

The number of rats in London has increased by 10 per cent in a year

A new report has revealed the shocking numbers

By Piers Meyler
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The number of rats in London has increased by 10 per cent in a year - with more than 186,000 complaints over the past five years, a new report urging action has revealed. Although there is good news for people living in Havering, the report compiled by Assembly member Susan Hall has revealed the stark problem facing the capital's food, drink and entertainment hub of Westminster.

The worst area is Tower Hamlets where there have been 30,000 complaints about rodents in the past five years, followed by Brent (19,978), Camden (13,558) Lambeth (13,357) and Ealing (12,240).

Westminster council, which oversees London's entertainment centre, had more than 5,000 complaints.

However people living in Havering recorded just 33 complaints in the same period.

The report was compiled by Assembly member Susan Hall and concludes that the problem increased by ten per cent in 2016/17 compared to the previous year and that conditions in London will get even better for rodents.

Her report, 'Rat Land', found the number of complaints received by local authorities is on the rise. A total of 30,119 were logged with councils in 2016/17 – an increase of ten per cent on the previous year.

The report suggests London is facing a problem on a similar scale to Paris, where rats reportedly now outnumber residents by two to one and have caused the closure of public parks.

More litter and food waste on streets, as well as unseasonably warm winter weather, have been blamed for the increasing rat population – which has risen 19 per cent nationwide.

The London Assembly member hall wants the Mayor to lead local authorities in cleaning up the city's streets and minimising the city's rodent problem.

She said: “The figures in my rats report suggest London’s crawling – and the problem is getting worse.

“We’ve seen in Paris what can happen when increasing populations of rodents are ignored. Not only do they present a public health issue, they risk damaging the reputation of individual boroughs and harming the global view of London as a clean and attractive city.

The black death in 1348, which is believed to have killed almost one third of the population in Britain, is widely blamed on rats that carried fleas from Asia.

Whilst the health risk to the public today is not as great as many centuries ago, the fact remains that rats still carry many serious diseases.

These include Weil’s disease, salmonella, tuberculosis, cryptosporidiosis, E.Coli and foot and mouth disease.

She added: “If we want to avoid our city being overrun by rats like Paris and Harrow, we need a co-ordinated approach to tackle this problem, led by the Mayor.

“The recommendations in this report will go some way to cleaning up London’s streets and ridding out our city’s nuisance rodents.”