



# City of Westminster

## Communities & Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release / Confidential
<b>Title:</b>	Portfolio Update
<b>Report of:</b>	Cllr Iain Bott
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Councillor Iain Bott, Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture and Community
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
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## 1 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, LEISURE AND SPORT (PALS)

### ActiveWestminster Awards

- 1.1 The 2019 ActiveWestminster Awards marked the tenth-year anniversary of this event, which was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019 at our grand, now Grade II\* listed Porchester Hall, which also celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday having originally opened in 1929. In previous years the ceremony has been held at Lords Cricket Ground.
- 1.2 The ActiveWestminster awards is the biggest awards ceremony that the council organises and demonstrates the hard work and dedication of all the nominees and how their work is appreciated by the City Council, local residents and communities.
- 1.3 This year saw the highest number of nominations for awards to date. Over 275 nominations were received, but more importantly 122 of these being unique; demonstrating the depth and breadth of the nominations, ranging from residents, local clubs and schools through to ActiveWestminster partners and Westminster-based athletes.
- 1.4 All the 31 finalists have been recognised for the vital role they play in using physical activity, leisure and sport to encourage Westminster residents to get and stay active.
- 1.5 The awards were sponsored by our leisure contractor Everyone Active and partners EcoWorld international. They were hosted by Sky Sports presenter, David

Garrido with special guests former England footballer, Rachel Yankey OBE and Team GB basketball player, Melita Emanuel-Carr who is also a local resident and previous award winner.

- 1.6 The ceremony was attended by c.320 guests, an increase of previous years of c.180-200 guests and featured several performances from local artists the Mangrove Steel Pan band, the Blend Choir, Bollywood dancing from Step Change Studios, freestyle footballer Aguska Mnich and our very own ActiveWestminster team member and singer, Yiannis Chrysanthou.
- 1.7 Winners on the evening were handed their trophies by the Lord Mayor Cllr Ruth Bush. The full list of winners are featured on the council website.

### **ActiveWestminster Strategy**

- 1.8 Our ActiveWestminster strategy 2018-2022 sets out high quality streets, parks and spaces that can and should encourage, facilitate and enable physical activity. These spaces should be flexible and support a range of physical activity, leisure and sport. Through this strategy, we want to focus our attention towards less traditional spaces.
- 1.9 We recognise that everyone's needs, and attitudes are different, and people look for different things from physical activity. The ActiveWestminster strategy encourages people to be physically active where, when and how they choose.
- 1.10 We want to work collaboratively to encourage innovation and will continue to actively promote the fundamental contribution that physical activity, leisure and sport makes to individual physical and mental wellbeing, as well as the additional positive impacts it has upon our economy, community and development of our City.
- 1.11 We are educating front-line staff about the benefits of physical activity, helping them to support our residents to create communities through attractive, supportive and healthier environments, that enable being active by default.
- 1.12 Through our new approach we are aiming to strengthen a culture of physical activity, leisure and sport – including play across our city, our lives and in our neighbourhoods.

### **OpenActive (ActiveWestminster Digital programme)**

- 1.13 Our ActiveWestminster Strategy 2018-2022 sets out our commitment to maximising digital technology to promote timely and relevant physical activity, leisure and sport.
- 1.14 We will continue with the OpenActive initiative to encourage sports organisations to open their data. This will allow us to promote opportunities and activities through public activity finders and our digital platforms.
- 1.15 As a local authority, we felt we should not only be supporting the OpenActive initiative, but purposefully implementing it. We are proud to be an early-adopter of

OpenActive, harnessing open data online to encourage more people to take up physical activity. Both our ActiveWestminster website and app were launched in Beta versions in March 2018.

