



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

# DRAFT MINUTES

## City Management and Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **City Management and Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held on **Wednesday 10 April 2019** in Room 18.2 and 18.3, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP

**Members Present:** Councillors Tony Devenish (Chairman), Barbara Arzymanow, Margot Bright, Paul Dimoldenberg, Matthew Green, Aicha Less, Mark Shearer and Shamim Talukder.

**Also Present:** Councillor Ian Adams, Sara Sutton (Executive Director of Environment, City Management and Communities) and Annette Acik, Acting Director for Public Protection and Licensing.

**Expert Witnesses:** Chief Superintendent Helen Harper and Chief Inspector Andy Brittain from the Metropolitan Police

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 The Chairman sought any absences, apologies or substitutions to the committee's membership.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 The Chairman sought any personal or prejudicial interests in respect of the items to be discussed from members and officers, in addition to the standing declarations previously made.

2.2 There were no declarations made.

#### 3. MINUTES

3.1 Councillor Green queried the actions relating to the three nurseries that received funding from the Clean Air Fund, he advised that this information had not yet been circulated.

### 3.2 RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the City Management and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 February 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

## 4. CABINET MEMBER FOR LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

- 4.1 Councillor Ian Adams updated the committee on the Licensing and Public Protection portfolio. He advised the committee that with regard to fly tipping and waste enforcement, City Inspectors had been continuing to target waste dumping hot spots across Westminster and particularly the 'Big Black Bin' sites in residential areas. With regard to Soho Angels, Councillor Adams advised the committee that following the successful pilot in the run-up to Christmas 2018, the Soho Angels initiative started on 22nd February, operating each Friday night from 10pm to 5am. He informed the committee that the initiative was a partnership between Westminster City Council and the LGBT Foundation.
- 4.2 Councillor Adams went on to discuss rough sleepers, advising the committee that from December through to February, numbers on the street returned to more seasonal norms. He stated that with regard to soup runs, non-commissioned charities and outside givers, the council had been working closer than ever and was keen to continue to build on those positive dialogue over the coming weeks. Councillor Adams discussed the Integrated Street Engagement Unit, advising it was conceived as part of the Council's #MyWestminster programme to improve people's lives in the city. Councillor Adams advised that the council continued to be concerned about tents, stating that the use of tents on the streets presents a significant risk to rough sleepers in Westminster. As such, the council will continue to lobby the Government for improved powers and guidance for statutory agencies.
- 4.3 Councillor Adams informed the committee that there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour, begging and rough sleeping which had a negative impact on the area surrounding the Westminster Cathedral and Piazza. Finally, on the topic of knife crime, he advised that over the past few weeks there had been several knife-related incidents in Westminster. In response, the police had been able to deploy additional police reserves. The Chair thanked Councillor Adams for his update and good work on fly tipping, and also asked Councillor Adams if he could provide a brief update on his new team members and management structure. Councillor Adams introduced Annette Acik, the Acting Director of Licensing and Public Protection and advised that there had been some movement in the management structure with the appointment of Sara Sutton to the Executive Director's post.

- 4.4 Councillor Talukder advised that he hoped to join Councillor Adams and the Police on their next walk about. Councillor Dimoldenberg thanked Councillor Adams for the great work on fly-tipping and the Big Black Bins. Councillor Less raised queries regarding rough sleepers' non-engagement with partner organisations and what could be done about the issue. Councillor Adams advised that there were some hard-core rough sleepers who were difficult to reach, however 8 out of 10 rough sleepers in WCC spend only one night on the street.
- 4.5 Councillor Bright made enquiries regarding the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) hotspots in Queensway and queried the council's views on residents hiring private security firms. Councillor Adams advised that the council did not agree with that as policy and the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) had recently announced more funding for additional police officers. Councillor Green requested an update on the WCC Hate crime strategy. Councillor Adams advised the committee that the query was timely, as he had met the chairman from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission that afternoon, he also advised that the council had just appointed an Officer last week who had been tasked with identifying members of the commission among other things. Councillor Adams agreed to bring this item back to the committee at a later date.
- 4.6 Councillor Shearer raised queries regarding rough sleepers in St James's ward and Westminster hostel accommodation for rough sleepers, he also asked for an explanation regarding the situation with bed spaces for rough sleepers. Councillor Shearer also queried the old legislation regarding rough sleepers and whether the council had plans on lobbying the government for change. Councillor Adams advised that the plan was to lobby for sensible changes to areas of law, including the Vagrancy Act, which the council believed to be ineffective. Responding to Councillor Shearer's earlier query, Sara Sutton confirmed that the council had commissioned over 400 bed spaces and doubled some night time provision. Councillor Arzymanow advised that one of the main issues in her ward was speeding/racing cars and she queried the council's policy on this matter.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

