

City Management and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 12 June 2019

Report Of: Councillor Ian Adams

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Licensing

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1. Improving Neighbourhood Co-Ordination

- 1.1 As mentioned in my last report to the Committee, we have reviewed our approach to neighbourhood management to provide Councillors with a consistent approach to member engagement at a neighbourhood level, supporting them in their role as civic leaders.
- 1.2 As of May 2019, a new neighbourhood meeting structure was implemented across Westminster. The new structure promotes a more collaborative approach to problem solving with our partners, including helping the police tackle the more serious cases at ward level. The new structure gives ward Councillors the opportunity to take part in local problem solving through monthly Neighbourhood Coordination meetings with Council officers and key stakeholders.

Service Improvements

- 1.3 The Council is constantly working to improve the services that we offer. As part of this, a proposal for a digital officer mobile inspection tool has progressed to the stage of inviting in potential suppliers for demonstration events. These will be evaluated before progressing to the next stage. The inspection tool is the first step to ensuring officers can record and action issues in real time on the street, accessing relevant information, cutting down on administrative process and improving our street service across the City.
- 1.4 The Council's noise SMS text service successfully went live on 14th of May. This solution provides customers with the ability to update noise complaints via SMS text messaging, and it is expected to reduce the number of visits required to cases. Initial figures for the first ten days show that the total number of cases that were closed automatically without officer intervention was 45%. We consider these figures an indicator of what might be possible on a long-term basis, and we will be closely monitoring the system. The service also enables a more speedy customer

response and ability for officers to attend, and more effectively investigate, the most serious and complex cases.

- 1.5 E-Notification for both Licensing and Planning applications went live on 28th of January. This allows people to view licensing and planning notifications across multiple devices in any location. Since the go-live date the total volume of on-line Planning and Licensing comments has increased by 31% on the same period last year.
- 1.6 A number of other developments to improve the efficiency of the Council are also in the pipeline. These include the automation of Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) payments.

2. Rough Sleeping

Rough Sleeping Strategy

- 2.1 We have the support available at Westminster Council to make sure every rough sleeper that finds themselves in Westminster has a sustainable route away from the street. However, when offers of support are continually refused our approach is to take more direct action with the aim of getting more people into services and radically reducing the number of rough sleepers choosing to bed down at night, street based anti-social behaviour, organised crime, and drug abuse.
- 2.2 Through our continued approach of delivering collaborative multi-agency working involving accommodation provision, drug and alcohol support services, mental health, police and council enforcement teams, over the next few months we will be increasing our visibility and activity through our neighbourhood co-ordinators and integrated street engagement unit by:
 - Carrying out daily operations targeting hotspot areas (Piazza, Strand, Whitehall, Victoria Street, Park Lane, Edgware Road) supporting people into services and using enforcement powers against the worst repeat offenders of ASB and criminality where they refuse to engage.
 - Continuing to identify and remove tents daily, and carry out fortnightly tent audits.
 - Supporting planned enforcement operations to target organised criminal groups across the city.
 - ISEU officers will be operating with visible branded tabards to help identify officers and the services.
 - Raising awareness of the work the Council does to tackle rough sleeping, by producing locally targeted materials to raise awareness of the campaign and services, and bust myths around rough sleeping.
 - Continuing to engage closely with businesses and residents to highlight how giving money to charities is much more effective than giving directly to those on the streets through our Chat App Tap campaign Numbers on the Street.

Numbers on the Street

- 2.3** The April Intel Count was carried out on the 29th and 30th of April by the Westminster SOS team.
- 2.4** A total of 283 individuals were seen bedded down in Westminster, which is a 6% decrease since the last street count in March.
- 2.5** During the April count the team encountered 129 EEA nationals, 88 UK & Ireland nationals and 8 'Rest of World' nationals. The nationality is not known for 58 individuals seen.
- 2.6** The below graph details where the Rough Sleepers are located within Westminster.