- 1.16** Officers are already engaged in several actions to take further drive forwards the implementation of OpenActive via our websites and app, working alongside colleagues in other service areas such as IT, Policy, Performance and Communications and Children's Services.
- 1.17** Due to the advanced development of the OpenActive standard, we are also working with our leisure contractor, Everyone Active, to implement the recommended OpenActive standard requirements to ensure continued engagement and longevity for the life-span and beyond our current leisure contract.
- 1.18** We will also look to implement the recommended OpenActive standard requirements for delivering OpenActive as part of our Community Use Agreements (CUA's). The use of a CUA secures well-managed and safe community access to sports facilities. They provide certainty and clarity about the intentions concerning community access and cover such matters as hours of availability, management arrangements, pricing policy etc. We also usually make a CUA a planning condition for sports facilities. This implementation would influence existing CUA site's and ensure that any new CUA sites such would include OpenActive by default.

### **'No Ball Games' & The City Plan**

- 1.19** As part of our ambitious ActiveWestminster strategy, we are making progress with our work removing prohibitive signage. Removing restrictive signage and bylaws such as 'No Ball Games' will allow for more supportive and permissive environments for physical activity wherever possible and appropriate.
- 1.20** Additionally, through our new City Plan 2040, we will look to ensure that planning guidance and principles, build in physical activity and becomes the preferred choice; particularly for our children, young people and families
- 1.21** Officers are already engaged in several actions to take the 'No Ball Games' policy forward, working alongside colleagues from other service areas, such as Parks and Open Spaces, Housing, Public Health and Children's Services.
- 1.22** The Council believes that participation in physical activity, leisure and sport can be truly transformative, inclusive and inherently positive. We are making great progress in turning that belief into something tangible.
- 1.23** Through our new approach we are aiming to strengthen a culture of physical activity, leisure and sport – including play across our city, our lives and in our neighbourhoods. We will do this by;
  - Removing current restrictive signage and byelaws such as 'No Ball Games' and 'No Cycling' etc. to create a more permissive and supportive environment for physical activity, leisure and sport – including play

- Ask our residents and communities to inform us where we currently have restrictive signage and byelaws such as 'No Ball Games' and 'No Cycling' etc, so that we can log and remove these
- No longer implement restrictive signage and byelaws such as 'No Ball Games' and 'No Cycling' etc.
- Educating front line staff about the benefits of physical activity, leisure and sport – including play, helping them to support our residents to create communities through attractive, supportive and healthier environments that enables being active by default
- Encourage our Registered Social Landlord (RSL's) to adopt our policy

**1.24** Additionally, through our draft new [City Plan 2040](#) being taken forward by the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning, we are developing a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), Built Facilities Strategy (BFS) and finalising the Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP), which will also highlight the work on the 'No Ball Games' policy

### ActiveStreets

**1.25** The Council's ActiveStreets programme is a key commitment of the Council's Active Westminster Strategy, as well as being part of our Biodiversity and Open Spaces Strategy. The programme consists of 3 types of Active Street:

- **Play Streets:** a permanent designated street which provides priority over traffic to children and families to play in streets at specified times. This is underpinned by Department for Transport legislation (Section 29, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984).
- **Street Play:** facilitated by temporary road closures (Section 16a, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) for children and families to play in streets at specified days, times and locations. Officers are developing a policy that makes the process of applying for 'Street Play' as simple and as affordable (ideally, free) as possible.
- **School streets:** provided either via permanent or temporary road closures for school children to play in the streets outside the school at specified days and times.

**1.26** ActiveStreets create a more permissive and supportive environment for children, young people and families to enjoy being outside and getting active. This programme provides easier access to physical activity, play and sport opportunities, encouraging our neighbourhoods to not only keep active, but encourage communities to come together and get to know their neighbours.

**1.27** Both 'School Street' and 'Play Street' involved working closely with schools, colleagues, developers and local residents, contributing to the success of the

project and changing many lives for the better, creating the City for All vision of 'Healthier and Greener City.'

**1.28** This programme will also contribute to the Council's commitment to improving air quality in local environments, by encouraging residents to take up more active travel.

**1.29** Through our new City Plan, we will look to ensure that planning guidance and principles build in physical activity and become the preferred choice for our children, young people and families.