## **5. CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CITY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND SCRUTINY PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW**

- 5.1 Councillor Tim Mitchell provided a report of the Environment and City Management Cabinet Member's portfolio. Members of the committee were invited by the Chairman to submit questions regarding the report to Policy and Scrutiny Officer.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

## **6. BASIC COMMAND UNIT (BCU) UPDATE**

- 6.1 Sara Sutton addressed the committee advising that the report was an opportunity very early in the implementation stage to review the BCU's approach, she reminded the committee that some of the data was just emerging. She informed the committee that over the last few months the partnerships and collaborative work had strengthened. Chief Superintendent Helen Harper from the Metropolitan Police Service provided an update on the implementation of the new Westminster BCU. It was advised that the BCU went live on 20th February and prior to this, the Deputy Assistant Commissioner led challenge panels to test the readiness of structure, the change and the process. It was noted by the committee that Police Officers had been trained and changes had now been implemented.
- 6.2 Chief Superintendent Helen Harper informed the committee that the Central West BCU had been acknowledged as one of the most challenging and unique. She advised that the volume of incidents and the West End were two key priorities for the Westminster area of the BCU, she also advised that specific attention was focused on putting staffing and governance in place to manage those specifics. Members were advised by Chief Superintendent Helen Harper that the current key challenges were filling vacancies with key posts prioritised; aid was the other challenge as levels of aid demand remained high due to the unique nature of Westminster. Chief Superintendent Helen Harper informed members that cultural change and new ways of working required significant cultural change by officers to fully realise the benefits.
- 6.3 Chief Inspector Andy Brittain felt that managing three unique local authorities' partnerships within the resources of the BCU model had required a review of processes around communications and meeting its structural needs. Sara Sutton advised the committee that the council was undertaking a number of projects in the Church Street ward to improve the lives of young people, both younger groups (years 5 & 6) and older children aged 10-17, she advised that this work had been undertaken together with the police and had been focused on some of the key challenges. Chief Superintendent Helen Harper advised the committee that it was an absolute priority to keep people safe, reduce violence, and deal with the things that matter the most to the people served.
- 6.4 The Chairman raised a query regarding the visibility of the police across areas of WCC, particularly the areas not in the West End. He also raised a query regarding the retention of current WCC BCU police officers. Chief Superintendent Helen Harper advised the committee that the dedicated police officers should be informing the council and the community via social media regarding their whereabouts. She also advised that unfortunately she was unable to stop officers from taking promotions or moving units, but she and others were working very hard to make Central West BCU a very exciting place to work.

- 6.5 Councillor Arzymanow queried the stop and search and knife crime statistics for August 2019. Councillor Bright commented on the perception, fear of knife crime and interactive work with young people. Chief Superintendent Helen Harper advised the committee that the stop and search statistics included the Notting Hill carnival and that the police had just received new section 60 powers allowing the police to categories entire areas for stop and search, when intelligence believes violence or crime was likely to happen, without grounds. However Chief Superintendent Helen Harper advised that the new section 60 powers was an area where they would have to tread carefully.
- 6.6 Councillor Shearer queried the Identity Not Known (INK) finger print recognition technology and Chief Inspector Andy Brittain advised the committee that the Street Engagement Unit used INK equipment and discussed the plans for the use of facial recognition software. Councillor Green commented on the number of burglaries in Little Venice Ward and queried the support offered to victims of crime. He also praised the Little Venice local ward police officer for his great work, especially his work with young people. Councillor Less commented on young people carrying knives for protection, she also queried the opening times for Police Hubs in the Church Street ward. Councillor Less made further enquiries relating to time frame for the installation of CCTV in the Church Street ward. Chief Superintendent Helen Harper advised the committee that she would look into this matter.
- 6.7 Councillor Dimoldenberg discussed drugs and alcohol as drivers to health problems, he queried whether the council should have a view on binge drinking and what more the council could do to assist the police. Councillor Adams commented on middle aged city drinkers and again referred to the work of the Soho Angels. Sara Sutton discussed the licensing charter, where premises holders were looking more closely at their responsibilities to patrons. Councillor Talukder thanked the officers for their presentation and praised his own ward local police officer. Councillor Talukder agreed with Councillor Dimoldenberg regarding drugs and alcohol drivers and spoke regarding the difficulties of neighbours who were afraid to report other neighbours. Councillor Talukder advised Chief Superintendent Helen Harper of an empty unit near Belgravia Station for a space to be utilised by police officers. Councillor Adams thanked the officers for their ongoing work with the council.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

