

Adults, Health & Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee

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Briefing of: Cabinet Member for Public Protection

Contact Details: Sion Pryse x 2228
spryse@westminster.gov.uk

1 Community Cohesion

- 1.1 After a successful initial meeting on 7th September a follow up meeting is expected to take place in December. The discussion emphasised the cross-council cooperation needed to understand and identify the issues that create isolation and marginalisation in society to make sure Westminster is a place where this does not happen. As such the next meeting will include officers from a number of departments ranging from Children Services to City Management and Employment to Housing. I would like to once again thank Councillor Hug, McAllister and Mohammed for their support and expert input.

2 Prevent

- 2.1 The team have been working alongside Prevent and Children's Services colleagues to host a Prevent and Schools Conference. The Conference outlined to attendees the risks that they face locally and how to respond effectively to the new statutory guidance. For much of the session institutions were given an opportunity to share their own unique experiences and approaches to responding to extremism and radicalisation risks.
- 2.2 The Creating Stronger Communities project will be completed next week. The project has been delivered alongside the Mosaic Community Trust, in Church Street. It works with Muslim women in order to empower them to overcome a range of social issues that they identified as impacting on their communities. Participants in the project are encouraged to become involved in volunteer work to support their local communities. Topics addressed to date have included gangs, drugs, radicalisation and domestic violence. The feedback received from the women has been very positive, and a number of follow up workshops are being arranged.

- 2.3 The team have also been providing support to schools across Westminster to assist them with ensuring that they are complying with the Prevent Duty. This has included delivering training to staff, and helping schools with action planning and providing guidance around their safeguarding policies; by making sure that risks around radicalisation are fully reflected.
- 2.4 The first series of our Prevent Parenting Programme (based on Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities) is being delivered in conjunction with the Abbey Community Association. The project works to support parents and to build and develop their parenting skills. It explores topics including: tools for effective disciplining, internet safety, cultural values and community integration. Two more series of the project will be delivered in Westminster by April 2016.

3 Violence against Women and Girls

- 3.1 Two new services to support women and their families, who are affected by domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women, were launched at an event at the Yaa centre in Westminster on the 22nd September.
- 3.2 The Shared VAWG Integrated Support Service is being provided by Angelou, a partnership of local and regional specialist services to tackle VAWG. Angelou is made up of nine organisations ranging from Solace Women's Aid who provide support to victims of sexual violence (and are separately commissioned to deliver the North London Rape Crisis Service), African Women's Centre who specialise in supporting victims of FGM, and Galop who work with LGBT survivors.
- 3.3 In addition to the integrated support service, we have also commissioned Standing Together, a local charity based in Hammersmith & Fulham, to deliver dedicated domestic violence court at Westminster Magistrates Court, and to run our multi-agency case conference process for high risk victims of domestic abuse.
- 3.4 The new services have been receiving a lot of positive publicity since they began work in July. The Chief Executive of Advance (the lead partner in Angelou) was interviewed on London lunchtime news, and we were invited to present at a DCLG summit on domestic abuse.

4 Starting Over

- 4.1 We have extended our contract with Starting Over to continue to provide a custody referral service in police custody until a re-commissioned substance misuse service across the Tri-borough is introduced in April 2016. Instead of working with Short Sentence Prisoners who now receive statutory support we have varied and extended their contract to work with the Integrated Offender Management cohorts with effect from 15th October to provide additional rehabilitation support to the most recidivist offenders with health and social care needs across the Tri-borough.

5 Minerva

- 5.1 MTC Novo who are the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) for London with responsibility for medium and low risk offenders are introducing a cohort model to working with offenders on the 7th December. One of the cohorts is female offenders. They are commissioning a variety of agencies through the London Women's Consortium to deliver some of this work.
- 5.2 The Deputy Mayor of MOPAC has committed further resources to expand innovative practice for female offenders and the London Reducing Reoffending Board has agreed to deliver upon this pledge. To do this MOPAC are looking to expand upon the provision provided by MTC Novo and to develop a one commissioning approach for London that incorporates a joint funding model between MTC Novo, MOPAC and local authorities.
- 5.3 The aim is once the basic female offender service is in place across London, boroughs will be available to fund additional support. This should make commissioning in the future easier. In the interim this lack of clarity of what provision will be available to female offenders has resulted in being unable to extend our contract with Minerva, to ensure that there is no duplication in service delivery, in time to meet Tri-borough procurement timeframes.

6 Street Performing

- 6.1 Over the summer we have trialled our joint approach to managing street performance with the Greater London Authority (GLA) in Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus. The aim of the trial is to reduce the negative impacts of street performance regularly experienced by businesses and residents.
- 6.2 The trial began with a period of proactive engagement funded by Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA) and backed with Council enforcement.
- 6.3 The engagement period finished at the end of October. The Busker Liaison Team engaged with performers proactively to respond to complaints and the West End Busker Forums gave all parties the chance to talk openly and receive feedback.
- 6.4 The feedback from businesses at Piccadilly Circus has been positive and there are now fewer problems as acts stay within their pitches and impact guidelines which mean little Busker Liaison support is now needed. The feedback from businesses at Leicester Square has been mixed. Weekly surveys conducted by HOLBA have focussed on negative impact still felt by businesses. However informal positive comments have been received by businesses and the police.
- 6.5 Enforcement is beginning to take place and the GLA wrote to four individuals regularly causing problems in Leicester Square noting that their acts were still causing problems despite repeated attempts to engage and so complaints had been passed to the Council and therefore open to enforcement action.

