

Adults, Health & Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee

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Briefing of: Councillor Aiken, Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Chairman of Licensing

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1 Spice

- 1.1 Following extensive lobbying to Government, Spice and other similar synthetic cannabinoids have been classified by the government as a class B drug, an amendment backed by the City Council since October 2016. The police will now be able to stop, search and arrest individuals in possession of Spice. The police will also be able to seize the drug, without arrest, to protect vulnerable individuals from its dangerous effects, without the need to criminalise them.
- 1.2 Currently, police operations are focusing on arresting dealers and as a result, a large quantity of Spice has been removed from the streets. This is a lengthy process, as the drug has to be submitted to Home Office for testing before any charge can be considered. Additional police resources are being used to increase visibility and reassure businesses and residents.
- 1.3 Officers in the Rough Sleeping team are working to map those sleeping on the streets and ensure their social care action plans are appropriate. All those found on the streets have been offered immediate routes off the streets but unfortunately, some refuse this support. Treatment services have developed a training package for staff who works with this client group, with trained outreach workers, in an attempt to engage these individuals. This will help establish a hybrid social care and enforcement response. So far, this approach has resulted in Criminal Behaviour Order bundles, which are currently being prepared for court.

- 1.4 Towards the end of 2016, reports from our accommodation services highlighted an alarming amount of overdoses and incidents of psychosis, caused by excessive use of Spice. These incidents have led to many frontline workers experiencing violent behaviour amongst habitual users. However, more recent feedback suggests less of these incidents are now occurring, particularly since police activity targeting Spice had been increased. Incidents are concentrated in the south of the City, with very few users in the North. Officers will continue to work with our accommodation services to respond to these incidents and monitor the number of Spice related issues.

2 Fatal Stabbing in Adelaide Street

- 2.1 In response to the fatal stabbing in Adelaide Street on 27 December 2016. Two 19 year-old men, both of no fixed address, have been arrested and were subsequently both charged with murder.
- 2.2 In response, a collaborative effort is being made with partners to reassure the local community. In addition, the Police are increasing their presence and have arranged for a specific operation to take place, which will be supported by City Inspectors, Rough Sleeping and Cleansing services. So far, there have been eight further arrests for a variety of offenses linked to activity in this area.

3 Notting Hill Carnival

- 3.1 On the 15th December 2016, I chaired a roundtable discussion on the future of Notting Hill Carnival with Commander Dave Musker of MPS Gold Command for Carnival, Cllr Tim Coleridge and Cllr Robert Freeman of RBKC, Victoria Borwick MP, Cllr Connell and Cllr Holloway. During the meeting, attendee's discussed the current issues and challenges concerning Notting Hill Carnival.
- 3.2 As a result of the roundtable, a letter was drafted to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden, which was co-signed by Victoria Borwick MP, Karen Buck MP, Cllr Nicholas Paget-Brown and Cllr Tony Devenish. In the letter, myself and the signatories highlight our intention to support the event organisers in managing a safe and entertaining event and ultimately, preserve the future of Notting Hill Carnival for many years to come. However, to truly achieve this, we ask that the Mayor and MOPAC clarify who is ultimately responsible and accountable for Carnival. In addition, we also ask that the Mayor and MOPAC provide immediate support to the Notting Hill Carnival Trust, in order to make them a viable and sustainable event organiser.
- 3.3 On the 17th January 2017, the Police and Crime Committee at the GLA published its report after launching an investigation into Carnival. The Council

submitted a response to this investigation and many of the points raised in our submission, have been reflected in the final report, i.e. the call for clear accountability, the need to support the Notting Hill Carnival Trust.

4 London Police & Crime Plan

- 4.1 The Police & Crime Plan is currently out for consultation and officers are working through the plan, in detail, to prepare the Council's response. Initial considerations are mixed, but we welcome a move towards local priority setting and the removal of the MOPAC 7 crime targets. The Plan also discusses new Basic Command Unit (BCU) pathfinder sites and the One Met Model 2020, which will introduce a series of 12 proposed BCU's across London. This includes the proposal to merge Westminster's BCU, with Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham.
- 4.2 Officers will continue to analyse the detail of the London Police & Crime Plan and any subsequent announcements made by MOPAC and the Police. I will ensure that Westminster's unique experience is highlighted and firmly put forward; our submission to the consultation will be made by the 23rd February 2017.

