

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD1529

Title: Installation of pay-to enter turnstiles in the toilet facilities, Trafalgar Square

Executive Summary:

The toilets on Trafalgar Square are open 7 days per week, only closing on Christmas Day, and they operate from 9am to 8pm. The cost of managing this facility is £149k per annum plus additional costs for repairs, which in the last year has been around £2k.

This facility has been subject to increased levels of vandalism and anti-social behaviour over the past few years. There have been issues with malicious damage, graffiti and anti-social behaviour. These acts have led to the toilets being unavailable for periods of time, whilst cleaning and/or repairs have taken place.

The introduction of a charge for using the toilets will act as a deterrent to prevent future misuse in addition to other measures such as security patrol of the toilets. The charge will also contribute towards the costs associated with running the service.

Decision:

The Mayor:

1. Approves expenditure of £56,000 on pay-to-enter turnstiles on both male and female toilets at Trafalgar Square.
2. Approves setting the initial entry price at 20 pence per person.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision, and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

31.7.15

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

Trafalgar Square is a landmark in central London enjoyed by Londoners and visitors alike. It is a lively place used for a wide range of activities including special events and celebrations, St Patrick's Day, Pride, Eid and Chinese New Year; filming and photography; and rallies and demonstrations as well as time for peaceful reflection in a site of National historic importance.

A report produced in 2003 for Transport for London by Space Syntax showed that the footfall in and around Trafalgar Square was approximately 4,000 people per hour. Of this around 1,500 pass through the main body of the square.

Random sampling carried out this year by the cleaning and waste management contractor of the footfall into the toilets on the square has shown that approximately 360 people use the facility per hour, which can be extrapolated to show that around 1.2 million people use this per year on non-event days.

The toilets on Trafalgar Square are open 7 days per week, only closing on Christmas Day, and they operate from 9am to 8pm. The cost of managing this facility is £149k per annum based on the amount paid to the cleaning contractor for the staffing, cleaning and consumables. This figure excludes costs for any repairs, which in the last year has been around £2k. The budget for cleaning the square in 2015/16 has been reduced and the choice was to either substantially reduce the availability of the facilities or maintain them through the introduction of a modest charge. Given the large number of users, the absence of toilet facilities due to shortfall in funding will significantly affect the standard of sanitation on the Square and may discourage users particularly families with children. The introduction of the charge will assist with the funding shortfall and ensures that the toilets will remain open at their existing advertised opening hours.

As there are only a few free toilets within the area, the Square's facility is more prone to vandalism and anti-social behaviour. There have been issues with malicious damage, including blocking the drainage system with clothing, damage to the equipment such as hand-dryers and doors and large amounts of graffiti. We have also had reports of people sleeping in the cubicles and using the sinks for body and clothes washing. These acts have led to the toilets being unavailable for periods of time, whilst extensive cleaning and/or repairs have taken place.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

The preferred solution to facilitate the charging for use of the toilets is the installation of four half-height coin operated tripod turnstiles. These will operate on a pay to enter system, with a variety of coins accepted by the machine. The incumbent infrastructure services contractor has supplied quotes for this system and the best value was selected. The quoted cost for the fully commissioned system is £56k.

The introduction of a charge for using the toilets will help act as a deterrent to prevent wanton entry, vandalism and anti-social behaviour from happening and will also contribute towards the cost associated with running the service. We will have better control of the customers entering and leaving the facilities. The issues with anti-social behaviour will be better monitored and managed particularly people sleeping in the cubicles which it is hoped will be reduced by the introduction of a charge resulting in better availability of the facility for visitors.

On the basis that free toilets attract more visitors than chargeable ones, it is conservatively estimated that around 500,000 will use the facility per annum on non-event days. This will give a projected income of circa £100k pa based on a 20 pence per visit price structure. In order to make the service easily available to

tourists, €0.50 will also be accepted. These charges are both reasonable and affordable and consistent with charges for the use of similar facilities in other public places in London.

