



City of Westminster

# Adults, Health & Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 23 November 2016

**Briefing of:** Cabinet Member for Public Protection

**Contact Details:** Joe Penny x 5772  
[jpenny@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:jpenny@westminster.gov.uk)

## 1 Spice

- 1.1 Further to my previous P&S update, a new version of Spice has hit the street population in recent weeks ('Man Down'). Evidence shows considerable strength present in each packet and we have already seen cases of users suffering serious side effects, such as convulsions and hospitalisation for issues such as cardiac arrest.
- 1.2 The West End cluster, especially Adelaide Street and surrounding environs, have emerged as key locations for Spice users and it is fast becoming a hub for Spice dealing.
- 1.3 To tackle this issue, I recently kick-started a media campaign to raise the profile of Spice and show how deadly this psychoactive substance is. This has been widely covered by news outlets and more organisations are pledging support to help Westminster in its efforts to fight Spice.
- 1.4 In addition, I chaired a high level roundtable discussion on the 10th October to discuss the challenges of Spice and possible actions we could take to combat it. This roundtable was attended by senior officers from the the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), National Crime Agency, Public Health, Outreach Services, London Ambulance Service (LAS) and experts on psychoactive substances. The meeting was highly constructive and positive feedback was received on the Council's efforts to tackle this issue.
- 1.5 As a result of the roundtable, the National Crime Agency has put Spice on the agenda for the January meeting of the National Drugs Threat Group. At the meeting, the group will discuss the possibility of including Spice on the National Drugs Strategic Action Plan. I will be attending this meeting in order to set the scene of the challenges in Westminster and to ensure Westminster leads the national debate on tackling Spice.

- 1.6 I am also in the process of writing to the Home Secretary to highlight the loopholes within the Psychoactive Substances Act that have led to these legal highs decimating the rough sleeping population in Westminster.
- 1.7 As a direct result of the Spice campaign, the Police held a community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to coordinate their response to Spice and 'Operation Tradewind' was implemented immediately after the meeting, which targeted alleged Spice dealers in the City. The council supported the MPS in delivering the operation's objectives, which included activities such as gathering intelligence, social care responses, cleansing and providing community reassurance to businesses in the area. The Police have arrested a number of alleged Spice dealers, with large quantities of Spice being removed from the streets. The council has identified the top nine problematic individuals who have been excluded from services and we are working with police on further enforcement action

## **2 London Police & Crime Plan 2017 – 2020**

- 2.1 The Police and Crime Plan 2017-2020 is due to be published in March 2017, and will set out what the Mayor wants to achieve in the area of policing and crime.
- 2.2 The Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC), led by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden, is currently in the process of early engagement with stakeholders on the Police and Crime Plan. This will be followed by a 12 week consultation on a formal draft which will start this month.
- 2.3 It has been suggested that the Police and Crime Plan will seek to introduce targeted services to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual groups, communities and locations in London.
- 2.4 In light of these new plans, I recently met with the Deputy Mayor to discuss a wide range of issues affecting Westminster. In the meeting, I lobbied the Deputy Mayor to retain the levels of funding already in place for Westminster, particularly those funds that support our Integrated Gangs Unit (IGU).
- 2.5 I am concerned that as a result of the plan, central London boroughs will see reduced levels of funding. I and senior officers will continue to liaise with the Mayor's office and MOPAC in order to input Westminster's view into the development of the plan.

## **3 The London Crime Prevention Fund**

- 3.1 The Deputy Mayor has given positive indications about the likely continuation of the programme beyond March 2017.
- 3.2 Although we are yet to receive the finer details, we expect there to be a number of significant changes to the way in which funds are distributed to Boroughs.

- 3.3 We expect to know our allocation and the process for accessing funding by the end of 2016. Following this, decisions will be required on how to spend this resource.

#### **4 London Zoo**

- 4.1 Following the escape of a Gorilla from London Zoo on Thursday 13th October, Environmental Health Officers from the Health and Safety Team are carrying out an investigation into how and why the incident occurred. They are working closely with the Licensing Team, but are primarily concerned with the Health and Safety of The Zoo's employees and the general public, as well as ensuring this does not happen again. The investigation continues and the team will work closely with The Zoo.

#### **5 Serious Youth Violence**

- 5.1 On the 5th October, I held a Youth Violence roundtable in order to update key stakeholders on the Council's current response to serious Youth Violence. The roundtable was attended by Karen Buck MP, the Queen's Park and Harrow Road Councillors, and representatives from youth centres. At the roundtable, attendees were briefed on the IGU's current responses to youth violence and a briefing note was distributed afterwards regarding the current funding arrangements of the IGU.
- 5.2 Since the formation of the IGU in 2012, levels of serious youth violence were continuing to fall steadily year on year. However, the first six months of this year saw a rise in youth victims. This can be attributed to significant one off events, such as the violent disorders that erupted at the Hyde Park Water fight and the Notting Hill Carnival. To help us better understand and respond to this trend, further analysis has been commissioned to look at the issue in more detail and inform our response.

#### **6 Licensing Standard**

- 6.1 Work has been on-going since the Licensing Roundtable I chaired earlier this year to continue development practicalities of the Licensing Standard. Pilot zones have now been identified to analyse the effect of the Licensing Standard in different areas of Westminster. In each Pilot Zone, council officers are consulting with operators on how they would like the Licensing Standard to operate in their respective areas.
- 6.2 It is hoped during the trial process, premises will see the following:
- Improved working relationships between authorities and premises
  - A lower risk rating, which could then lead to a more flexible inspection regime
  - Reputational benefits for the area and the likelihood of associated revenue uplift

- 6.3 Once the analysis has been collected, I will host a further Licensing Roundtable, with pilot operators, to discuss how the trials are progressing.
- 6.4 A bid is also being prepared to the Home Office Local Alcohol Action Area (LAAA) programme which aligns directly with the Licensing Standard and will afford the council access to wider support and visibility for the programme.