**1.30** On the 23rd August 2019 we formally launched our overall ActiveStreets programme at our 'Play Street' at Fisherton/Luton Street (which coincided with DfT publishing their updated guidance on 'Street Play'). Our launch included;

- The signing of the Car Free Day Pledge by the Lord Mayor of Westminster & Cllr Tim Mitchell, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management.
- Following the launch, we actively encouraged local organisations and residents to apply to hold 'Street Play' sessions/activities for Car Free Day on 22 Sept, an initiative backed by the Mayor of London and London Play.
- Residents made applications for Car Free Day - 'Street Play' sessions/activities at;
  - Droop Street (1)
  - Radnor Mews (9)

However, these sessions/activities did not proceed as the applicants advised that they had insufficient the 'StreetMakers' (stewards/parents/volunteers).

- Additional, Car Free Day events were held at;
  - Regent Street
  - Connaught Street
- Activities were also held at our permanent 'Play Street' at Luton/Fisherton Street
- These events were publicised by the Mayor of London, TfL & Car Free Day

**1.31** Following Car Free Day 2019;

- Working out the environmental impact of a Car Free Day is difficult because air pollution is influenced by the weather as well as by emissions. However, a temporary air-quality monitoring site in Regent Street measured a decrease of 60% compared with the day before.
- We are working towards the opening for general applications for 'Street Play' sessions in the coming weeks, subject to formal adoption of our draft 'Street Play' policy by Spring 2020, which will enable and facilitate

residents/community organisations to apply all-year round to hold 'Street Play' sessions/activities.

- We have an emerging strategic partnership developing with London Marathon Events / London Marathon Charitable Trust, which includes further support to our overall ActiveStreets Programme.

### **Dance Westminster**

- 1.32** Dance Westminster is an opportunity to promote active lives among young adults with disabilities and for Westminster to champion a creative, positive initiative that supports participation and inclusion through physical activity. The proposal is designed to allow for Dance Westminster to become an annual event and provides an option for creating tools that will enable carers/ teachers to support people to be active through dance and movement.
- 1.33** This brand-new programme of activity ran for 6-7 weeks, having started in December 2019 and will conclude with a celebratory Gala Final in January. Across the workshop and audition days, the aim was to identify 10 promising dancers who will receive 6 weeks of training to prepare them for the final gala.
- 1.34** It is hoped that c.100 participants in total will attend from across the ActiveWestminster North, Central and South networks of the Borough.
- 1.35** The programme started with three fun, general active dance workshops, with options for both seated and standing participants. Following these workshops, participants were then invited to perform a learned routine in front of a panel and an audience of family and friends.
- 1.36** Our first workshop had 17 participants ranging from 16 – 79 and was attended by BBC's Strictly Come Dancing, spin-off show 'It Takes Two' and this year's Strictly contestant and Paralympian Will Bayley. This indent was shown on BBC Two on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019. Will has also offered to be a judge at the final gala in January.
- 1.37** The year's final gala is due to take place on 23 January 2020 at Porchester Hall.
- 1.38** As part of the Dance Westminster legacy, PALS will also be setting up a new disability dance programme at an Everyone Active centre in each of the three networks for all participants who did not get selected for the final.
- 1.39** Officers have spoken to Para Dance UK to see if they would like to collaborate. They have offered to help with the legacy programmes that we plan to run across the three networks.

### **Sport for Confidence (SfC)**

- 1.40** Sport for Confidence has been operating specifically at Moberly so far for the last six months and has recently expanded to Seymour Leisure Centre. The programme supports people who face barriers to participation to get involved in a

variety of sporting activities in mainstream settings. SfC places Occupational therapists and Sports Coaches alongside each other to ensure truly inclusive sport and leisure opportunities.

- 1.41** Residents have been able to access a variety of weekly sessions across two days at Moberly Leisure Centre and now a third day at the Seymour Leisure Centre. Within 9 months in the borough, we hope to expand SfC in the south of the borough, at Queen Mother Sports Centre.
- 1.42** The service has also provided numerous tasters and regular engagements with several other services, such as Mencap, OneWestminster and Carer's Network. Working closely with PALS and Everyone Active they have promoted their inclusive approach to various networks and groups.

