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Title:	The Leader Of The Council
Report of:	Councillor Nickie Aike, Leader of the City Council
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Leader of the Council
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	City for All
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 I last addressed the Commission via a verbal update on 24th May 2017, four months after I was appointed Leader of the Council and two months after I launched City for All 2017/18.
- 1.2 In my submission for this meeting, I provide the Commission with an update on the Council's City for All vision, key areas of new policy direction and other matters raised by the Commission in advance of the meeting.
- 1.3 The Chief Executive's Report provides an overview of issues of managerial importance and I have therefore limited the content of this report to those strategic matters which I have prioritised in recent months along with other areas of potential interest for the Commission.

2. City for All – update

- 2.1 Updating the City Plan and the Interim Statement of our New Approach to Housing delivery
 - 2.1.1 In June I spoke to the London Real Estate Forum (LREF) about the new direction the Council will take under my leadership to ensure Westminster is a place where people from all backgrounds can afford to live. This is the bedrock

of City for All because access to high quality reasonably priced housing is the single most important aspect of many people's lives.

2.1.2 I challenged the house building industry to do more to deliver affordable housing units in developments across the city. At the same time, the Council published an Interim Statement of our New Approach to Housing delivery. This document makes clear the Council's expectations under existing planning policy on issues such as use of Section 106 Funds, viability assessments, the cost of land and post-permission viability reviews.

2.1.3 A full review of the City Plan is ongoing and Members will be provided with the opportunity to be briefed on the contents and timetable for the revision.

2.2 Community Cohesion

2.2.1 Last year, as Cabinet Member for Public Protection, I established a cross-party Community Cohesion Commission to undertake a review of the social integration of Westminster's communities and strengthen our work on cohesion. I committed to carrying this work forward as Leader as a key City for All priority.

2.2.2 The (Scrutiny) Commission will be aware that Westminster is one of the most diverse places in the world, with a rich array of residents and a thriving entertainment and cultural hub which attracts millions of visitors a week. With this in mind, the City Council has always had a particular focus on building strong and cohesive communities and my predecessor, the late Sir Simon Milton, launched a review in 2006 to develop a better idea of what people thought was needed for a cohesive community. Since then, a lot has changed - from the global economic recession to the decision to leave the European Union, changes in demographics, policy developments and a host of other activity that has all impacted the way people in Westminster work and live with one another.

2.2.3 My review has sought to shine a spotlight onto the current state of community cohesion in Westminster and ensure that the City Council and our partners are in a strong position respond to these challenges and changes.

2.2.4 Over the last year, the Commission has undertaken a four tiered, evidence based approach to inform our understanding of cohesion in Westminster. These were:

- i) Reviewing national policy, literature and developments including talking to experts in the field such as Ted Cattle and evaluating the Government's position and response following major disturbances.
- ii) Analysing local survey based data analysis to gauge how residents feel about living in Westminster and get a sense of how far communities are gelling together at a rudimentary level.

- iii) Benchmarking best practise with neighbouring authorities including a visit to Hackney Council to discuss how they are using their borough's unique assets to address similar challenges.
- iv) Extensive active engagement with residents, stakeholders and local groups from all over the borough including over 25 events involving roundtables, evidence sessions, focus groups, attendances at partner forums and meetings. In parallel, we also launched a public online consultation page inviting people to share their experiences and stories of community cohesion.

2.2.5 Following this evidence gathering and extensive engagement activity, the findings have been collated and the Commission is now drafting its final report. We expect to launch the report in the Autumn at an event with partners, stakeholders and everyone we spoke to over the course of our engagement activity. With these stakeholders, we will develop an action plan to ensure that our recommendations are put into meaningful actions. I have asked that the (Scrutiny) Commission monitor the implementation of these actions on an on-going basis.

2.3 Don't Be Idle Campaign

2.3.1 In collaboration with Councillor David Harvey, I have launched and championed a major new anti-engine idling campaign called #DontBeldle. The campaign asks motorists to sign an online pledge to turn off engines at the side of the road and help to reduce asthma, heart disease and lung cancer in the area.

2.3.2 As of mid-September the campaign has achieved the following results.

- 300 pieces of media coverage across trade, regional, national, print and broadcast media with regular mentions throughout summer.
- 1.25 million people reached through use of the hashtag: #DontBeldle
- 700 retweets of #DontBeldle tweets to date
- 1,600 clicks through to pledge page
- 3,500 members of the public approached by parking marshals since the campaign launched including XX idling drivers.
- Over 50 idling drives agreed to stop idling in the first three anti-idling action days of the campaign.
- High levels of volunteer engagement with 45 volunteers within three months.
- 550 pledges of support from members of the public.
- Letters of support from Jesse Norman, Minister in the Department for Transport, responsible for idling and Steve Brine MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Public Health in the Department of Health.

2.3.3 We are also piloting a schools engagement programme with schools in the Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood involving air quality marshals.

2.4 Superfast broadband

2.4.1 Westminster has secured £2.8m to deliver a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project that aims to connect small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the city and the West End Partnership area to superfast fibre broadband connections.

2.4.2 To support the delivery of the scheme the council ran a supplier registration process to register a pool of registered suppliers who can deliver vouchers under the scheme. This process resulted in 104 suppliers registered to support the council to roll-out the scheme. The introduction of the scheme has resulted in significant positive benefits including major investment in fibre in the ground from companies in anticipation of the scheme and a diversion of investment from other parts of London to Westminster.

3. **Other issues to note**

3.1 Supporting the response to the Grenfell Tower Fire

3.1.1 The Chief Executive has provided a full update on the corporate response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy in his written report. I will not therefore cover the same ground in this report but I do feel it is important to recognise and thank Westminster officers for the exceptional work they undertook both in the aftermath of the fire to support the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and also to re-examine Westminster's own position on fire safety.

3.2 Move from tri-borough to bi-borough

3.2.1 In March, I took the decision, in consultation with the Cabinet, and alongside the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, to serve notice on the Section 113 agreement that existed between our two councils and the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.

3.2.2 An intensive, large scale period of service reconfiguration has commenced to deliver the disaggregation of the shared service arrangements that are currently in place.

3.2.3 A corporate programme has been established, overseen by a small Group of key Cabinet Members whose services are directly affected, to plan and coordinate activity ensuring that the tri-borough exit is orderly and within the one year timeframe set. This includes design, consultation and finalisation of bi-borough organisational structures.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Richard Cressey x 3403
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