve:-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal set out in paragraph 20 that the attached draft updated actions list (Appendix 2) is amended incorporating any comments from your Committee;</li> <li>• that the City Noise Strategy is reviewed, revised and consulted upon in the next year to reflect current concerns; and</li> <li>• the City Noise Strategy is published next year considering the period 2016 – 2020 to align with the City Air Quality Strategy 2015 -2020.</li> </ul>	

## 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 the Noise Strategy.

2. A draft of this Noise Strategy was brought before your Committee on 24 January 2012 and was subsequently agreed at your 1 May 2012 Committee along with list of actions and summary of the Strategy (see Appendix 3).
3. The aim of this report is to provide an update on some of the key areas of work being undertaken set out in the original action plan (see Appendix 1), updating and prioritising the action list for the next year (see Appendix 2) and agree the proposal to start a review and revision of the Noise Strategy over the next twelve months to align actions with the City Air Quality Strategy 2015-2020.

### **Current Position**

4. Noise is part of the everyday 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.
5. 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.
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 (particularly construction sites) and the City Corporation to undertake noisy works, with the expectations of residents and neighbouring businesses who wish for disturbance to be minimised. In particular, City Corporation officers have given further consideration to balancing the authority's statutory noise responsibilities and traffic management needs in relation to minimising disruption from streetworks and the extent to which City night time activities, such as deliveries, refuse collection and street cleansing can best be facilitated.

### **Key Matters**

11. The progress made against the original Noise strategy action plan is set out in a table which can be seen at Appendix 1.
12. With respect to Tranquil Areas; work to protect and enhance these have now been embedded in the City of London Local Plan and the Open Spaces Strategy. The Local Plan Policy DM19.1 requires new open space in commercial or residential developments to 'have regard to acoustic design to minimise noise and create tranquil spaces.'
13. The Open Space Strategy now sets out how the City will protect and enhance the gardens in the City and create more spaces. It guides the management and planning of open spaces. The strategy contains a chapter on tranquillity (page 31) and states; '*Opportunities will be identified for improving and enhancing the tranquillity and soundscape of open spaces during the planning or enhancements of new spaces.*' The Strategy was adopted in January 2015 as a supplementary planning document. Further development of advice will depend on identifying additional resources for independent consultancy in this area. The Pollution team will continue to work with Open Spaces with comment and advice on their proposals for new and enhanced use of existing spaces in the City with respect to protecting their acoustic environment.

14. The Out of Hours Service (OOH) is now provided 24 hours a day 364 days of the year (except Christmas Day) delivered more effectively in house by Department of Built Environment (DBE) Street Environment Officers (SEO's) as agreed by your Committee on March 11 2014. There continues to be an extensive training and mentoring programme to ensure that these officers meet minimum requirements for dealing with noise matters as set out in guidance through Governments Better Regulation and Delivery Office. Over the first year the SEO's have received a total of 474 complaints outside of normal working hours and weekends of which 368 needed or wanted a visit; of these 95.9% were carried out within the one hour and most were much quicker than this. In the last quarter 100% of calls back to the person affected, where appropriate, and visits to site (within 15 minutes and one hour of receipt respectively) have been achieved. The customer feedback has been very positive in line with these performance measures.
15. The seventh edition of the City's Code of Practice for Deconstruction and Construction has been extensively updated and revamped particularly with respect to expected liaison practices as previously reported to your Committee on April 30 2013 and further minor updates are currently being considered.
16. The first City Corporation Streetworks Code of Practice has been introduced to clarify requirements of the City with respect to this specific work activity and to enable more flexible working where this is appropriate as agreed by your Committee on November 13 2012. This appears to be working well despite the continuing large demand for this activity which will be further increased as the two Transport for London (TfL) Cycling Superhighways North/South and East/West start after the London 2015 Marathon at the end of April.
17. TfL are promoting the more extensive use of re-scheduled evening and night time freight delivery which may have concerns in certain areas of the City where there are residents potentially affected by any such changes. These are mostly controlled at the moment by condition in planning approvals suggested by The Pollution team to avoid impacts on sleep by noise from these activities between 2300 and 0700. The Pollution Team is in close contact with Department of Built Environment strategic transport Officers and will be contributing to development of a proposed City Freight Strategy to ensure the noise impacts of such changes are suitably and sufficiently mitigated this year.
18. Procurement and Contracts were identified within the strategy as potential areas where pro-active work may help improve the City soundscape.

Although there has been limited progress with this the City Procurement Team is now in place and the Pollution team will investigate further whether these issues can be raised as part of the City procurement process. The issue of contracts used by the City, for example by Barbican Centre/City Surveyors for their activities and premises is to be considered along with City Surveyor and Chamberlain's Department in respect of including civil remedies to run either in parallel or as first option before using the Pollution team's statutory powers to control noise matters.

19. There have been considerable improvements in liaison between Public Protection and DBE services, including Strategic Transportation, Highways, Planning and Environmental Enhancement Teams in order to ensure that their policies align with the Noise Strategy and there is ongoing liaison regarding new programmes, projects and policies. Pre-application meetings now include input from the Pollution Team and noise issues are explicitly included within the new Local Plan. As identified in the Local Plan action plan it is anticipated that the Pollution Team will seek to develop a supplementary planning document (SPD) in 2015/16 on noise and noise related impacts to enhance these links making the processes clear and consistent. There is considerable ongoing work between our Licensing and Pollution Teams (Public Protection) together with Safer City Partnership, City of London Police regarding information sharing, joint working concerning anti-social behaviour which is being used as an integrated model to be rolled out for other Community Safety work across the City Corporation via Town Clerk's Department.

### **Proposals**

20. I propose that, subject to comments received at your meeting, a focussed revised action plan for 2015/16 is agreed by your Committee (see Appendix 2 and the Noise Strategy itself is reviewed to update this in line with current developments and published, after consultation, in 2016 to run in parallel with the recent Air Quality Strategy to 2020.

### **Financial Implications**

21. Financing of work associated with the Noise Strategy will remain within the local risk budget of the Port Health and Public Protection Service.

### **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

22. The work on The City Noise Strategy 2012 -2016 fits with one of the City Corporation's three aims of the Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019 in that it seeks to evolve a service 'to provide modern, efficient and high quality local

services and policing within the Square Mile for workers, residents and visitors'. It also meets two of the five key policy priorities KPP2 'Improving the value for money of our services within the constraints of reduced resources' and KPP3 'Engaging with London and national government on key issues of concern to our communities such as transport, housing and public health'.

## **Conclusion**

23. The City Corporation continue working on the actions of the Noise Strategy 2012-2016 which it is suggested are re- focussed for the year 2015/16 as set out in Appendix 2 and the Strategy itself needs review to run in parallel with the City's newly update Air Quality Strategy.

## **Background Papers:**

Report on Enhanced Working Hours for Street works in the City - Port Health and Environmental Services Committee November 13 2102

Report on Mitigation of Environmental Impacts from Developments - Port Health and Environmental Services Committee April 30 2013

Report on Noise Service Delivery Policy/Noise Complaint Policy - Port Health and Environmental Services Committee July 2 2013

Report on Port Health and Public Protection Out of Hours Noise Service - Port Health and Environmental Services Committee March 1 2014

## **Appendices:**

APPENDIX 1: Noise Strategy Action Plan– Update March 2015

APPENDIX 2: Noise Strategy Action Plan 2015/16

APPENDIX 3: Noise Strategy 2012-2016 Summary

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