## **7. THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

- 7.1 Sara Sutton presented a report to the committee providing an overview on how the Community Safety Partnership in Westminster worked, highlighted some examples of best practice and the challenges faced. Sara Sutton advised the committee that some health partners were under-represented at the partnership

meetings and this was being addressed. It was also advised that due to the significant organisational restructures within the police and the WCC council's Public Protection and Licensing department, a governance review had been undertaken and concluded earlier that week.

- 7.2 Sara Sutton informed the committee that the Strategic Assessment was the evidence base for the partnership and aimed to identify the key crime and anti-social behaviour issues affecting the borough. It was identified that some key areas of focus would be domestic abuse and drugs and alcohol which were two of the key drivers of crime and disorder. Other key areas included the risk to older people from repeat victimisation and the council's response to counter terrorism.
- 7.3 Councillor Devenish queried how the council were working with the police to ensure good quality data. Sara Sutton explained that there were a number of good quality analysts in her team, however there was the opportunity to now work with the BCU's local analysts. Chief Superintendent Helen Harper advised the committee that an intelligence analyst would be starting in May. Councillor Dimoldenberg discussed a recent public meeting on an estate, where many residents were angry and concerned with the lack of activities for young people. Councillor Dimoldenberg praised the work of the All Stars and the Avenues, which had featured on national radio. Councillor Green discussed the youth boxing club run by his local ward police officer, he again commented on the good work of his local ward police officer.
- 7.4 Sara Sutton advised the committee that under the wider relationship, 'Everyone Active' and SLM sports facilities would be increasing outreach work with young people and our communities. Councillor Shearer commented on local community groups and residents committed to getting involved in local issues relating to young people, he felt that the council could champion those local groups. Councillor Shearer also queried the vulnerability of older people. Sara Sutton advised that this was an area where her team was working closely with the Adult Safeguarding team and was also an area where she felt needed improvements. It was noted that Sara Sutton would circulate a briefing on social isolation to committee members.
- 7.5 Councillor Arzymanow queried the working relationship between the British Transport police and the Metropolitan Police, she was advised the British Transport Police had informed her that they would be happy to share information, but there were a number of issues that prevented a closer working relationship. In response to Councillor Arzymanow's query, Chief Superintendent Helen Harper advised the committee that she would look into the matter. The Chairman thanked officers for presenting their reports and their good work.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

**8. COMMITTEE TRACKER AND WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

8.1 Artemis Kassi (Policy & Scrutiny Officer) presented an updated report on the agreed topics for the committee's 2018/19 work programme.

8.2 The committee reviewed the progress of items on the 2018/19 work programme, committee members were asked to note the unallocated items and prioritise, where required. The committee was also asked to consider items for the 2019/20 work programme and note the action tracker. The committee suggested a number of topics including Parking Occupancy Service, Waste Recycling Plan and Racing Cars. It was also noted that the Inclusion in the Night Time Economy task group was due to report back to the committee and should be added to the programme.

8.3 RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

9.1 The chair introduced Annette Acik, Acting Director for Public Protection and Licensing.

**10. FUTURE DATES**

Wednesday 12 June 2019 at 7.00pm  
Wednesday 10 September 2019 at 7.00pm

The Meeting ended at 8:56 pm.

CHAIRMAN: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_