

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Port Health & Environmental Services Committee	16 July 2018
Subject: Mosquito Problems at Tudor Rose Court	Public
Report of: Director of Markets & Consumer Protection	For Information
Author: Tony Macklin, Assistant Director (Public Protection)	

Summary

Residents of Tudor Rose Court in Fann Street approached the City Corporation in 2017 with concerns about being bitten by mosquitos. Public Health England suggested that they were potentially a specific sub-species, *Culex pipiens form molestus* (the so-called "London Underground mosquito") which breeds all year long.

A survey of the block by Hanover Housing Association did not find any potential underground breeding sites and given that it was now November, it was felt extremely unlikely that any mosquitos were breeding above ground.

The matter was raised at an Aldersgate Wardmote in March 2018 so officers investigated again and believe that recent pressure washing out of drains in the basement lightwells of the block will have removed any potential breeding harbourage.

A mosquito trap has recently been installed to monitor any activity around the block and adjacent to the wildlife garden beside Tudor Rose Court, and the results are awaited to see if any traces of *Culex pipiens form molestus* remain before considering what if any, further steps can be taken.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report

Main Report

Background

1. Residents of Tudor Rose Court in Fann Street originally approached the City Corporation in May and again in November 2017 with concerns that they were being bitten by mosquitos.

2. Samples of the insects had also been sent by residents to Public Health England's Medical Entomology & Zoonoses Ecology Emergency Response Department (MEZE) at Porton Down.
3. Given the time of year it, MEZE suggested problems were potentially due to a specific sub-species, *Culex pipiens form molestus* (the so-called "London Underground mosquito") which breeds all year in dark, underground spaces:-

"Molestus and pipiens s.s. are, for the most part, behavioural, rather than physical biotypes of each other. Molestus predominantly lives underground or in areas linked with the Underground and bites people, whereas pipiens lives above ground and feeds almost exclusively on birds. As far as the scientific community have determined, there are no categorical differences in the way they look, so without further molecular work (with which we are ill-equipped) we would not be able to identify your specimens past Culex pipiens".

4. Initial discussions with the landlords, Hanover Housing Association, and a survey of the premises by their Building Manager did not find any potential sites there. Given the time of year and the weather conditions, officers felt it was extremely unlikely that mosquitos generally were breeding above ground in either of the two ponds in the Barbican Wildlife Garden nor in open 'ponding' of stagnant water on the roof of a nearby building.
5. Furthermore, at the time they did not identify any potential London Underground shafts or vents in the area where *Culex pipiens form molestus* could be breeding.
6. Residents continued to complain that they were still being bitten and at an Aldersgate Wardmote in March, the following resolution was passed:-

"That the citizens of Tudor Rose Court in Aldersgate are sorely troubled by being bitten by mosquitoes. These creatures are a health hazard, as well as a serious nuisance. They have been identified as Culex pipiens, and possibly the sub-type Culex pipiens molestus, commonly known as the London Underground mosquito. What action is the City of London Corporation taking to determine the sub-type of these mosquitoes, which will help determine the source of these pests, and what action is the City taking to ensure these pests are eliminated?"

and this was sent back by the Grand Court of Wardmote to your Committee for action by my department.

Current Position

7. Officers have investigated the block again recently and noted that the drainage systems around the outside light wells in Tudor Rose Court have just been jet washed out which has dealt with the blocked drainage points that were a cause for concern as potential harbourage for this form of mosquito.
8. The only remaining concern is the Barbican Wildlife Garden beside Tudor Rose Court, which has two ponds for wildlife. As a wildlife garden it has been

allowed to grow naturally and although not common, it is thought that there may be sufficient foliage cover over some areas of stagnant water to provide a breeding site for *Culex pipiens form molestus*.

9. The investigating officer has taken this up with City Gardens and a mosquito trap has recently been installed to monitor any activity around Tudor Rose Court and adjacent to the wildlife garden.

Proposals

10. To wait for the results of the monitoring see if any traces of *Culex pipiens form molestus* remain before considering what if any, further steps can be taken.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. None

Implications

12. None

Conclusion

13. We now await the results of the monitoring to see if evidence but believe that the recent pressure washing of the block's basement lightwell drains may well have removed any potential breeding harbourage for this type of mosquito.

Appendices

None

Tony Macklin

Assistant Director (Public Protection)

T: 020 7332 3377

E: tony.macklin@cityoflondon.gov.uk