

# City Management and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee

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**Portfolio:** Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Licensing

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## 1. Organisational Restructure of Public Protection & Licensing

- 1.1 From Monday 3 September, Public Protection and Licensing Services have adopted a new way of working. Area based teams were created to help our officers work more effectively with our local communities and stakeholders.
- 1.2 Our City Inspector, Environmental Health Teams and Neighbourhood Problem Solving Coordinators are now working in three area based teams: North, South and West, and Central.
- 1.3 Supporting these teams are two city-wide teams. A Licensing and Regulatory Service which brings together Licensing with other regulatory functions such as Health and Safety, Trading Standards, Environmental Sciences and Consultation functions.
- 1.4 A City Operations Service will also operate on a city-wide basis, comprising Community Safety commissioning, Youth Crime and Disorder, Contest activity in relation to Counter Terrorism, Prevent and Prepare teams, and our Mortuary and Pest Control service.
- 1.5 The new structure will help us to better understand and respond to local demand more effectively. The changes are also designed to help us work more closely with the local community and local stakeholders.
- 1.6 Each ward will benefit from multidisciplinary teams dedicated to supporting local area, and tailored to meet their demands. We have trailed these types of teams since 2015, and proven that different disciplines working together to tackle complex problems is more effective.

- 1.7 All wards will have at least the same resource as they do now. In addition, wards outside of the West End will benefit from additional City Inspector coverage during out of hours periods. Each ward will also have dedicated coverage from Environmental Health Officers.
- 1.8 We are expanding our capacity to deal with noise complaints, by training all City Inspectors. This will enable dedicated noise officers to deal with the most complex issues.

## **2. Notting Hill Carnival**

- 2.1 The annual Notting Hill carnival took place on the weekend of Sunday 26 and Monday 27 August. The footprint of the carnival, although mainly in Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, does fall in wards in the west of Westminster.
- 2.2 In order for the Council to do its part to ensure the carnival was safe and successful, officers from City Promotions, Events and Filming, Licensing, Environmental Health, Parking Services, City Inspectors, Contingency Planning and the Press Teams, all worked collaboratively prior to and during the weekend.
- 2.3 Prior to the weekend itself, four main changes from last year occurred.
- 2.4 First, was the presence of a new organiser - Notting Hill Carnival Limited who, worked alongside the City Council, RBKC, the Metropolitan Police Service, Transport for London and the emergency services to prepare for and deliver the event.
- 2.5 Second, we required the six static sound systems in Westminster to undertake further engagement with local residents, and planned with the operators of these sounds systems to ensure that wider resident concerns were addressed.
- 2.6 Third, changes were also made in relation to the street trading sites within our part of the carnival footprint – largely to assist and support improvements to the movement of people in and around the event footprint. In total 34 pitches were sold within Westminster.
- 2.7 Fourth, we doubled the provision of temporary toilets for the event. This was in response to a large number of resident complaints relating to street urination over the weekend. Whilst the installation of these additional toilets understandably raised concerns from residents in some locations, the result

was positive, as officers on the ground noticed a significant reduction in on-street urination.

- 2.8 The City Inspectors team were on site throughout the weekend to monitor illegal street activity, respond to noise complaints and deal with other nuisances within the footprint.
- 2.9 As previously, the post event garden clean up service was offered to residents and 289 households signed up for the service. The event footprint was cleansed on both the Sunday and Monday nights, ahead of schedule by 170 members of Veolia staff.

### **3. Rough Sleeping**

- 3.1 The Rough Sleeping team have, over the exceptionally hot summer, extended the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) to cover hot weather, where previously the protocol was only implemented when temperatures dropped below freezing.
- 3.2 Prolonged hot weather can pose a health risk to those on our streets, through dehydration, sunstroke and heat exhaustion. Our rough sleeping team have worked with clients and their pets to ensure that those on our streets are hydrated and have the protection they need during periods of very hot weather.
- 3.3 This response and procedure are now in place and officers are exploring ways to work with other boroughs on similar initiatives.
- 3.4 The Rough Sleeping team have also noted a large increase in the number of rough sleepers from the European Economic Area in Westminster. This demographic group in the rough sleeping population poses unique challenges as they tend to gather in large group and can be resistant to typically methods of engagement from council officers. As always, our goal is to find every individual a route off the streets and the rough sleeping services will continue to explore ways to help these people stop rough sleeping.
- 3.5 In cooperation with the Integrated Street Engagement Unit (ISEU – see below) and City Inspectors the Rough Sleeping team have also been working to minimise and disrupt anti-social behaviour associated with our street population. Often this involves a mixture of enforcement and support work with individuals, who often have complex needs e.g. relating to drug addiction or trauma.
- 3.6 Soup runs continue to have a significant presence in the Strand area. The Rough Sleeping team are working with the Westminster Homeless Action Together (WHAT) group to coordinate existing soup runs, whilst we also actively

researching the demographics of those eating from the soup runs. This intelligence will help us ensure those who need it have access to other services as suits their needs.

