



City of Westminster

# Adults, Health & Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**Briefing of:** CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC PROTECTION

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## 1. Emergency Planning

- 1.1 The team are currently coordinating the Council's business continuity plan that requires each Council department to update their plans following significant organisational changes that have been introduced. The target is for plans to be completed by the end of June 2015 and this will be followed by a phased 'testing' of the plans during the next few months.
- 1.2 Other emergency plans are also being updated to ensure the Council is fully prepared to respond effectively to incidents.

## 2. Prevent

- 2.1 As was reported last month, the Prevent training that is provided to schools has been revised in order to ensure that it remains up to date. The training introduces Prevent and some of the key concepts behind it before looking at how it applies to schools. It ends by focusing on training staff to be able to identify individuals who might be at risk of radicalisation and how we can work to support and safeguard them. This training has already been delivered in a total of 9 schools to over 220 staff.
- 2.2 The first Westminster Prevent Stakeholders Meeting was held on 1 June. This was the culmination of 12 months efforts in building up community links in order to facilitate an open dialogue with stakeholders about the most effective way to deliver Prevent locally. Attendees were given a copy of the first Prevent Quarterly Newsletter which outlined the Team's achievements over the last 12 months. Discussions then moved on to the work the team are planning to undertake this year. The meeting was very productive with attendees providing useful advice and suggestions. A number also made commitments to supporting the delivery of aspects of Prevent projects over the coming months.

- 2.3 I am in the process of establishing a “Community Cohesion Commission” to consider how resilient Westminster’s communities are and what public agencies and local partners can do to reduce the risk of individuals, and young people in particular, becoming isolated from society and consequently at risk of falling into dangerous situations.

The Commission will:

1. Review levels of local community cohesion. Examine any city-wide or localised threats to community cohesion which may lead children and young people to become isolated from society. Evaluate actions to tackle threats to cohesion and build stronger, more resilient and inclusive communities which support children and young people to avoid dangerous situations.
  2. Consider the effectiveness of existing approaches to identifying and working with children and young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, gang activity or other harmful behaviours.
  3. Develop specific, radical and deliverable proposals to improve the ability of local public services and communities to respond to such risks.
  4. Review how effectively Westminster public services are meeting their responsibilities under the Prevent Duty introduced by the Home Office in early 2015 and make recommendations relating to how to improve the response.
- 2.4 On 14<sup>th</sup> May, I attended the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life to give evidence on Westminster’s experience in creating cohesive communities post 7/7 and work forthcoming to review the Council’s approach to this important issue. Chaired by Baroness Butler-Sloss the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life has taken evidence from a range of witnesses across a diverse span of topics. This session focused on the role of civic leaders and evidence was also received from Cllr Bush as Chair of the Westminster Faith Exchange, Camden and Lambeth Councils, the Metropolitan Police and Public Health England.

### **3. VAWG Shared Services**

- 3.1 Following extensive consultation led by Imkaan and Women’s Aid, and an open tender process, the following contracts have been awarded for the provision of specialist support for victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and other forms of violence and abuse predominantly targeted at women:
1. **Coordination:** Standing Together Against Violence – provision of high risk multi agency conferences (MARAC) and dedicated domestic violence courts (DDVCs) across the Tri-Borough area
  2. **Integrated Support:** Angelou Partnership led by Advance Advocacy – support and advocacy for victims and their families including enhanced provision within Westminster Children’s Centres. Angelou is a

partnership of local voluntary sector providers including: Advance Advocacy, Standing Together, Al Hassania, Solace Women's Aid, Women & Girls Network, Hestia, and the African Women's Centre

- 3.2 The new services commence on 1<sup>st</sup> July, providing an expanded and better coordinated offer across the area based on need, rather than just risk. There is also a greater emphasis on the new service to ensure appropriate referrals are made into other provision commissioned on a regional and sub-regional basis. A launch event is being planned for mid-July.