### Current membership and usage statistics for Leisure Centres

- 1.43** The tables below show current membership and usage statistics\* for the Leisure Centres (statistics provided by the leisure contractor, Everyone Active);

Leisure contract year 3 (July 18 - Jun 19);

Memberships														
Contract Yr 3	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Net Gain	% Gain
Little Venice	886	867	867	956	1,008	986	1,033	1,065	1,019	1,070	1,125	1,158	272	31%
Marshall St	2,921	3,011	2,808	2,799	2,999	3,036	3,037	3,042	3,273	3,023	3,298	3,296	375	13%
Moberly	2,492	2,713	3,126	3,374	3,202	3,496	3,887	4,040	4,181	4,443	4,463	4,405	1,913	77%
Paddington Rec	1,402	1,392	1,383	1,455	1,465	1,405	1,513	1,545	1,567	1,543	1,550	1,577	175	12%
Porchester	3,240	3,233	3,198	3,198	3,196	3,058	3,223	3,293	3,193	3,291	3,257	3,216	-24	-1%
Queen Mother	3,679	3,558	3,710	3,764	3,746	3,533	3,634	3,936	4,155	4,183	3,679	3,880	201	5%
Seymour	2,499	2,543	2,616	2,695	2,720	2,683	2,809	2,860	2,793	2,950	2,902	2,855	356	14%
Total CY3	17,119	17,317	17,708	18,241	18,336	18,197	19,136	19,781	20,181	20,503	20,274	20,387	3,268	19%
Total CY2	14,689	14,519	14,958	15,067	15,591	15,115	16,300	16,770	16,478	15,791	16,085	16,011	1,322	9%

  

Usage													
	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total
Contract Yr 1	183,418	175,081	190,726	192,164	183,802	143,308	209,404	219,443	224,040	219,976	220,429	221,558	2,383,349
Contract Yr 2	204,637	173,888	221,403	222,565	228,968	177,842	234,557	218,363	222,730	223,717	222,632	215,982	2,567,284
Contract Yr 3	215,430	199,025	237,102	238,969	245,216	182,874	259,047	263,097	257,674	244,932	248,462	255,381	2,847,209

  

Contract Year 3													
	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total
Marshall Street	19,450	19,189	22,732	22,824	22,975	11,674	23,610	22,366	22,274	21,673	21,912	22,227	252,906
Pad Rec - Site Aq	26,435	18,225	26,540	26,528	26,626	23,384	22,254	22,099	22,310	22,460	22,651	27,240	286,752
Pad Rec People	109,447	92,168	108,852	100,612	80,420	60,430	74,096	75,987	114,687	141,411	161,608	163,528	1,283,243
St Augustines	1,732	1,729	1,639	1,753	1,698	1,584	1,610	1,794	1,761	1,797	1,796	1,837	20,730
Porchester	37,686	37,494	46,722	43,204	45,605	38,194	46,592	48,523	50,418	44,642	45,171	45,754	530,005
Queen Mother	51,034	49,819	51,552	51,508	53,435	30,357	59,446	61,275	56,690	55,303	54,312	56,635	631,366
Seymour	33,679	26,692	34,570	35,245	35,349	26,404	34,313	37,652	40,119	37,033	39,249	37,551	417,856
Little Venice	12,536	10,304	12,096	12,918	13,334	9,068	13,010	13,172	13,568	12,271	12,424	12,477	147,178
Moberly	32,878	35,573	41,251	44,989	46,194	42,209	58,212	56,216	50,534	49,753	50,947	51,660	560,416
Total Y3	324,877	291,193	345,954	339,581	325,636	243,304	333,143	339,084	372,361	386,343	410,070	418,909	4,130,451

Leisure contract year 4 (July 19 - to date);

Memberships													
Contract Yr 4	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
Little Venice	1,175	1,222	1,286	1,275	1,308								
Marshall St	3,523	3,223	3,393	3,482	3,476								
Moberly	4,492	4,484	4,634	4,691	4,706								
Paddington Rec	1,605	1,609	1,686	1,777	1,755								
Porchester	3,299	3,315	3,382	3,458	3,490								
Queen Mother	3,890	3,887	3,942	3,802	4,108								
Seymour	2,908	2,915	3,049	3,109	3,259								
Total CY4	20,892	20,655	21,372	21,594	22,102	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total CY3	17,119	17,317	17,708	18,241	18,336	18,197	19,136	19,781	20,181	20,503	20,274	20,387	