#### **4. Integrated Street Engagement Unit (ISEU)**

- 4.1 The ISEU are tasked with tackling the challenges associated with Westminster's daytime street population. A significant amount of information is known about the night rough sleeping population in Westminster, however, far less was known about the population on the streets during the daytime. In order to build our understanding of the daytime street population in our city the ISEU coordinated the first Day Street Population Audit.
- 4.2 During the Day Audit the ISEU have counted 321 people of which, only a third stated that they were rough sleeping in City of Westminster. The ISEU are continuing to develop ways of better understanding the day street population and using this information to reduce anti-social behaviour and help these people off the streets.
- 4.3 The ISEU have engaged with hundreds of people in the borough and have helped many into accepting offers of services including accommodation, education, work, training or treatment including drugs and alcohol support services. Quarterly headline statistics show the ISEU has engaged with 220 individuals, 23 have been referred into workspace for Education, Training and Employment Support, 29 have been referred into Mental Health Support and 45 into substance misuse support services.

#### **5. Night Safe Project**

- 5.1 The Night Safe project will see the Council, along with key partners and stakeholders deliver an Alcohol Intoxication Management Service (AIMS) which consists of on street volunteers and a central safe space. This project falls under the umbrella of the Licensing Charter and is directly supporting the charters objectives, from building the evening and night-time economy to ensuring revellers are kept safe.
- 5.2 The Council is working with partners to deliver the AIMS within Soho, on Friday and Saturday nights from 10pm to 5am. Soho has been selected as the location for this project due to the volume of licensed premises in the area, that this area has a substantial number of alcohol related calls to the ambulance service and that there is a strong residential and business community who could benefit from this project.

- 5.3 The heart of the AIMS will be the safe space which will be called Westminster Night Hub (The Hub). The Hub will provide a place for people to recover, receive first aid, recharge phones, rehydrate, receive information on local transport, signposting to further support if required and sexual health or other public health information readily available. The Hub will be operated by a paid co-ordinator and volunteers. They will be supported in the delivery of the Hub by personnel from other partner/agencies, such as St John Ambulance, Police and Street Pastors.
- 5.4 The second element of the AIMS will be the on street support network which will be operated by volunteers who are trained and equipped to engage with visitors and businesses in the area, provide local information and assistance as required and identify and support those who may be vulnerable due to intoxication. The on street volunteers will provide pastoral care to those who need it and escort if possible anyone who is identified as vulnerable to the Hub. The volunteers will work during the time when the Hub is in operation. The on street support network will support and work with local night-time economy businesses to identify and support those in need.
- 5.5 The council has recently partnered on this project with the LGBT Foundation who run a similar and highly regarded operation in Manchester's Gay Village. The LGBT Foundation will bring to the project their experience and knowledge of the operation of a similar scheme, specific training support for volunteers on specific issues relating to the LGBT+ community, which will be prominent within Soho and sponsorship for the project.
- 5.6 The other partners involved in this project are the Police, NHS Central London CCG, St John Ambulance, Drinkaware and Safe Business Network. Officers are also in discussions with the London Ambulance Service, Terrance Higgins Trust and Street Pastors who are looking to either support or partner this project.
- 5.7 We are about to start a significant recruitment drive for volunteers. The aim will be to recruit approximately 40 volunteers initially to enable the project to operate. Once the recruitment campaign has commenced then officers will be engaging with businesses in the area to promote the service and ensure business are helping to reduce the risk to their more vulnerable patrons.
- 5.8 We are working towards a launch date for the AIMS within Soho in mid-November 2018. This will enable the service to support those visiting the area during the busy festive period.