#### **4. Operation Shield**

- 4.1 Westminster continues to develop plans to implement Operation Shield in the Borough, a MOPAC led pilot to tackle rising youth violence across the capital testing a new approach in Lambeth, Haringey and Westminster. Discussions with MOPAC are on-going to agree the scope and timing of the pilot in Westminster.

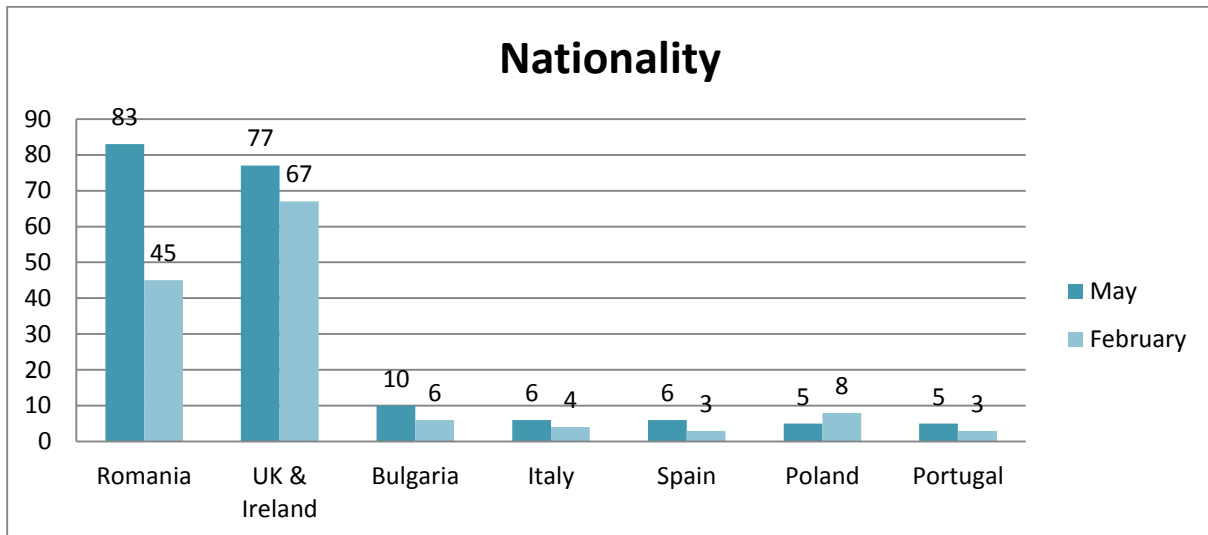
#### **5. Street Performing**

- 5.1 Further to my detailed update in April, a meeting has been secured with senior colleagues at the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to discuss how best to tackle persistent nuisance busking, particularly in relation to ongoing noise and overcrowding problems at Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus. This will feed into a round-table discussion between officers at WCC, MPS and the GLA and representatives from Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA), local businesses and street performers with the aim of agreeing a joint approach that will both promote considerate busking and effectively deal with nuisance.
- 5.2 In the meantime, work continues with HOLBA, New West End Company and Northbank BIDs to consult local stakeholders and agree pitch guidance to be shared via [www.BuskInLondon.com](http://www.BuskInLondon.com). The GLA plans to formally launch the programme, which puts all the information buskers need about how to perform without attracting complaints, on National Busking Day (18th July). The main event, taking place on the GLA-owned section of Trafalgar Square, kicks-off the UK Busking Festival: three weekends of curated street performance which will be used to publicise London's collaborative approach to street performance and thereby encourage more considerate busking.