- 6.6 I have also initiated a Trafalgar and Leicester Square Officer Working Group to find solutions to any outstanding problems in the area that have been highlighted through the Busk In London initiative. The first meeting was held on the 3rd November and was attended by officers from both licensing and planning.
- 6.7 Further trial pitches in NWECC and the Northbank BIDs' trials are due to start imminently and this will more than double the number of recognised pitches in the West End. The GLA is working to bring in more boroughs, BIDs and landowners into the programme. The Keep Streets Live Campaign and Lord Clement-Jones both continue to lobby against a blanket busking ban in other UK cities instead promoting an approach akin to Busk In London.

7 Rough Sleeping

- 7.1 September played host to a full street count, all outreach workers were accompanied by a volunteer acting as a verifier and support from Met Police ensured that data was as accurate as possible. Figures continued to rise, a total of 294 were counted. Core UK & Irish accounted for 85; Foreign Nationals accounted for 181 (159 EEA & 22 Rest of the World). Those of unknown nationality accounted for 28. Only around 30% of those encountered were entitled to the benefits required to offer accommodation while the rest can only be offered support into private rented accommodation or a reconnection to their home country. Both offers remain unattractive to those encountered and subsequently refused. This now means that 39% of Westminster's rough sleepers are from Romania.
- 7.2 Due to the high street count figures and a visible rise in rough sleeping, we continue to work hard with our enforcement partners to address any anti-social behaviour and complaints we may receive. Fortnightly tasking with immigration (Home Office) and weekly co-ordination meetings with the Police ensure we are focused on priorities and working collaboratively to address the problem.
- 7.3 During this time of year we begin looking to the colder months and a robust Serious Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEPP) is compiled. We work closely with our support agencies, City Management and the GLA to ensure that if the weather drops to below freezing, additional actions are undertaken and provision are made available. We will also be meeting with our non-commissioned partners to complement their work with the Winter Churches operation running throughout November to March. This sees a number of spaces made available across a network of faith based buildings to offer shelter to people during the colder months

8 City Inspectors

- 8.1 On the 7th November I joined our City Inspectors on duty in the West End. Feedback from City Inspectors highlighted that the restructure has benefited the way we manage the city and allows for a more holistic approach. The inspectors fed back that they feel the new role has allowed them to increase their skill base and knowledge. Being out with the team was a real eye opener

and reminder of the excellent work our city inspectors undertake. I have recommended to the West End Partnership Board members and the members on the Licensing Sub-Committee to also join our City Inspectors on a visit to the West End at night.

9 Night Time Economy

- 9.1 On the 30th November I will be attending a roundtable event titled 'Is Regulation Killing the Night-Time Economy'. The discussion will focus on the social and economic conflict associated with the night time economy and the impact of licensing. I will be asserting the difficult decisions local authorities have to make to ensure a balance between opportunities for the night time economy and the needs of residents and communities reminding the attendees that the Licensing Sub Committee will review each case on its individual merits.

10 Licensing Consultation

- 10.1 Following consideration of the responses to the consultation proposals, a revised licensing policy has been drafted, updating the policy and incorporating revisions. I presented this draft for approval at Full Council on the 11th November where it was approved and so will become effective from January 2016.

11 Stress Zones

- 11.1 Following the successful revision and updating of our licensing policies, the second phase of the policy review is now underway to verify whether the current boundaries of our cumulative impact areas remain valid, and examine whether it is appropriate to apply special policies to any other areas of the city to address concerns relating to the licensing objectives which may arise.
- 11.2 Public consultation has already identified resident concerns in Mayfair and the police have highlighted issues in the area south of the current West End Cumulative Impact Area.
- 11.3 Work is now underway to assess the nature and extent of the problems and to examine how the application of special policies may contribute to resolving them. We recognise of course that all the problems associated with a vibrant night time economy cannot be addressed by licensing measures alone, and the findings of the review will inevitably feed into other areas of work both for the council and our partners.
- 11.4 We are hopeful that specific proposals can be drafted in the first quarter of the New Year, and, following consultation and scrutiny, any necessary measures can be implemented in the summer. It will be important to engage with all interested parties throughout this process and keep local residents engaged.

12 Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

- 12.1 The Stage One proposed new Statement of Licensing Principles for Gambling was consulted upon for a period of five weeks ending on the 2nd October 2015. The Council received seven responses to that consultation. After considering these consultation responses and making minor amendments, I presented the draft to for approval Full Council on the 11th November where it was approved and will become effective from the end of January 2016. The consultation for Stage Two will be conducted for a longer period in 2016.