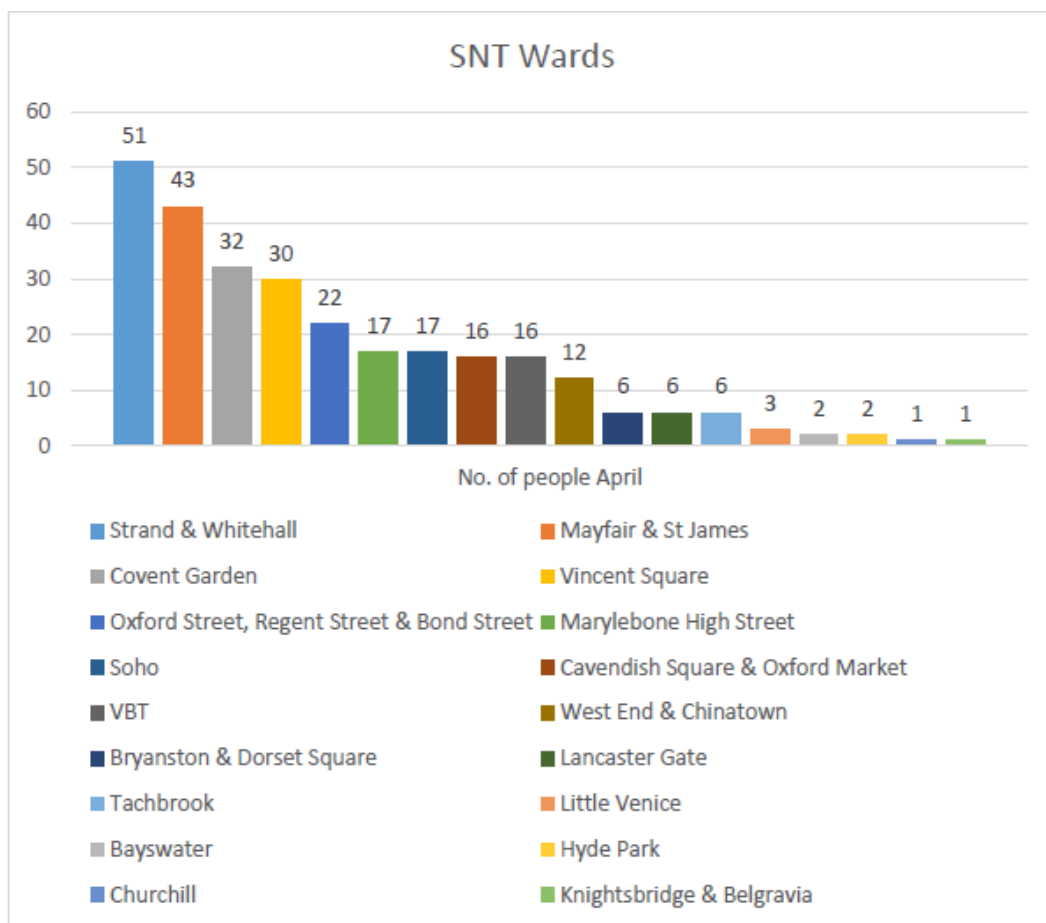


Figure 2- Rough Sleeping by SNT Ward

Soup Runs, Non-Commissioned Charities & Outside Givers

- 2.7** Officers are developing a close working relationship with soup run operators and considerable work has been undertaken to better understand the needs and motivations of soup runs throughout March and April. As a result, officers have met with several groups and attended multiple listening events. Officers' aim has been to better understand what drives soup run operators to deliver their services in the way that they do.

- 2.8** The largest event was held on the evening of the 15th of April at Homeless Link HQ. Many soup run providers and non-commissioned services gathered to discuss why and how they deliver runs, and what Westminster can do to better support and integrate these services into our established pathways.
- 2.9** Engagement will continue throughout the Summer to continue our understanding of how we can work closer with Soup Runs, Non-Commissioned Charities & Outside Givers.

Chat, App, Tap

- 2.10** The Council will soon launch a second phase of this campaign. This second phase will focus on promoting the 'hidden network' of outreach workers and services who work behind the scenes to make a real difference to people's lives and help them off the streets for good.

Cathedral Piazza

- 2.11** The Council continues to engage with residents on the issues raised of rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour in the Westminster Cathedral Piazza. A public meeting to discuss issues was held on 3rd April at Westminster Cathedral Hall. A follow up meeting is due to take place on 2nd July.

Integrated Street Engagement Unit (ISEU)

- 2.12** The Integrated Street Engagement Unit continues to be deployed across the City. In April the team also undertook thirteen operations in hotspot locations with outreach services and police partners, engaging with a total of 88 individuals. Twenty-eight community protection notices were issued to those behaving anti-socially, and eighteen tents were removed from the highway. Additional resources are being provided to the team from June to provide resilience over the busy summer months.