#### **6. Rough Sleeping**

- 6.1 Along with the recent changes within my portfolio I have now taken on the area covering rough sleeping. I have already met with the Westminster Rough Sleeping team to align myself to on-going problems and given the complicated nature of this area I will be taking these meetings forward to align myself with on-going issues.
- 6.2 The last full street count carried out by outreach services in Westminster on 28th May showed that 266 people were seen rough sleeping. Of those seen, 77 were UK Nationals. There has been a slight increase in UK & Irish rough

sleepers from 67 to 77 since the last full count in February; as well as numbers rising as we approach summer it is worth noting that the winter night shelters which were open at the time of the previous count have now closed. The numbers of Romanian rough sleepers have increased; they now represent almost one in three of all rough sleepers in Westminster. The trends that see large sections of their cohort return to Romania for seasonal festivals continues; numbers are up 46% from the previous count in February, but down on the peak figure of 155 from March's intel, with Easter following that count.



- 6.3 Sustained disruption and clear messaging that groups of four or more sleeping together on the streets of Westminster will not be tolerated due to associated anti-social behaviour and safety has seen a marked improvement around the tunnels of Park Lane. We found just one individual in the tunnels at the last count. We still have an issue of individuals who are rough sleeping in order to beg in the day time, predominantly from the Roma community in Romania, however, these numbers have dispersed and are found around South Molton Street, Piccadilly and Victoria. The Hotspot Team are dedicated to developing action plans for these sights and remaining firm that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.
- 6.4 Teams remain dedicated to assessing and offering a route away from the streets to everyone that they see, we continue to have success at driving down our 'living on the streets' figures. Our core numbers of UK Nationals entitled to accommodation continues to remain at their lowest it has been in recent years.
- 6.5 In recognition of the increasing community and public concern about the anti-social behaviour and impact from the large groups of foreign national rough sleepers, we will be meeting with our key stakeholder group to discuss and agree a position on how best to address the growing numbers of economic migrants from EEA countries. This message will then be refined and evidenced with demographic data in order to initiate discussions with central

government about the legislative changes which are needed to support the Council to increase effective enforcement action.

## **7. Licensing**

- 7.1 As the new Licensing Chairman I have taken ownership of the Westminster Entertainment Forum. My first task will be to look at how we use the forum to improve our dialogue with the entertainment industry.

## **8. Licensing Consultation**

- 8.1 Westminster's statutory Statement of Licensing policy is due for review and replacement this year. Building on the successful operation of the policy over the previous 5 years, public consultation on 13 proposals to update and improve the policy ended last month. These proposals included specific proposals to clarify our approach to café and delicatessen style operations wishing to sell alcohol within the West End cumulative impact or stress area, assess the impact of proprietary clubs and event venues on cumulative impact, and consider how our policy should respond to the proposal to extend the operation of parts of the Underground network for 24 hours on Friday and Saturday nights from September.
- 8.2 A healthy 25 formal responses to the consultation were received from a variety of sources consisting of 10 Amenity society or resident associations, 5 individual residents, 3 landlords, 3 business associations or BIDs, 2 individual businesses, 1 licensing solicitor, and 1 voluntary sector interest (CAB).
- 8.3 A small working group of relevant members is now being convened to assess the responses to the consultation proposals and draft a revised licensing policy. Subject to discussions with colleagues and advice from officers I will be presenting this draft for approval at Council in November.

## **9 Fixed Odds Betting Terminals**

- 9.1 Officers have been tasked with producing a statement on the Council's position relating to Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT's) in betting shops. This follows the request from the London Borough of Newham to support its submission to the government under the Sustainable Communities Act proposing that the maximum stake for FOBT's be amended from £100 to £2.
- 9.2 The proposal has been made to attempt to reduce the number of betting shops on the high street. However, there are significant concerns relating to the proposed reduction in the maximum stake as there is little evidence to support it would effect a reduction in betting shops and may have the opposite effect by increasing the number of betting shops.
- 9.3 The statement has now been finalised and sets out Westminster's position on FOBT's and the work it has and is continuing to do to ensure that all gambling premises do not harm children and the vulnerable within our

communities. The statement sets out the work and achievements that Westminster has had in its regulatory roll under the Gambling Act 2005 and how it does not support the Sustainable Communities Act proposal to change the maximum stake and sets out its reasoning. Officers recommend that this statement is adopted by the Council.