5 Licensing Charter

- 5.1 Significant progress has been made with the development of the Licensing Charter and particularly the Leicester Square pilot area, following discussions with the Heart of London Business Alliance and Members (HOLBA). A draft proposal is currently being worked on, which will later be presented to a full range of licensed premises in the coming months. The feedback from this proposal will then be used to finalise the draft proposition.
- 5.2 On the 30th of November 2016, the Licensing Committee agreed to endorse proposals for the Council and its partners to explore innovations in policy, for example:
- Draw in and coordinate support from voluntary schemes, such as Drinkaware Crew and Street Pastors.
 - Provide training to premises on how to deal with potential dangerous or damaging situations e.g. major security incidents and managing vulnerability through intoxication, drugs or other factors.
 - Identify problem premises through the use of a wider range of factors, rather than crime data solely.
 - An enhanced compliance support offer, which will enable premises to address issues in partnership with authorities, rather than the need for expensive enforcement action.
 - Flexibility and exemptions for compliant premises, in the event of any future implementation of the Late Night Levy.

6 Begging & Street-based ASB

- 6.1 In the run-up to the busy holiday period in December, a series of operations were arranged to target begging and street-based ASB across the City, including; Oxford Street, Mayfair, Strand and Whitehall, Covent Garden, Marylebone High Street, Queensway and Victoria. These have been joint deployments with the Police and local City Inspectors. Victoria BID security has also been joining teams on operations, which fall within their footprint. The operations have been intelligence-led and enforcement-focussed, utilising Community Protection Notice (CPN) and highways legislation, with a view to making arrests for those found breaching.
- 6.2 Approximately 30 rough sleepers have been engaged by City Inspectors, alongside Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Eight contacts have resulted in social care and signposting interventions and City Inspectors are working with Veolia to remove any associated waste.
- 6.3 A new protocol agreed with the Police, whereby those breaching CPNs would be subject to targeted arrests, has proved successful during a deployment in Marylebone. During an operation on the 8th December, one prolific individual continued to beg despite being subject to a CPN. The offender was consequently arrested for breach of CPN, then detained and deported back to Romania. During the first 2 weeks of the operations, there have also been:
- 2 verbal warning
 - 11 CPN formal warnings
 - 1 CPN
- 6.4 The team is also working closely with hostels and day centres, should any of their clients be found to be engaged in crime or ASB. This is to ensure that social care is balanced with enforcement and care plans can be adjusted accordingly.

7 New Year's Eve

- 7.1 The City Inspector service provided a significant presence during the New Year's Eve celebrations, working in conjunction with the Police. Inspectors focused on tackling illegal street trading at the event and saw 6 unlicensed forecourt interventions and 10 seizures at the event. Goods seized included a peanut trolley, 3 hot dog trolleys and 2 trolleys containing soft drinks. The City Inspectors also dealt with ticket touts, prosecuting three individuals. Lastly, City Inspectors participated in the cleansing operation, by acting as a liaison between Veolia, the event organiser and the police. This ensured a smooth re-

opening of the roads after the event and the safety of road users during the cleansing operation.

- 7.2 There was also an incident at the Rah Rah Rooms, Piccadilly, over the festive period. Three individuals were stabbed at the premises and as a result, the police called for an expedited review of their licence, which has subsequently been suspended pending a full review.

8 Westminster Cathedral Piazza

- 8.1 There have been concerns raised by residents and members regarding the increase in rough sleeping and ASB in the Cathedral Piazza area. A neighbourhood meeting was held at the Passage on 6th December to discuss these concerns and agree an approach to tackling the issues identified. As a result of this meeting, the following steps are being taken to reduce problematic activity in the area:

- An agreement by a local hostel to disqualify anyone who is found bedding down in this area from access to its services.
- Regular patrols, by City Inspectors, who have been advised to use community protection warning notices to individuals behaving in an anti-social manner.
- Implementation of a section 35 dispersal power under the Crime and Policing Act, 2014 for when the police deem this power necessary.
- Agreement for additional cleansing of the Piazza on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- The passage has delivered a Spice Awareness week to highlight the dangers of taking psychoactive substances.
- The council is also working with landowners to redesign some of the areas around the Piazza to reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour, for example, increased lighting.

9 Street Entertainment

- 9.1 On the 24th November 2016, I chaired a roundtable discussion with street entertainers and local business representatives on the future vision for Street Entertainment in Westminster. The meeting helped identify key issues regarding the current status of Street Entertainment in the City and find an agreeable way forward that had the broad support of all stakeholders. After constructive discussions, prominent street entertainers agreed to set up Street Performers Associations (SPA) in the locations of Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square. As in Covent Garden, SPA's would provide the best forum for the local authority, businesses and street entertainers to work together and improve the provision of street entertainment in Westminster.