  

Usage													
	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total
Contract Yr 1	183,418	175,081	190,726	192,164	183,802	143,308	209,404	219,443	224,040	219,976	220,429	221,558	2,383,349
Contract Yr 2	204,637	173,888	221,403	222,565	228,968	177,842	234,557	218,363	222,730	223,717	222,632	215,982	2,567,284
Contract Yr 3	215,430	199,025	237,102	238,969	245,216	182,874	259,047	263,097	257,674	244,932	248,462	255,381	2,847,209
Contract Yr 4	406,919	355,208	393,235	377,767	257,146								1,213,381

  

Contract Year 4													
	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total
Marshall Street	19,921	20,789	23,259	23,888	23,167								111,024
Pad Rec - Site Ad	27,840	23,594	29,208	30,020	29,685								140,347
Pad Rec - People	161,877	137,165	149,983	127,529	TBC								576,553
St Augustines	1,716	1,662	1,467	1,611	1,887								8,343
Porchester	42,101	34,239	35,529	38,042	42,434								192,345
Queen Mother	57,659	50,023	53,408	54,512	58,410								274,012
Seymour	36,737	30,538	37,559	38,894	38,325								182,053
Little Venice	11,848	9,622	11,632	11,981	12,339								57,422
Moberly	47,220	47,576	51,190	51,290	50,899								248,175
Total Y4	406,919	355,208	393,235	377,767	257,146	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,790,274

\*Statistics are revised on a monthly and quarterly basis to ensure accuracy.

## 2 MAJOR PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

### Porchester Centre, Spa and Hall

- 2.1 A listed building consent application for works to Porchester Centre's large/main swimming pool was submitted in September with a decision due shortly.
- 2.2 The new Porchester Spa had an initial re-opening ceremony on 28th November 2019 with public access available from the following day, following an extensive modernisation programme costing in the region of c.£800k.
- 2.3 A lot of very positive feedback regarding the high quality of this refurbishment has been received by the local community and customers.

### Seymour Leisure Centre

- 2.4 Council Officers have reviewed several options to scope how best to remodel/refurbish this leisure centre, which will actively facilitate creating space for the new Marylebone library.
- 2.5 The proposals suggesting the raising of the current sports hall to first floor level to allow the original large/main swimming pool area to be brought back into use are currently being discussed and awaiting confirmation. This approach will bring back an original use and create a larger and significantly better swimming provision than

the existing swimming pool which is now past its design life and has a constrained size.

- 2.6 A stakeholder meeting was held on the 26th November with several local groups including the Marylebone Association, St. Marylebone Society and the Marylebone Forum to discuss the best approach to remodelling/refurbishing and modernising Seymour Leisure Centre. Initial plans were presented and received very positive feedback in fully supporting a significant change going forward.
- 2.7 The concept design is currently being amended with further detail to take account of heritage aspects of this Grade II listed building. Proposals will look to protect important heritage aspects of this Grade II listed building as much as possible. This was scheduled for a presentation to the Director of Placeshaping and Town Planning in December.
- 2.8 Sport England have reviewed and provided positive feedback on these plans. In doing, they are supportive of this co-location opportunity and have provided initial design and cost plan advice.
- 2.9 The business case to support this refurbishment investment is being procured with the strategic outcomes being available before Christmas. Alongside this, Sport England are currently identifying the wider leisure benefits of this proposed refurbishment through their own planning modelling process. These findings will be integrated into the business case strategic outcomes, as well as the emerging Built Facilities Strategy (BFS) that is being developed at part of our City Plan 2040.

### **Jubilee Sports Centre**

- 2.10 Phase 2 of the scheme will create a Community Sports Centre and 56 private residential homes. WHIL (Westminster Housing Investment Limited) have had an offer accepted to acquire 19 of these homes. The future use will be at the Council's discretion, but the intention is for these 19 homes be let on a range of rents based on Westminster's intermediate rent bands.
- 2.11 Considerable progress to enable a start on site is being made in negotiations with the Council's development partner, EcoWorld. Heads of Terms to pursue Phase 2 is being recommended for a Cabinet Member decision was signed in December.
- 2.12 Legal documentation to permit the commencement of Phase 2 is being concluded in December to allow a forecasted start to demolition works by February at the latest.