## **6. Gambling Policy**

- 6.1 The Council has been doing a great deal of work surrounding gambling licensing since the Gambling Act 2005 (the 2005 Act) came into effect in 2007. We are responsible for premises based gambling within Westminster under the Act. We cannot control or restrict online gambling.
- 6.2 Since the 2005 Act introduction the council has taken a robust approach to ensure that children and those who are at risk of being vulnerable to gambling related harm are protected.
- 6.3 The Council, in partnership with Manchester City Council and the Local Government Association commissioned research into local gambling vulnerability which was the first of its kind in the UK. This research and the resulting vulnerability index has enabled the council to visually display where those who are most at risk to gambling related harm are located within the City.
- 6.4 Every three years the Council must review and publish its statement of principles for gambling (gambling policy) which sets out how it intends to consider and determine applications under the 2005 Act. The current gambling policy will expire on the 30 January 2019. We have committed within the 2018/19 City for All to consult on a new gambling policy, leading the way nationally on setting the standards for the industry and protecting the most vulnerable in our neighbourhoods by providing better regulation of betting shops across the city. Due to the timescales required under the statutory provisions of the 2005 Act the Council is approaching the development of the Gambling Policy in three phases.
- 6.5 First, the Council's current gambling policy will expire on the 30 January 2019. To ensure that the council meets its statutory obligations, we intend to readopt the existing gambling policy, with some minor changes. If approved, this current version of the gambling policy will take effect on the 31 January 2019. It will remain in force until it is replaced by a new gambling policy in the later part of 2019.
- 6.6 Second, in late October/early November 2018 the council will begin wide public consultation on its future approach to gambling in Westminster. We will use the results of this consultation to support the drafting of the new gambling policy.
- 6.7 Third, in March 2019 the Council will conduct a formal consultation on the proposed new gambling policy. Following this consultation, we intend to adopt a substantially different gambling policy at the end of 2019 that truly reflects the approach that our residents want us to consider and determine applications for gambling, subject to the requirements of the 2005 Act in the future.

6.8 The public consultation for phase 1 of this process commenced on the 28 August 2018 for 6 weeks. The results from that consultation will be considered and then put forward for formal adoption at Full Council on the 7 November 2018.

## **7. Hate Crime Strategy**

7.1 I have been disturbed to learn that Hate Crime has been increasing year on year since the beginning of 2014, both in Westminster and across the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) as a whole. It is not clear whether this rise reflects an increase in tensions, an increase in confidence in reporting, or a change in recording practices. We also do not know how much of this is attributable to factors such as the nighttime economy, online offences e.g. social media etc. who the perpetrators are or if there are any in-community tensions. There is also significant under reporting of disability and transgender hate crimes, and limited understanding of the emotional and long-term impacts that hate crime may have on an individual.

7.2 In June 2018, Full Council adopted the anti-Semitism definition, and made a wider commitment to gaining an in-depth insight into Hate Crime and develop a 5 year strategy on this issue. I have had frequent discussions on this matter with officers and external stakeholders. A working group has been established to consider the content of the strategy and approaches to building our intelligence base on this issue. As I am sure you can imagine, this strategy will have wide ranging implications and so detailed work and a significant amount of stakeholder engagement is required prior to the formulation of the strategy.

## **8. Enforcement Policy**

8.1 The council's corporate enforcement policy is an umbrella policy under which a number of service specific policies sit (e.g. parking enforcement, planning enforcement etc.). It provides a clear statement on the regulatory principles that all departments should be adhering to, how the council approaches enforcement, and what residents businesses and visitors can expect from officers.

8.2 A review of the corporate enforcement policy was needed to align our approach with the City for All Commitments and updated to include new legislative changes (e.g. GDPR). The draft Enforcement Policy is currently out for public consultation until 31st October and can be found on the Council's website. Following the consultation the policy will be taken to Full Cabinet for approval in early 2019.

## **9. Shisha Premises**

- 9.1 Since taking over this portfolio I have noted the frequency of issues related to irresponsible shisha establishments. Cllr Action, who leads our work on this issue and I are resolved to working together to ensure that the Council has a fully joined up method for dealing with the impact of non-compliant shisha establishments and the broader public health concerns. We are also looking to re-examine our public affairs approach to this issue.
- 9.2 The new structure for Public Protection and Licensing, which has created area based multi-disciplinary teams, will facilitate more opportunities for innovative ways of tackling the issues that we have identified. We will continue to work closely with other agencies, including the fire brigade and the police, to target premises and bring them into compliance or take robust enforcement action.