- 9.2 In addition to SPA's, the roundtable reached broad agreement from attendees that crowds gathering to watch street entertainers, at Oxford Circus, often lead to increased public safety issues. It was stated by street entertainers themselves that reasonable buskers would not seek to perform there. On the back of this mandate, we have implemented a more robust enforcement procedure, using CPNs to specifically target problematic buskers in the area.

10 Soho

- 10.1 Following on from the community meeting held in November, a Soho ASB 'drop in' surgery was held on 6th December and attended by residents and local businesses. As a result, a number of actions are underway and a number of arrests have been made. In addition, changes to problematic phone boxes and lighting issues are being action, whilst further options are being considered to design these issues out.

11 Seasonal Health Interventions Network (SHINE)

- 11.1 It has been confirmed that funding has been made available from Ofgem for Westminster to be involved in a pilot of a fuel poverty and health network. The Seasonal Health Interventions Network (SHINE) provides a holistic service that aims to reduce fuel poverty and seasonal mortality and morbidity amongst vulnerable residents. SHINE has been operating in Islington since December 2010 and in Hackney since February 2012. In that time, 13,500 referrals have been received, leading to around 60,000 interventions. It is one of the most extensive referral networks of its kind. SHINE works with partners to locate and assist such residents, with a wide range of interventions at its disposal. Most of the interventions are evidence-based and focus on: people's home environment, their financial status, seasonal health and general social support.
- 11.2 A number of organisations such as the London Fire Brigade, Thames Water, UK Power Networks, energy suppliers are already in a position to make referrals immediately. Advisors are also in a position to make referrals for Warm Home Discount, Priority Services Registers and supplier energy efficiency schemes.
- 11.3 This partnership will tie in with the Public Health related work carried out by Residential Services and complement the Warm Homes Healthy People project. The pilot is due to run until the end of May 2017.

12 Review of Operation Unite

- 12.1 Operation Unite is a partnership between the City Council, Metropolitan police, Home Office Immigration Enforcement Service (HOIE) and other stakeholders to tackle key issues affecting Westminster. Operation Unite aims to tackle

longstanding issues, where previous operations and tactics have proven to be unsuccessful in delivering a long term reduction.

12.2 As a result of Operation Unite, there has been a measured success in protecting vulnerable people, reducing anti-social behaviour, criminal offences and improving the look and feel of Westminster. A full report is due in February, but key highlights to report so far are:

- There has been a 50% reduction in the number of foreign nationals sleeping rough on Westminster Streets
- With the increased focus on aggressive begging, there has been an increase of 18% in arrests for begging.
- A reduction of 23% in crime reports for theft person, combined with a 130% increase in arrests for this offence over the summer.

13 Halloween and Autumn ASB

13.1 Autumn Nights is a partnership response to address the firework related ASB during the Halloween and Bonfire night period. This has increasingly become a concern during this period, with the levels of CAD (Crime and Disorder) calls received in 2015 being more than double that of 2014 (+117%). The partnership includes officers from PPL, the Police, London Fire Brigade, Children's Services and City West Homes.

13.2 Unfortunately, despite significant preplanning and proactive patrols, Halloween and Bonfire Night saw between 50-100 youths congregating in the Lisson Green Estate and Church Street, firing fireworks at police officers, police cars, members of the public and traffic on the public highway. This activity saw a total of three police officers injured, as well as two police cars and two civilian cars put out of service. At least 25 arson attacks on City West Homes bin chambers were also recorded over this period.

13.3 This has obviously been taken very seriously and the partnership has worked together to identify the individuals involved in this incident. Utilising footage from the new police body cameras, 33 of the individuals involved have been identified. A multi-agency case conference was convened to agree activity for each individual.

The interventions now put in place are as follows:

Police & Probation Interventions

- 1 charge of Violent Disorder
- 1 charge of Assault on a Police Officer
- 1 Criminal Behaviour Order
- 3 referrals for enhanced Probation engagements

Children's Services Interventions

- 1 referred to Children's Services triage for targeted intervention
- 1 subject to continuing intervention due to vulnerabilities

Housing Enforcement

- 10 served Notice of Seeking Possession (pending legal clearance)
- 1 served Seeking Possession Order (pending legal clearance)

Legal Letters

- 24 City West Homes warning letter about Tenancy jeopardy if behaviour continues
- 8 City West Homes banning letter from Estates

Joint Agency Home visits

- 4 Police, Children's Services, City West Homes
- 2 Police, Integrated Gangs Unit, City West Homes
- 2 Police, City West Homes
- 10 to attended parenting and young person workshops

- 13.4 This highlights the potential for the partnership to tackle this type of behaviour in the future and thus, it is intended that this new partnership will have a positive impact on the levels of fireworks related ASB for 2017.