

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT
TO THE LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

19 DECEMBER 2018
ALL WARDS

CHRISTMAS EVENTS IN BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE

1. Summary
 - 1.1 To advise the Committee of the involvement by Environmental Health Officers at the Frankfurt Christmas Market, City Social, and Cathedral Craft Fair which were inspected during November 2018.
2. Recommendation
 - 2.1 That the report be noted.

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3. Background

- 3.1 As in previous years, the food market stalls offered various traditional German cuisine including frankfurters, schnitzel, hamburgers as well as a range of German breads and pastries many of which are baked on site each day. The food of other nationalities is also catered for from other non-German stalls, but which in more recent years have also tended to support the Christmas event. In addition to the Frankfurt Market, further events were held by the Mailbox (City Social) and in St. Phillips Square (Cathedral Christmas Market).
- 3.2 In order to promote safe food hygiene practices and to enforce relevant food legislation at this years event, Environmental Health Officers attended pre-event planning meetings with the organisers and Environmental Health visited and inspected a total of 73 'high risk' food stalls (stalls selling cooked or open food).
- 3.3 Prior to the event opening an information pack, which included a section on the principles of how to ensure food safety, was provided to the event organisers. This was then available for all stall holders making an application to trade at the various events to receive a copy well in advance of it opening.
- 3.4 Officers from Environmental Health also attended and presented information at the stallholders and their staff briefing meeting on the evening of Wednesday 14th November 2018 at the Council House.

4. Inspections by Environmental Health

- 4.1 Environmental Health Officers visited and inspected all 'high risk' food stalls and where necessary provided advice and recommendations to Food Business Operators in order to ensure their stall operations and practices complied with food safety requirements. Whilst this was carried out on the first day of operation, a pre-opening structural inspection was carried out in advance to ensure that any problems identified during the build could be rectified in advance.
- 4.2 Any areas of non compliance that were identified during the process of inspection were dealt with at the time and with strict regard to the risk to health of the attending public.
- 4.3 On the Frankfurt Christmas Market traders were issued with pass, improve or fail cards respectively coloured green, yellow and red. Those that received the fail cards are not allowed to trade until they have rectified the problems which led to a fail card being issued.
- 4.4 Due to differing organisational arrangements, we were not able to implement the pass/improve/fail system at City Social or Cathedral Christmas Market. Any issues were therefore raised with organisers and timescales agreed.

5. Specific Issues

- 5.1 Of the 50 food inspections carried out on 15th November at the Frankfurt Market, 43 traders were immediately awarded a green pass card and 6 required minor improvements. Much of this related to improvements to hand washing facilities, temperature control, pest proofing and a number failed to display any information relating to allergen advice for food on sale. Two traders were issued fail notices. This required them to cease trading; in both cases this was due to a lack of allergen information being available.
- 5.2 All of the stalls issued with a fail rectified the issues shortly afterwards to allow them to trade. All stalls that received an 'improve' were subject to revisits and as of 20th November all traders are up to standard.
- 5.3 The outcome of inspections at City Social revealed that of the nine trading stalls only two would have received a green pass cards for food hygiene matters, however these businesses did not comply with pre-event checks as laid down in the Birmingham City Council's Outdoor Events Organisers' Guide. Of the remaining stalls three required improvement and four stalls failed and were issued with schedules of work. These matters were dealt with and checked off by officers. Again, a number of these traders failed pre-event checks.
- 5.4 At the Cathedral Christmas Market two businesses failed in relation to hand washing and cleaning, these matters were rectified shortly after. A further 9 stalls were rated as improve, issues included pest proofing, allergen information and cleaning. Four stalls received a pass with no further action required. Additionally there were significant concerns about the availability and condition of the communal wash area that was also being used as a preparation area. These matters are still being monitored on a regular basis. Finally, there were problems with unauthorised stalls appearing without any prior notification.

6. Outcome

- 6.1 The Food Team will use this data to help ensure mobile traders who attend outdoor events staged in Birmingham continue to comply with the requirements of Food Hygiene and Safety legislation. The officers have strongly recommended to the organisers of the City Social and Cathedral Christmas Market that they attain higher standards by following the Council's outdoor events organisers' guide.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Consultation was not undertaken directly with stall holders, although significant efforts were made with the event organisers and at the SAG meetings to ensure all relevant information was available prior to the stall holders coming on site.

8. Implications for Resources

- 8.1 There were no additional costs incurred from the Committees approved budget.

9. Implications for Policy Priorities

- 9.1 The contents of this report are consistent with the Regulation and Enforcement Mission Statement - locally accountable and responsive fair regulation for all – achieving a safe, healthy, clean, green and fair trading city for residents, business and visitors.

10. Public Sector Equality Duty

- 10.1 The Frankfurt Christmas Market and other city centre events are enormously popular annual events that have huge seasonal appeal. They continue to attract large numbers of people from all sections of the community and have acquired both national and international acclaim.

ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Background Papers:

Birmingham City Council's Outdoor events organisers' guide

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/267/outdoor_event_organisers_guide