

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive Member for Communities and Partnerships  
**Date:** January 2022  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Corporate Director of Place

### Report Title

**Busking Code of Conduct - Altrincham**

### Summary

**This report is regarding the council's proposal to introduce a code of conduct in relation to busking in Altrincham.**

**This follows a number of complaints made by businesses in the town centre and conflict arising between buskers and the businesses.**

**The Council looked at practice in other areas and drafted a code of conduct which was then consulted upon over a period of 3 weeks in March/April 2021. 460 responses were received to that consultation.**

**Separate more in-depth meetings have also been held with the Business Improvement District members and with the Musicians Union who work with local authorities nationally to help develop proportionate policies and responses to live street performances.**

**Following this it was resolved not to implement the proposed code but to monitor the situation through the Autumn / Christmas period.**

**A Revised Code of Conduct, taking on board comments made during the consultation has now been prepared. It is proposed to be trialled for a temporary period.**

### Recommendation(s)

- 1. To approve the Code of conduct attached at Appendix 1 and implement it for a period of 6 months commencing 1 April 2022**
- 2. To monitor the management of busking and any issues or complaints over this period.**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Helen Grant, Strategic Manager Crime & Antisocial Behaviour

## **Background Information**

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	The management of town centre activities aligns with the aim of creating Successful and Thriving Places – which includes successful and thriving town centres and communities
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	Sustaining town centres aligns with broader GM policies
Financial	There are no direct financial implications
Legal Implications	Legal input may be required before the Council takes any formal legal steps to resolve noise and nuisance complaints.
Equality/Diversity Implications	The Code was subject to wide consultation with the aim of gathering a wide range of views
Sustainability Implications	None directly arising
Carbon reduction implications	None directly arising
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	None directly arising
Risk Management Implications	The risk of nuisance arising from anti-social busking needs to be balanced against the need for public support for regulation
Health and Safety Implications	A Busking Code would require enforcement from the Community Safety Team and other officers

### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Council receives complaints from some of the businesses in Altrincham town centre due to amplified busking outside their premises which they report to be disruptive and which they say has an adverse impact on their businesses.
- 1.2 Examples of this include bands with amplifiers setting up in the main shopping area and affecting businesses delivering training in their offices, or their ability to speak to their customers because of the loud noise.
- 1.3 In response to these issues the Council drew up a detailed code of conduct for Busking in the Town. This was the subject of consultation in March and April of 2021. The result of consultation was set out in an Individual executive member decision [Report](#) in August 2021. Following the report it was resolved:
  1. To note the key findings of the consultation
  2. Not to implement the Code of conduct at the present time
  3. To continue to monitor noise complaints and other issues associated with Busking
- 1.4 Through the Autumn of 2021 some businesses in Altrincham continued to complain that loud busking was disrupting their regular commercial activities.

The Altrincham BID has also received comments and concern on this issue on behalf of businesses and retailers in the town centre.

- 1.5 Having allowed for an additional period of monitoring as recommended in August, this further report now sets out proposals for the next steps.

## **2 Consultation**

- 2.1 A copy of the draft code was published in March 2021 with a number of questions for respondents and space for free text so that respondents could give their views and add any additional comments.
- 2.2 A full analysis of the consultation responses is set out in the Decision Report of August 2021. The Comments received have helped guide the approach to managing busking in Altrincham.

## **3 Revised Proposals for a Busking Code.**

- 3.1 From the results of the consultation it was evident that opinion was divided as to merits of a code of conduct. It is evident that the Code as originally drawn up required some refinement – and there was not a clear body of opinion that supported the implementation of strong measures with immediate effect.
- 3.2 As a consequence the Code has been revised and updated, taking account of the views received during the consultation wherever possible. Overall there is a genuine balance to strike: many value the atmosphere and ambience created by live music in the town centre – whilst others point to the damaging impact of noise (especially amplification) on legitimate business activities.
- 3.3 The revised Code seeks to recognise that tension – by encouraging busking to take place within responsible parameters. The updated Code is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.4 In recognition of the differing views on the issue it is proposed to implement the code for a limited period initially – for six months from 1 April – so that its impact can be fully assessed. It is acknowledged that as well as securing an appropriately worded Code, the Council needs also to consider how effective the code is in practice and how any disputes are handled.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the issue be reviewed at the end of this time and over the 6 month trial thought will be given as to how best to assess, discuss and engage on the impacts of the measures and the appropriate next steps.
- 3.6 This timescale will enable the revised code to be in force over the peak summer period – and a start date of 1 April will enable advance publicity to be prepared to ensure all parties are aware of the code.

## **Other Options**

The alternative approach would be to continue to monitor the issue, to implement a code permanently or not at all. The merits of this are set out in the report.

**Consultation**

As explained in the report the draft code was subject to consultation, the results of which form the basis of the recommendation

**Reasons for Recommendation**

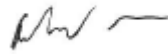
The Recommendation flows directly from the consultation on the busking code of conduct, the previous recommendation to monitor the situation – and the preparation of a revised and updated code.

**Key Decision:** No

**Finance Officer Clearance** .....PC.....

**Legal Officer Clearance** ....TR.....

**[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE** *(electronic)*



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Corporate Director has cleared the report prior to issuing to the Executive Member for decision.