

**Date:** Monday 10 May 2021

**Report Of:** Councillor Heather Acton

**Portfolio:** Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration

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## **1 City for All – Communities and Regeneration Priorities**

### **Vibrant Communities**

#### Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy

- 1.1 We are in the early stages of developing a new Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) strategy to make it clear how we and our partners address ASB across the borough. The aim is to publish the strategy in late Autumn 2021, having consulted on it, including with this committee. However, work has already commenced to examine areas that have been highlighted as being potential gaps or duplication in our ASB approach including:
- A cross agency Westminster City Council (WCC) and Metropolitan Police Service Youth Early Intervention Scheme, streamlining with other Youth Intervention provision
  - Developing an approach to mental health and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
  - Developing the capability of WCC caseworkers to address ASB, with additional training. The aim is to improve WCC capacity to pursue ASB and criminal prosecutions.
- 1.2 The strategy will incorporate standardised processes across over 50 agencies within the Westminster ASB partnership, so that ASB cases are handled consistently.

#### Westminster Connects

- 1.3 Westminster Connects is planning for the next stage of recovery support. Over the next few months, focus will be on how the service will move away from a pandemic response into business as usual and delivering on City for All.
- 1.4 Operationally, significant efforts have been placed on improving COVID-19 vaccination uptake, on completing contact with the newly advised group of shielding residents, on incorporating the track and trace team into the mainstream work of the Public Protection and Licensing department and scoping Voluntary and Community Sector contracts.

#### Rough Sleeping Commissioning Strategy

- 1.5 The Council continues to assess the longer-term impact of accommodating people previously sleeping on our streets and people at risk of sleeping rough during the pandemic. Current provision must be retained, while future options are developed for post-pandemic services. A commissioning working group is being set up for May 2021 to support the Divisional Head of Housing Needs, Support and Safety. This will develop a Rough Sleeping Commissioning Strategy and review future options for service commissioning. Officers from across the Council and procurement business partners will form part of this group.

#### Church Street

- 1.6 Stage 1 of the pre-planning consultation for Church Street Site A closed on 31 March 2021, with over 300 responses. Stage 2 is planned for Summer 2021. 50% affordable housing and the ambition for net zero carbon will be included as part of the planning application.
- 1.7 Expressions of Interest have been received from 10 operators for the Church Street Triangle Project, all with experience of delivering community focused enterprise spaces. Jan Kattien Architects are developing final designs for the three vacant units and are progressing designs for the public realm.

#### Ebury Edge

- 1.8 Businesses at Ebury Edge have reopened following the lifting of non-essential retail lockdown on 12 April 2021. To date, 18 start-up businesses have taken up occupation in the new units on Ebury Bridge Road. Community café, 'Fat Macy's', recently held a COVID-19 compliant 'Easter Grill' and Early Years childcare provider 'Carly's Angels' has taken up occupation in the community centre.

#### Infill Schemes

- 1.9 As part of the Infill programme, 6 new social rented homes will complete shortly. These schemes involved conversion of former office space, a former laundry room and undercroft space to provide a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed homes. For community benefit, these new homes will be offered to eligible residents within the blocks, enabling the Council to address cases of local housing need. Across the Infill programme there are currently 145 on site or at the pre-construction stage. Consultation on further schemes will commence soon.
- 1.10 Photographs from a recent visit to the near-completed infill sites are included as an appendix at the end of this report.

### **Cleaner and Greener**

#### Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)

- 1.11 The Code of Construction Practice has been drafted and will be discussed at an upcoming Communities, Regeneration and Housing Policy and Scrutiny committee. There will be a six-week public consultation period, in order to consult with the developer community and other stakeholders to ensure their input is fully integrated into the plan.

#### Air Quality Action Plan

- 1.12 We are revising some of the actions in the Air Quality Action Plan to reflect the impact of the pandemic. Cross-portfolio discussions will take place to ensure that the plan reflects the full range of steps that can be taken by the Council, including public health measures

#### Westminster Schools Air Quality Programme

- 1.13 The council's Schools Clean Air Programme has provided every school with the opportunity for a bespoke Air Quality Audit which recommends measures which will help to mitigate the impact of poor air quality for students and staff at the school. This programme has been supported by environmental consultants WSP who carried out the audits and collated the results. All the schools that participated have now received their audit reports. WSP have collated the findings and the final report and the next steps of the programme will be finalised shortly.

## **2 Major Decisions**

- 2.1 Since my last report to Committee, I have formally approved the following decisions:
- Luton Street: Request for approval to transfer head lease (CMR)
  - HMO Additional Licensing Scheme Recommendation to Full Council (CMR)

## **3 Areas of Focus**

#### Serious Youth Violence and Gang Activity

- 3.1 The Council and Metropolitan Police Service have been working closely in preparing for the lifting of COVID-19 lockdown conditions in order to prepare for any potential increase in gang offending. A high visibility policing plan has been put in place, with both BCU and centrally deployed police resources in areas of high risk.

**3.2** Work has commenced between Westminster City Council and London Borough of Brent officers and police to ensure maximisation of cooperation required to deal with any cross-border gang issues. The Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit (IGXU) continues to work with young people either involved in gangs or at risk of involvement to ensure that opportunities are offered in employment, training, education, mental health and family support.

#### Modern Slavery

**3.3** A bi-borough Modern Slavery Strategy has been drafted with RBKC and is due to be published soon.

#### Rough Sleeping

**3.4** The last street count took place on 25 March and 106 rough sleepers were accounted. Whilst only a slight reduction on our January count (108), there is usually a significant increase between January & March counts historically in Westminster. The exceptional number of “move-on” achieved this winter has enabled us to steady the numbers sleeping on our streets. UK nationals have continued to decrease overall.

**3.5** Westminster has been shortlisted for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s (MHCLG) Changing Futures Programme, a new round of funding that supports adults experiencing multiple disadvantages. The Council’s Expression of Interest was co-produced across Housing, Public Health, Adult and Children’s Social Care, and Public Protection & Licensing, and was co-signed by ten partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors. Work is in process to design systems change for impact on the following groups facing multiple disadvantage:

- Rough Sleepers with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues
- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Autistic Adults
- LGBTQI+
- Temporary Accommodation

**Appendix: Photographs of recent visits to Infill Sites**

**Edinburgh House, Maida Vale**



**Falkirk House, Maida Vale**





John Aird Court, Little Venice