3. Emergency Planning and Business Continuity

- 3.1.** A pan-London project called EP2020 that seeks to standardise the approach taken by all councils in how they respond to emergency and major incidents in the implementation phase. The project is wide ranging and has involved major changes to the way Westminster's Borough Emergency Control Room (BECC) is both resourced and operated.
- 3.2.** Westminster Council is on-track to fully deliver all aspects of the project as per the programme timelines and has engaged in a process of seeking new volunteers from across the Council to support our emergency operations. A significant amount of training has been undertaken and new cadres of both Gold and Silver Command Officers are now operating, meaning that the Council has increased resilience in its ability to lead during times of emergencies.
- 3.3.** The Council has ensured that even though we have complied fully with the requirements of pan-London standardisation, we have not lost the best of what we already do. For example, the Council has a unique approach of training all of our

City Inspectors as Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALOs) who can respond quickly to potential incidents. Our unique approach means that not only can we operate in the same way as every other London Borough and support mutual aid requests across councils, but we also have an improved response with our own local initiatives.

- 3.4.** The implementation of the new processes was tested fully on the 2nd May with the pan-London major incident test, Operation Safer City. All 32 London Boroughs and the City of London were involved in a large-scale test exercise involving a water contamination incident affected large areas of the Borough. The exercise was a complete success locally where our new processes were fully tested and our new staff were able to put their training into good practice. Some good learning points arose which will help us to improve our response even further going forward.

4. Serious Youth Violence Task Group

- 4.1** The Serious Youth Violence Task Group continues to provide the Council's focus on working together across Council departments, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and with partner agencies to adapt to the changing nature of violence in Westminster. The Task Group looks at how we can better understand the drivers behind serious violence in the borough, in order to provide appropriate strategic and tactical responses, as well as empowering our communities to help reduce serious youth violence.

- 4.2** The Task Force has been leading on a number of initiatives including:

- Developing a serious youth violence toolkit for parents and carers in Westminster to equip them with a glossary of facts, practical advice to look for signs of their child's involvement, tips on how to speak to their child and how to seek further help or support within the borough.
- A Task Force meeting focussing on schools and how the partnership can support young people in education and schools in addressing serious youth violence.
- Leading on the Council's Public Health approach to serious youth violence. A workshop was held in November 2018 exploring what a Public Health whole systems approach to serious youth violence could look like in Westminster. The workshop began to collectively capture what we are currently doing that contributes to a Public Health approach and what we could be doing more from a PH perspective to shape an action plan. The full outcome of this workshop has contributed towards the new Public Health Approach that has now been adopted by the Health and Wellbeing Board as a priority for 2019/20.
- The Task Group decided to pilot the proposed Public Health approach and the identified evidence-based interventions in Church Street. A scoping meeting took place in February 2019 with a range of council and community partners to gain support and develop a programme plan. Work is currently ongoing to develop preventative education sessions in primary and secondary schools and sessions with young people during the school summer holidays; training in schools for professionals, as well as linking in opportunities for positive activities and consultation with young people alongside the Church Street Regeneration programme.

- Following a Task Group workshop on Community Engagement, a gap was identified in terms of having a dedicated post to develop engagement with the local community. A Serious Youth Violence Engagement Officer has now been recruited and will begin work at the end of July.
- The next Task Group meeting will look at how we can improve the links between Sports and Leisure and the work of the Serious Youth Violence Taskforce.

5. Westminster Knife Crime Action Plan

- 5.1** The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) published its Anti-Knife Crime Strategy in 2017. The strategy has six key themes:
- Governance
 - Targeting lawbreakers
 - Keeping weapons off our streets
 - Protecting and educating young people
 - Standing with communities, neighbourhoods and families against knife crime
 - Supporting victims of knife crime and offering ways out of crime
- 5.2** The Westminster local knife crime action plan is currently being refreshed and is currently subject to consultation. It will be submitted to the Met Police and Violence Reduction Unit at the end of May. The Westminster Knife Crime Action Plan is overseen by Community Safety and has been updated and agreed within the Youth Crime Prevention Partnership, which sits within the broader Safer Westminster Partnership.
- 5.3** The latest refresh reflects the shift within the IGXU to include exploitation, such as the new GMACE (Gangs Multi-Agency Child Exploitation) meeting which takes place every six weeks and its purpose is to identify, monitor and disrupt high risk gang members and identify young people at risk of exploitation in order to identify the links and to develop common themes in order to provide an adequate partnership response. The plan also reflects the changes in responsibilities following the BCU merger.