### **Paddington Recreation Ground (PRG)**

- 2.13 Excellent progress has been made at PRG using a combination of capital budget and CIL funding worth c.£1.5m over 3 years. This includes delivering a new community suite, three new sports pitches, a callisthenics area, parkour equipment, sprint track, efficient LED lighting as well as a landscaping and environment area.

**2.14** Officers are also working with Highways and the Road Safety Team on a cyclopark proposals. As part of this wider project, there is a review of the Paddington Recreation Ground Management Plan being undertaken.

**2.15** The Community Suite at Paddington Recreation Ground has reached practical completion. The new community suite is now open and allows PRG to offer a range of group exercise classes, including group cycling, as well as soft play and community activities.

**2.16** A detailed planning application for several new facilities including a MUGA for hockey and football training, a sprint track, a parkour area, a callisthenics area and associated LED lighting was validated in November 2019. A planning decision is due in January 2020 with works set to commence in Spring 2020.

### **Lisson Green Pitch**

**2.17** The current pitch on the Lisson Green estate is reaching the end of its design life and needs an upgrade. PALS are managing the project on behalf of Westminster Housing services to offer best practice and subject matter expertise. The new pitch investment is a partnership between the Council and the London Marathon Trust, with both parties sharing the cost. A local sports club have a long-term interest in this pitch and would like to be part of the future management of the facility via a Community Use Agreement (CUA).

**2.18** Our consultants submitted a detailed planning application in November with resident consultation to date signifying strong support for the changes proposed. A planning decision is due in January with works set to commence in Spring 2020.

### **Wilberforce School Pitch**

**2.19** After a period of detailed public engagement and an adjustment to the location of the MUGA, a detailed planning application has been submitted in November. A planning decision is due in January with works due to commence in Spring 2020.

**2.20** As several other works are happening at the Wilberforce School such as the refurbishment of the original school and the construction of a new St Marylebone Bridge Special School, a series of quarterly stakeholder meetings are held to co-ordinate activities, timescales and agreed parameters.

**2.21** To ensure community access to the new facility, a Community Use Agreement (CUA) will be implemented.

### **Outdoor Adventurous Learning Centre - Sayers Croft**

**2.22** Sayers Croft team are in the process of recruiting three new Outdoor Activity Instructor Apprenticeship roles at Sayers Croft. This Apprenticeship is new, and employer led, designed by the outdoor industry to provide a nationally recognised qualification to trainee Instructors. The first set of three have initially been ringfenced for Westminster residents as we are keen for our visiting schools to have good role models from within their own neighbourhoods. As we continue to

recruit another 5 in the summer, again we will focus our advertising to catch applications from Westminster residents.

## **3 VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS)**

### **Westminster Advice Service Partnership (WASP)**

- 3.1** The latest monitoring report submitted for Year 1, Q4 (July-September 2019) shows that the contract continues to progress well, with most areas exceeding their set targets.
- 3.2** During this quarter the contract dealt with 4708 enquiries – with the three main enquiry areas being Benefits 49%, Housing 13% and Debt 10%. As a result, the contractor supported residents to access £970,563.00 in eligible benefits either in claiming new benefits/adjusting the benefits due or supporting residents in appeals.

### **Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Contracts**

- 3.3** A review is underway to review the existing Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) contracts, and the investment the council makes in the sector and the support it provides to it. Included in the review is a series of 6 workshops involving colleagues across the sector. The review will support the development of a strategic framework for guiding future procurement and commissioning decisions with the VCS in line with the Council's City for All strategy.