## **7 Operation to tackle brothels and modern slavery**

- 7.1 A joint operation with MPS and the council targeted suspected brothels in Soho and Chinatown. Whilst this was a Police lead operation, the council supported it by providing intelligence and resources for the planning of the operation, with the City Inspector Service leading on Massage and Special Treatment venues. Relevant welfare support was also provided to support any vulnerable women.
- 7.2 Key results from the operations are as follows;
- A number of premises were closed
  - 10 women taken to a place of safety and offered welfare support
  - 18 arrests for controlling prostitution
  - Firearms, fraud and immigration offences
  - £35,000 in cash seized
  - 4 other properties searched as a result of the arrests

## **8 Waste Enforcement Policy**

- 8.1 I have recently given my approval for a reviewed Waste Enforcement Policy. The policy was implemented on 7th November and all City Inspectors have been undergoing training on the new approach.
- 8.2 The overall aim is to improve compliance and encourage residents/businesses to work with us in promoting a cleaner and greener environment. Compliance will be achieved through providing good, accurate information on arrangements and options for waste disposal. The role of our City Inspectors will be to educate residents and issue fines where necessary, but also work with discretion. Enforcement will be focused, ensuring best use of resources and effective use of legislation against those who act irresponsibly, or who persistently offend.

## **9 Rough Sleeping**

- 9.1 Over the period of eight weeks up to 4th November, considerable effort was made to gather and collate views during the consultation on the draft Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 9.2 In addition, on the 31st October I organised a roundtable discussion for key outreach services in Westminster to discuss the draft strategy. During the meeting, outreach services responded positively to the new direction of the

strategy and offered constructive feedback to make the strategy work for everyone.

- 9.3 Various operations have been on-going to tackle localised issues of rough sleeping at Victoria Piazza and King Scholars Passage. A meeting was held with local stakeholders, the Police and Outreach services to review working practices and decide on priorities to tackle the issue moving forward.

## **10 Night Time Economy**

- 10.1 A recent submission has been made to the Mayor's Night Time Commission on Licensing and the Night Time Economy in London. Our submission chiefly covers the management of premises and our experiences of licensing the largest night-time economy in the country.

## **11 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**

- 11.1 A Tri-Borough VAWG strategy is in place and details how our Tri-Borough Angelou Partnership will deliver a coordinated community response. The strategy is subject to regular reviews and consideration by the VAWG Strategic Board.

- 11.2 Front line specialist support for survivors and their families is being delivered by the Angelou Partnership and Standing Together (an umbrella organisation which supports access to services and raises awareness of domestic abuse). These two organisations coordinate coordinating the MARAC conferences and two Domestic Violence Courts including one at Westminster Magistrates court.

- 11.3 The Angelou Partnership's performance over the year to July 2016 showed there were 1,107 referrals to Westminster:

- 84% of domestic abuse cases that were dealt with had a reduced assessed risk when the case was closed (against a target of 82%)
- 84% of women reported increased safety and feelings of safety following involvement with the Angelou Partnership
- 93% of women reported a reduction in abuse due to support and advice received from Angelou Partnership

- 11.4 Additionally the percentage of defendants convicted at the Dedicated Domestic Violence Courts in Westminster increased to 73% in 2015/16, from 63% in 2014/15.

## **12 Harris Review**

- 12.1 The Harris Review into London's preparedness to respond to a major terrorist attack was published on 28th October. The review outlined that the plans in place 'are robust, well tested and proportionate'. On analysis of the recommendations, many are already included in Westminster's Emergency Planning Strategy

12.2 I will continue to highlight the important role of local authorities and how we can impact or support the role of other emergency services.

### **13 Soho public meeting regarding drug issues**

13.1 A community meeting was held in Soho regarding concerns raised by residents of an increase in drug usage and activity. The meeting was attended by representatives from Public Protection and Licensing, the Police, local councillors, landlords, landowners and Public Health representatives.

13.2 As a result of this meeting, the Police have implemented specific days of action to target drug dealing. We are supporting this with regular ward sweeps to ensure that any environmental issues are identified and resolved quickly. We are liaising closely with landowners in the locality to identify hotspot areas. We continue to work with the Police to obtain criminal behaviour orders against persistent offenders in the locality.

13.3 In addition, I recently went on a walk of Soho with the chair of the Soho Ward Panel, Andrew Murray. On the walk, I saw first-hand the very serious issues on-going in Soho and as a result, I have been on contact with the MPS Borough Commander to ensure a robust plan is in place to tackle these issues.

### **14 Police and Crime Committee – policing and security at Notting Hill Carnival**

14.1 The London Assembly Police and Crime Committee have launched an investigation into the policing and security arrangements of the Notting Hill Carnival.

14.2 The Council has submitted its own response to the committee. In our response, we highlight the importance of the Notting Hill Carnival as a unique part of London's history and how it forms an iconic part of our identity as a global city. We also highlight how the event has grown organically over the years since its inception, but the pace of this has not been mirrored in the approach to management and planning of the event. If this issue is not addressed, it could threaten the future of the Carnival and the history associated with it. Lastly, we stress that there is an urgent need for a more strategic approach to be taken in organising the event.

14.3 At the end of November, I will be holding a roundtable discussion on the Notting Hill Carnival with key stakeholders to better link communications between all parties involved and find a common sense of direction in tackling the issues caused by recent Carnivals.