



City of Westminster

# Adults, Health & Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**Briefing of:** Councillor Antonia Cox, Cabinet Member for  
Public Protection & Licensing

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## 1. Berwick Street Market

- 1.1 The vacant pitches on the Berwick Street Market were advertised in April and applications were invited for street trading licences for the available pitches. The five criteria that applications would be scored against were included in the advertisement. There are currently 16 pitches that are vacant on Monday to Saturday, one pitch that is vacant on Wednesday and Saturday, and nine pitches that are vacant on Saturday only.
- 1.2 We have received 50 applications for the 16 available pitches. As the number of applications exceeds the number of available pitches, a Sub-Committee hearing has been arranged to determine the applications. This is due to take place at the end of September.
- 1.3 The formal notices of the hearing have been sent to all applicants. The Sub-Committee will determine, on the basis of announced criteria, which applicants should be granted a licence and the remaining applications will be refused.

## 2. Restricting sales of Noxious Substances

- 2.1 Trading Standards have commenced a project aimed at restricting the sales of noxious substances which may be used to harm others, working jointly with the police to tackle this issue.
- 2.2 The team have identified approximately thirty independent premises that we would like to join a voluntary scheme in Westminster, agreeing to keep logs of sales made and refusing sales to children, or where they have any other concerns regarding potential purchasers. Trading Standards are also working with major supermarkets get their buy-in.

### **3. Notting Hill Carnival Update**

- 3.1 Following Carnival in 2016 Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and other partners, including Westminster City Council, commissioned a review of the crowd dynamics in order to address possible crowd safety issues. Movement Strategies were appointed and completed a report which identified site wide issues for Notting Hill Carnival as well as specific recommendations.
- 3.2 As a result of this and multi-agency debriefs, a number of measures were implemented for the 2017 event. These included redesign of the barrier plans, additional toilets, an earlier start time and finish time, reduction in number of sound systems and floats, additional counter terror measures and revised contingency plans. The City Council also contributed to the funding of the event management company put in place to manage this year's event.
- 3.3 Notting Hill Carnival 2017 started at an earlier time of 9.15am on Sunday 27 August 2017 with an opening ceremony of contemplation and support for Grenfell and a 9:30am start on the Monday.
- 3.4 A minute's silence was held at 3pm on both days, which was successful with the floats and the sound systems largely adhering to the silence. A quiet zone was also introduced on Ladbroke Grove where participants, including floats, could pay their respects to Grenfell by turning down the music on their floats.
- 3.5 Public Protection and Licensing officers were assigned to the footprint undertaking a number of roles to support the aspirations for a safe and secure carnival. This included having officers dealing with licensed/unlicensed activity, food hygiene, health and safety, illegal street trading and noise.
- 3.6 Over the weekend a total 8 noise complaints about carnival were received by WCC. There were 8 seizures for illegal Street Trading, 3 interventions with mobile traders and 11 interventions with forecourt traders. The teams worked closely with Veolia, our waste collection contractors, to return the streets back to normal as soon as possible following carnival.
- 3.7 On Monday evening, there were some significant crowding issues and in the interest of public safety a decision was taken by our Gold Commander, following advice from the police, to delay closing down of sound systems by 30 minutes to 7.30pm to help facilitate pedestrian movement in and around the carnival footprint and to tackle crowd density.
- 3.8 Overall casualty and crime figures were down on last year, although a number of notable incidents occurred, including a number of assaults on police officers.
- 3.9 The initial feedback on the changes specifically implemented by the City Council has been positive. The additional toilets resulted in less street urination on both days and it is considered that the revised barrier systems offered improved safety and access for residents and emergency services.

- 3.10 Whilst there were a number of positive measures implemented this year it is clear that a number of challenges remain and that further changes will be required to ensure a safe and secure carnival going forward.
- 3.11 Full internal and multi-agency de-briefs are planned over the coming months and this will include feedback to the strategic partners group, chaired by MOPAC, on crowd safety matters. Plans to hold a joint post-Carnival meeting for residents are also in place. I will provide further update on this to the committee in due course.

#### **4. Rough Sleeping Strategy Launch**

- 4.1 The rough sleeping commissioning team are working closely with stakeholders, CMC and PPC to launch the Westminster Rough Sleeping Strategy on Tuesday 12 September from 11am. We look forward to launching the event with representatives from St Mungo's, the Passage, CSTM, Veteran's Aid, Homeless Health, Westminster BIDs and the Metropolitan Police. The attendance at the launch goes some way to demonstrate our commitment to ensure that all partners work together to address the complex challenges that surround rough sleeping in Westminster and beyond.
- 4.2 One of the commitments of our strategy was to open a brand new assessment centre, which has now been done. By working over short periods of time in an intensive way we anticipate that more people will be able to find a route off the street quickly and sustainably. Since the assessment centre launched at the beginning of June we have developed a successful and sustained routes off the streets for an individual with complex needs on average every three days.
- 4.3 In addition, our current work ensures 75% of new people found rough sleeping in Westminster do not spend a second night on the streets. I am encouraged by our progression towards our strategic goal of preventing anyone rough sleeping for a prolonged period on the streets of Westminster.
- 4.4 There is still more work to do to achieve our goal. In the next few months, Public Protection officers will be working closely with Housing & Regeneration to ensure the joint working between homelessness and rough sleeping services is as seamless as possible.

