



Date: 22 June 2023
Classification: General Release
Title: Chief Executive's Update
Report of: Stuart Love, Chief Executive

1. Night Stars volunteers arrest by Metropolitan Police

- 1.1. On Saturday 6 May, three of the Council's Night Stars volunteers were arrested by the Metropolitan Police's Territorial Support Group on suspicion of intent to disrupt the Coronation proceedings. The volunteers were carrying rape alarms which are part of the kit they take on patrol to assist vulnerable people on a night out. They were detained for almost 15 hours before being released, and despite providing information that they were volunteering on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2. The Council has met with local BCU representatives as well as the responsible deputy commissioner and his assistant to discuss the issues surrounding the arrests.
- 1.3. The three arrested volunteers were provided with ongoing support from the Council staff in City Wide Operations and Policy and they were encouraged to access the Council's Employee Assistance Programme for extra support.
- 1.4. Following the incident, a full review of the processes and arrangements to support the Night Stars service was undertaken, which was used to inform a service improvement plan, the implementation of which is monitored fortnightly.
- 1.5. Many of the actions have already been completed, with an updated risk assessment produced, improved arrangements for Night Stars to sign-on and sign-off with the PP&L Duty Leader and shared with the BCU Operations mailbox. Other actions, including updated handbooks for volunteers and the development of a volunteer steering group are also underway.

2. Asylum seeker protest in Pimlico

- 2.1. Council officers were notified in the early hours of Thursday 1 June by a City Inspectors that forty asylum seekers were on the street in protest after being moved to a hotel in Pimlico by the Home Office, where they had been asked to share four to a room.
- 2.2. This required council outreach and emergency response staff to support the group, with contact between the Council and the Home Office about the emerging incident only taking place at the Council's instigation on the following day.
- 2.3. The Leader wrote to the Home Secretary on Thursday evening asking for clarification from the Home Office and that the lack of communication to the local authority in regard to this incident was not acceptable. On Friday evening the Home Office reverted its position and agreed that the asylum seekers could share two to a room, as they had done at their previous accommodation.
- 2.4. Although the council was aware through regular engagement with the Home Office in the months prior that the hotel was being used to accommodate asylum seekers, there was no notification that forty people would arrive on that date nor that they had refused the conditions set by the Home Office and were consequently on the street.
- 2.5. The poor management of the transition between accommodation and subsequent action by the Home Office caused significant disruption to the local community as well as placing the asylum seekers at risk.

3. Internal events: Muslim History Month, Windrush 75, Pride

- 3.1. The Council is supporting and facilitating Pride in London by working closely with Pride in London and their event production company to provide advice and guidance during the event planning process, whilst also balancing the impacts with our experience and local knowledge of the event footprint. Multiple agencies including the Police, GLA, TfL and blue light services are involved in the operation planning, and the Council supports with includes road closure planning, resident and business liaison, licensing requirements, cleansing, parking, and use of the Council's parks.
- 3.2. Officers from the City Promotions, Events and Filming team work across the event weekend- some based on street and others within the multi-agency event control room. The Council also has an entry in the Pride parade, which is organised by the Rainbow Network, which the Lord Mayor usually attends as well as cabinet members. The Westminster Rainbow Network will be attending Pride with the Pride Network in RBKC and Unison with floats.

- 3.3. May was International Muslim History Month which an opportunity to learn and celebrate the accomplishments of Muslim men and women. As a culturally diverse organisation, the Council have celebrated International Muslim History Month for the very first time this year to create amazing opportunities for colleagues to discover Muslim history in Westminster and the UK.
- 3.4. The Multifaith staff network organised a series of events such as a walking tour to discover Muslim History in Britain; a celebration event with the Muslim in Leadership Foundation to celebrate and raise awareness of Muslim in leadership roles; and hosted the Media & Public Relations Manager of London Central Mosque on Loop Live to speak about the mosque's history and its importance to Westminster.
- 3.5. This month the Council is marking the 75th anniversary of the Empire Windrush's arrival to the UK. The Global Majority Staff Network, together with colleagues across departments, are working in partnership with Westminster UNISON and the Windrush Caribbean Film Festival to host a film premiere that celebrates the contributions of the Windrush generation on 22 June.

4. Disability Confident Leader

- 4.1. The Council has achieved Disability Confident Leader status; the third London borough to achieve this thanks to the challenge to become more inclusive from the Unions, Able Network, Staff Networks, and staff across the Council.
- 4.2. Disability Confident is a government scheme to attract, recruit, retain those with disabilities and health conditions and to help organisations to think differently about them. All organisations start at level 1 and progress through the scheme at their own pace.
- 4.3. The first two levels focus on inclusive and accessible recruitment and the actions organisations are taking. The Leader status demonstrates the commitment to taking an active role in encouraging and helping other employers on their journey to becoming Disability Confident.

5. Ethical Care Charter

- 5.1. The Council has now signed UNISON's Ethical Care Charter following a ceremony in City Hall. The charter highlights the value that the council places on staff who deliver care and those who receive it and sets out the intention to better support both care workers as well as the people they look after.

- 5.2. Signing the charter is a key deliverable within the Council's Fairer Westminster strategy setting high employment standards for care workers resulting in better working conditions for them to provide higher quality, more dignified care.

6. Lift operations at City Hall

- 6.1. Lift operations were affected at City Hall from 2 to 8 June with only one functioning lift for that period. Council staff with a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) or who would not be able to use the stairs in the event of an evacuation of the building were advised to work from home or from another council building, with business continuity processes activated.
- 6.2. Engineering surveys were undertaken over the course of the week to enable re-certification of the lifts enabling them to be brought back into use. There will be some weekend remedial work to replace lift cables over the next 8 weeks. It is envisaged this will happen from Friday evening to Sunday throughout July and into August.
- 6.3. The building management of City Hall sits with Avison Young (AY) who look after the common parts for both the Council and Parliamentary Estates.