## **4 CULTURE**

### **Cultural Strategy**

- 4.1** The Council's draft Cultural Strategy will go out to formal consultation for 8 weeks from 27 January. The strategy outlines the council's commitment to supporting culture across service delivery and provides a basis for which to advocate for the council's role as a broker and facilitator to enable more Westminster residents to benefit from the cultural opportunities on their doorstep.
- 4.2** The new Cultural Strategy provides a framework for the council to:
  - **Increase access to culture for all**, with a specific focus on reaching residents that encounter physical, social and economic barriers. We will work with local arts partners to increase and promote accessible cultural offers for Westminster residents, as well as seeking ways to promote self-initiated arts participation activities in libraries and other community venues.
  - **Develop health and wellbeing programmes including Out and About** (free arts event tickets for the over-65s) through collaboration with more local cultural partners and deepening relationships with council services (e.g. Families, Public Health, Adult Social Care) and local NHS link workers.

- **Nurture communities through social impact programmes** that harness the power of culture to change lives and build social cohesion. We will work with partners and lever the potential of MyWestminster and other council community funds.
- **Establish a Local Cultural Education Partnership** to increase connections between education providers, cultural institutions and creative employers to maximise existing initiatives such as City Lions and industry weeks. This would increase cultural capital and skills opportunities for young people and improve access to lifelong learning for all.
- **Increase civic engagement by supporting creative placemaking.** We will ensure cultural infrastructure, creative workspaces and resident programmes are integral to planning and regeneration schemes. The quality and impact of City of Sculpture and Green Plaques will improve through collaboration with community and arts partners.

- 4.3** Engagement activities are planned for informally consulting with residents and cultural and creative sector stakeholders to test out the Cultural Strategy priorities and develop an action plan for cultural delivery in Westminster that will be published as part of the Cultural Strategy 2020-24 in late Spring 2020. This will seek to deliver the ‘thriving communities’ ambitions of the new City for All vision.
- 4.4** A community/cultural/BIDS stakeholder engagement event will be held at The Photographer’s Gallery in February which will involve action planning breakout groups (25<sup>th</sup> February). Brett Rogers, TPG Director, will also present there about the new Photographer Quarter public space development off Oxford Street, supported by the Council. Residents will be invited to engage in the online consultation through Citysave website, the Westminster Way e-newsletter, Facebook, social media and library posters/leaflets. In addition, a Cultural Strategy market stall will be held at the 13<sup>th</sup> Feb Open Forum event to gather feedback and suggestions from residents. A joint discussion forum will take place with City Lions and Youth Council members during the consultation phase.

### Cities of Learning

- 4.5** The council will be submitting a Cities of Learning bid on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to receive support from the Royal Society of Arts, employers and creative organisations to improve career pathways for 14-24 year olds and lifelong learners through place-based digital badges. This new system would help address persistent access barriers and skills gaps across Westminster. This process will support the council’s work towards Local Cultural Learning Partnership status, which would enable us to take a systemic approach to creating high-quality learning opportunities for young people within Westminster, linking informal and formal provision.

### Cultural Events

- 4.6** Following Westminster Council hosting an event on 12 July as part of the Arts Award Network cluster for North Central London (Camden, Islington, Haringey,

Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea), two larger cultural education events will be held in Westminster locations during Spring 2020. The events are being led by and supported by A New Direction, the organisation funded by the Arts Council to support young people's creativity in London. 'Culture in the Curriculum' will be held at Royal Opera House on 11 February 2020 to explore strategies for enhancing the cultural offer for pupils across the school curriculum. On 28 April, 'Exploring Culture & Community', at the Donmar Warehouse Rehearsal Space will be exploring how young people are benefitting from accessing cultural activities and experiences at a local community level. The events are aimed at local schoolteachers, community, youth and arts organisations.

- 4.7** Since June 2019 the new Community Gallery at Westminster City Hall has made the WCC art and archives collections more accessible to residents and visitors and provide a platform for the council to communicate Westminster Way values relating to diversity and inclusion. The West End Theatre exhibition received 420 visitors during London Open House and several community partners attended the launch of the BAME staff network Black History Month exhibition, which was profiled by BBC London and West End Xtra. The next exhibition will be focused on the history of PRIDE in London as part of the staff network celebration of LGBT+ month.
- 4.8** The Cultural Policy & Projects Officer is working with Business & Enterprise on a breakfast event with WCC Business Unit and UK Screen Alliance to promote best practice and generate more local creative apprenticeships during National Apprenticeships Week on 4 February 2020. Society of London Theatre, Creative and Cultural Skills, Creative Industries Federation and UK Screen Alliance will be participating, and the audience will be creative businesses and cultural institutions.