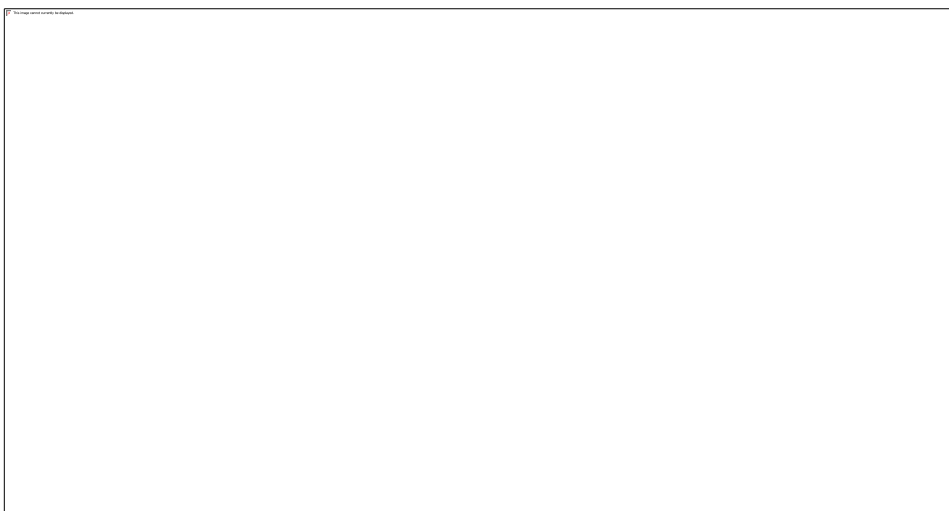
6. Knife Crime

- 6.1** On 27th June, Westminster Council will be joining with the MPS to run Operation Poniard, a day of action to tackle knife crime and to specifically promote social responsibility amongst retail premises selling knives, reducing opportunities to steal knives and reduce the availability of knives to young people.
- 6.2** We have also been updating our joint Knife Crime Action Plan as part of the London Knife Crime Strategy launched in 2017. This document captures activity to combat knife crime across London Boroughs and allows for sharing of good practice to inform local knife crime prevention planning.

7. Basic Command Unit (BCU) Update

- 7.1** Following the tri-borough merger of the Police BCU in February, Westminster Council has kept regular touch with the Met to ensure that Westminster remains safe.
- 7.2** The BCU has launched a Priority Crime Team (PCT) that consists of forty-six Detectives and Uniformed officers working to a Detective Inspector in response to significant increases in robbery offences.
- 7.3** This team will focus on responding to those incidents and will own investigations from reporting through to case disposal. This improved grip by a dedicated team will see an increase in positive outcomes at court thereby reducing the levels of this crime type across the BCU.
- 7.4** Overall, the response time for 999 calls requiring an immediate response has remained stable, showing only a slight decrease since the implementation of the BCU as shown in the graph below.

I Call Performance



8. Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

Building Safety Programme

- 8.1** In response to central government's Building Safety Programme, work is ongoing to inspect and assess buildings with unsafe cladding across the City. Since identification of affected buildings, officers have been closely engaged with relevant parties, including building owners and leaseholders, to bring about assessment of the fire risk presented by buildings and the necessary remediation works. This has included inspections of these buildings and obtaining certain information regarding building construction and fire risk assessment.

- 8.2** Officers are also consulting with key partners including Building Control and London Fire Brigade in specifying necessary remedial works. We are currently working towards ensuring remediation on twelve buildings. One building has been remediated, and another three are nearing completion.
- 8.3** The Council possesses powers under the Housing Act 2004 to enforce remediation of buildings, and consideration is being given to utilisation of enforcement powers dependent on the circumstances of each case.
- 8.4** Officers regularly meet with colleagues from other local authorities, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and London Fire Brigade to monitor the progress of this work and share key information to assist with the remediation of these buildings. A dedicated Joint Inspection Team is being established by MHCLG to assist with the practical inspection, assessment and enforcement on affected buildings which we will work with closely.
- 8.5** On 9th May, the Housing Secretary, James Brokenshire announced that the Government will fund the replacement of ACM cladding with a £200 million fund to remove cladding from unsafe privately-owned buildings.
- 8.6** The recent government announcement of funding to utilise in the remediation of private high-rise buildings is welcomed, and we will ensure that affected buildings within Westminster can avail of the use of this fund and use it to remove cladding as soon as possible. We continue to liaise with the MHCLG on the removal of ACM cladding on buildings in Westminster.