There are also a set of toilets in the café on Trafalgar Square. Although there will be no charge for these, they will only be available for use by patrons of the café. This may increase the number of customers that use the café, which in turn will increase the turnover of the business. As the GLA has a profit share arrangement for this café it will be of additional benefit to the GLA.

3. Equality comments

The toilet block has two disabled toilets, which are accessed via a radar key. These toilets will remain outside of the pay-to-enter turnstiles and so will be accessible and free of charge to radar key holders. The lift will also remain outside the turnstiles and will be accessible to all users.

The toilets will continue to have an attendant on duty at all times that the facility is open. The attendant will have discretion to allow people into the facilities free of charge. This will be encouraged should they see parents with several children or people struggling with large pushchairs etc.

The Café on the Square has two toilets, which are available free of charge to patrons of the café. These will continue to be free.

4. Other considerations

Key Risks

As one of the last free of charge public toilets in central London, any scheme to charge a usage fee will likely attract criticism in the media. There could also be complaints from members of the public who may feel that the Authority is charging simply to make a profit.

However, without applying a charge for the service, the Authority will be unable to maintain a facility in the Square that is open 7 days a week due to the increasing levels of vandalism and increasing consumables costs. The charge would act both as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and criminal behaviour and would contribute towards the costs for running the toilets on the Square.

Events

The figures given for the current usage of the toilets are all based on non-event days. The footfall will be substantially higher on event days but it is proposed that the turnstiles operate on 'free-vend' during these periods. This will help prevent congestion in the toilet block and avoid any negative press that may be associated to the event taking place. Any costs for consumables and staffing will be recharged to the event producers or project cost centres for GLA owned events.

Consultations

A survey was conducted on ten London Boroughs to determine what charges are applied to turnstiles. Of the ten London boroughs investigated, 90% have some level of entry price for public toilets. A sample can be found below:

Borough	Charge
Barking & Dagenham	10p
Brent	10p - £1
Camden	20p – 30p
City Of London	50p
Greenwich	50p
Hackney	No charge
Haringey	10p
Kensington & Chelsea	20p
Newham	10p
Westminster	50p

The Royal Parks has confirmed that a 20 pence charge to use most of its toilets commenced on 23 March 2015.

The closest open public toilets are located in the subway to the Charing Cross Station (next to the Square) and in Leicester Square. These toilets have a charge of 30 pence and 50 pence per visit respectively, so will be more expensive than our proposed price.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is sought for the expenditure relating to the installation of the pay-to enter turnstiles on both male and female toilets at Trafalgar Square.
- 5.2 The total estimated cost of the installation is valued up to £56,000 and will be funded from Capital Receipts

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 Section 93(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (“the LGA 2003”) empowers the GLA to charge for the provision of discretionary services, to those agreeing to the provision of such services (subject to the restriction in section 93(3) that, taking one financial year with another, the income from the charges should not exceed the cost of provision). Each person’s agreement to the provision of the service (use of the toilet facilities) is inherent in the payment of the charge at the turnstiles.
- 6.2 Section 384(3) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (“the Act”) makes the GLA responsible for the care, control, management and regulation of Trafalgar Square. In addition, section 384(4) requires the GLA to repair the Square and keep it in good repair. Agreeing to the installation of these turnstiles will reduce the incidence of misuse of the toilets and vandalism, generate maintenance for a proper upkeep and care and proper management of the toilets and the square given the large number of users.

The proposed charges for the use of the toilet facility is affordable and commensurate to charges imposed for the use of similar facilities located at other public places such as airports, parks and train stations and it may reasonably be viewed as falling within the GLA’s functions under sections 384(3) and (4).

7. Investment & Performance Board

This project falls outside the scope of the Investment & Performance Board

Appendices and supporting papers: None

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form -NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Alexander Fleming has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following have been consulted on the final decision.

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Simon Grinter has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Martin Clarke has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Sir Edward Lister has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature

M. J. Allen

Date

30.7.15

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

Signature

Edward Lister

Date

30:07:2015