#### **5. London Crime Prevention Fund**

- 5.1 The co-commissioning fund was created by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) from 30% 'slice' of funding previously allocated directly to boroughs, to incentivise more collaborative working between areas and agencies. Workshops were held in early July 2017 to bring stakeholders together under a number of priorities (see below) as part of a 6 week expression of interest (EOI) process. EOIs were submitted to address one or more of four chosen priorities for the first tranche of the fund:

- Youth Offending
- Sexual Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Female Offending

5.2 The deadline for the submission of EOI to the London Crime Prevention Co-commissioning Fund passed on Monday 14 August 2017. Westminster led on or partnered on 8 EOIs as follows:

- Increase capacity of sexual violence services across London through provision of ISVAs and counselling / therapeutic support in Rape Crisis Centres
- Tackling harmful sexual behaviours in young men
- Expanding elements of the successful Integrated Gangs Unit model into neighbouring boroughs of Brent, Kensington, and Hammersmith
- Supporting young people at risk of exclusion through targeted early intervention in Secondary Schools and into the community
- Supporting young people identified as at risk of future negative outcomes through the use of predictive analysis and supportive interventions with families of primary school children
- Improving co-ordination and availability of diversionary activities for young people through the Young Westminster Foundation
- Intervening with young people involved in or at risk of involvement in so-called 'County Lines' offending / drug dealing
- Outreach and support for women exiting prostitution, identifying trafficking and exploitation concerns in the process

5.3 EOIs will now go to a series of evaluation panels with representatives of the co-commissioning working group and the Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime. Final decisions as to which EOIs will be developed into full proposals will be discussed at London Councils Leaders Committee in late September with EOI leads informed by 29 September 2017. Successful EOIs will then progress to the development stage whereby they will have two months to work with partners to address any queries raised by evaluation panels, and to develop more detailed project implementation plans before final funding decisions are made in December 2017.

5.4 The co-commissioning fund is one potential route through which we might begin to meet the 56% funding reduction Westminster experienced through the new LCPF allocation process; however, at this early stage there do not appear to be significant opportunities for this.

## **6. Review of recent incidents that have impacted on and received support from the council**

6.1 During 2017, there have been terrorist attacks on Westminster Bridge and at the Palace of Westminster, London Bridge and Manchester. The threat level has been raised to critical for the first time since 2011. All of these incidents have had some degree of impact on the council. In addition, a number of

councils have had a role in the recovery operation following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington and Chelsea, with Westminster City Council taking a lead role and providing most of the day to day resource to support the operation.

- 6.2 Whilst a significant number of colleagues from the Public Protection and Licensing directorate worked closely with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and the Grenfell Fire Recovery team, to support the response in the aftermath of the tragic fire, officers from across the directorate also worked extremely hard to ensure a 'business-as-usual' service was maintained across Westminster.
- 6.3 All of these incidents have tested the council's ability to respond within the framework of counter terrorism, major incidents and the Civil Contingencies Act. They have also challenged our emergency and business continuity plans. Whilst these incidents have demonstrated our ability to respond and expertise in this area, they have also prompted us to review our contingency planning arrangements and to consider what changes need to be made and where additional capacity or resilience needs to be created.

## **7. Licensing Charter**

- 7.1 The Licensing Charter will be formally launched on 30 October 2017. The Licensing Service, Communications team, Best Bar None and HOLBA are working together to plan the event. The aim of the launch event will be to explain the purpose and vision of the Licensing Charter and to enable key stakeholders to meet each other and promote the charter to perspective businesses.
- 7.2 Invites will shortly be sent to key stakeholders and potential businesses who we hope will sign up to the charter.

## **8. Residential Services work on fire safety**

- 8.1 The Residential Services private sector housing enforcement team are currently linking in with colleagues in other service areas and the London Fire Brigade to make contact with owners of high rise blocks within the borough in order to ensure that housing in our borough is safe.
- 8.2 In addition to the above, Residential Services have also undertaken a number actions to safeguard tenants from a fire safety perspective in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, including providing fire safety advice to managing agents, HMO licence holders, manager of private purpose built blocks and registered housing providers operating within Westminster.

## **9. Street Entertainment**

- 9.1 In response to a rise in complaints seen in 2016/2017 a dedicated busking team was set up in January 2017. The team provides a street presence in Trafalgar Square, Leicester Square and Oxford Circus between the hours of 13:00 –

19:00. They proactively engage with street entertainers to ensure that noise does not rise to unreasonable levels and also provide a fast response to complaints that are received in this area. Alongside this, the council was seeking to support a voluntary approach to managing street entertainment based on the development of Street Performers Associations (SPAs) where street entertainers themselves take the lead in managing negative impacts and promoting good behaviour. However, the development of this SPA has stalled and is now considered unlikely to progress.

9.2 In the months April to August 2017 the Noise Team received a total of 863 complaints of noise from street entertainers. This is a 41% decrease compared to the 1460 complaints received in the same period in 2016. However, it is recognised that some complaints may go directly to the officers.

- April saw a 34% decrease from 262 complaints to 172
- May a 48% decrease from 329 to 173
- June a 38% decrease from 278 to 173
- July a 45% decrease from 363 to 198
- August a 35% decrease from 228 to 147

9.3 Whilst this approach can be considered successful, it is very resource intensive and reduces the capacity the council has to manage other issues across the City. It is also recognised that concerns relating to street entertainment from residents and businesses remain. As such, the council has committed to do a further review of the options available to manage and/or regulate street entertainment, during the autumn. This review will also include consultation with officers from the RBKC, who announced that they were considering licencing such activity in May.