Housing Standards Task Force

- 8.7** The Taskforce has been operating since May 2018, linking closely with the short term lets team, but operating independently. Enforcement action is a priority for this team. Warrants of entry have been executed and Civil Penalty Notices of £44,000 issued. A total of fifty-three enforcement notices have been served for various offences and two successful Housing Act prosecutions completed.
- 8.8** The Taskforce has been involved in analytical work, drawing together databases across the Council to provide the basis for a HMO Licensing Tool. This work is nearing completion and a report is due imminently. A Landlords Forum has been developed, to share best practice and encourage compliance, and two successful meetings have been held.
- 8.9** The team has supported tenants through the 'safer renting' scheme, and was also part of a successful bid to MHCLG for Rogue Landlord funding. The Bid was to provide a joined-up landlord intelligence base across London. This database is now accessible by both Trading Standards and Environmental Health Officers

9. Markets

New Fee for Markets

- 9.1** Revised fees and charges for Westminster's markets came into effect on 1st April, following approval by the Licensing Committee on 28 November 2018.
- 9.2** The Committee approved a tapered rate over a two-year period for the daily charge increasing it to £16 Monday to Thursday, £22 Friday and Saturday, rising to £22 across all days in year 2. 55% of traders had responded favourably to this option in the consultation which allowed traders a one-year transitional period to full charging.

New Application Process

- 9.3** The Licensing Committee also agreed that we would implement a new process for granting permanent licences. Strutton Ground Market will be the first market to undergo the new process, followed by Tachbrook Street Market and then rolled out to the remaining markets. From the 1st of June an advertisement will appear for two months in the trader newsletter, on the Licensing website and by email to all current traders inviting applicants. Applications will then be assessed, and licences granted in August.

Trader Handbook

- 9.4** A new trader handbook has been completed and uploaded to the Council's licensing website. The handbook contains all the information that a trader requires to apply for a street trading licence including the assessment criteria. It also includes local information pertaining to the individual markets within Westminster.

10. Special Events

- 10.1** The Council works hard to help stakeholders deliver successful events across the city every year. My portfolio deals with the environmental health and licensing aspects of events, including food hygiene, health and safety, public safety, licensing, noise.
- 10.2** Throughout Summer 2019, there are several major impact events this year which the team will work closely with including:
- *Taste* (Regent's Park, 19 - 23rd June)
 - *British Summertime at Hyde Park* – a 6-day concert with 65,000 people per event (5th, 6th, 7th, 12th, 13th and 14th July)
 - *Pride* (6th July on the streets of Westminster)
 - *Cricket World Cup at Lords* (23rd, 25th and 29th of June and the 5th and 14th July),
 - *The Fan-zone* (Trafalgar Square, 12th-14th July)
 - *The Opening Party on The Mall* - (29th May)
 - *Somerset House Summer Series* -(11th - 21st July)
 - *Notting Hill Carnival* (25th and 26th August)

- *Last Night of the Proms and the Radio 2 concert at Hyde Park (14th and 15th September)*

10.3 The Council's aim is to help to deliver a safe and successful event that is enjoyed by all those concerned by:

- Promoting **Public Safety**: This includes all members of the public including vulnerable children and adults.
- Ensuring **Food Safety**: Documentation review and inspection of all catering provisions on site.
- Overseeing **Health & Safety** procedures: Risk assessments and method statements reviewed and full site inspection. Assessment of activities such as, inflatables, funfair rides, children's activities, face painting, use of pyrotechnics and special effects, performance of animals, special treatments, etc, are carried out.
- Administering **Licensing** regimes: Check that the event is licensed and in compliance with all conditions attached to a Premises Licence or a Street Trading Licence.
- Managing **Noise** levels: A noise limit may need to be set and/or continuous noise monitoring to ensure compliance with Licence conditions and ensure that the event does not cause a nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Ensure compliance with the The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 for staff and contractors on site.

11. Licensing Venues

Windmill Sexual Entertainment Venue Appeal

11.1 The appeal to Crown Court against the refusal to renew the sexual entertainment venue licence for the Windmill has recently been withdrawn. This means that the provision of Sexual Entertainment must cease immediately. The venue is currently closed and all licensable activities relating to the premises licence has also ceased. Should the premises re-open, the licence holder of the premises licence understands that no sexual entertainment can be offered until, if it is their intention, a new Sexual Entertainment Venue is obtained.

11.2 We continue to seek our costs in relation to this case. Clear breaches of licence conditions were proven in this case, and we have made it clear to the industry that compliance and protection of both customers and workers is our absolute priority.

12. Hate Crime Commission

12.1 The important job of establishing and supporting the work of Hate Crime Commission was advertised nationally last year. After an open and fair competition, an appointment was made earlier this year and the post-holder started in March.

12.2 The lead officer's role is currently focused on identifying suitable candidates for the role of Commission Chair and Commissioners more widely. To ensure we are

considering the best people for the role, I have written to Cabinet colleagues for their views on suitable candidates.

12.3 We expect to be able to announce the Commission and its terms of reference in the coming weeks.