## **5 CITY LIONS**

- 5.1** City lions is part way through year two of a two project targeting disadvantaged young people aged 13-16. Aiming to enrich young people's lives by encouraging participation in cultural and creative opportunities. City Lions is helping young people discover and celebrate their own culture and creativity and make the best of what Westminster has to offer.
- 5.2** After year one's success of engaging over 800 young people in activities and programmes, we have engaged another 135 young people in a range of activities and programmes, the target is to reach 750 young people in year two.
- 5.3** We have been exploring the options for City Lions to go on work experience placements across the Council. Council departments such as Policy, Performance and Communications (PPC), Physical Activity, Leisure and Sport (PALS) and the Registry Service have offered work placements so far.
- 5.4** PALS have been delivering a long-standing and well utilised offer relating to work experience as an integrated and strategic looking approach to work experience that can be replicated across Westminster, which will be looked into in the new year.

## **6 LIBRARIES**

### **Connecting Libraries**

- 6.1** Since Connecting Libraries (the independent advisory board's report) was published in April 2019, officers have been developing a communications plan and starting the engagement process. This will look objectively at what the board recommends, in partnership with residents, library users and stakeholders, and develop a comprehensive response that is about adopting the recommendations wherever feasible, practical or appropriate. Engagement with Members and library staff through workshop sessions on the report's recommendations has already started.
- 6.2** The next steps will be a series of workshops and discussions with colleagues across the council, which have now started. The key focus is the "libraries deliver" element of the report which highlights what libraries can contribute to City for All and corporate priorities. Libraries can help cut costs, connect with residents and help combat social isolation. An external stakeholder engagement workshop is scheduled for January.
- 6.3** These sessions will feed in to a libraries strategy, which when published will form the basis of wider engagement with residents and library users.

### **Marylebone Library and Seymour Leisure Centre**

- 6.4** Proposals for the integration of Marylebone library with a refurbished Seymour Centre are detailed in section 2 of this report. The collocation of library and leisure will provide an opportunity to work in a cross-cutting way to deliver multiple benefits to the community, by providing a combined enhanced health and wellbeing offer focusing on widening participation in activity.
- 6.5** Discussions continue with colleagues in the Physical Activity and Leisure team and with the leisure contractor to develop a wellness approach. The enhanced offer will include a range of services to support physical, emotional, social and mental wellbeing sports and fitness activities, health information and resources, cultural events and activities, signposting, social prescribing and volunteering opportunities to help connect people.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

- 6.6** Libraries have implemented a core health offer, supported by Public Health, to address health inequalities across our communities by providing a range of opportunities for people to make healthy lifestyle choices. This will be achieved through the provision of reliable, evidenced health information and resources in appropriate formats, access to free health services, health and wellbeing events and activities, and support from knowledgeable, informed staff.
- 6.7** As part of Libraries' core health offer, information resources support our communities so that they can better understand and be more involved in their own

health care, simplify their access to health information, and be better equipped to make decisions and choices that help them optimise their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

**6.8 All libraries will:**

- Promote Reading Well: reliably sourced and researched book lists for health and mental wellbeing produced by The Reading Agency, a national charity which supports reading development. This includes providing Reading Well collections in book and ebook formats through targeted displays to help inform customers, community and support group
- Provide hard copy and digital information on healthy lifestyle choices for adults in line with NHS Live Well priorities
- Promote health and wellbeing books and information that support the government's Prevention Agenda (to keep people living healthy, independent lives free from illness or disability)
- Provide at least one designated iPad linking directly to the NHS website as the preferred point of access for reliable, evidenced digital health information and services, and to the Council's healthy lifestyle provider services
- Provide a designated health and wellbeing area in every library for Reading Well collections, themed health displays, hosting stalls with health and wellbeing partner organisations, and digital health equipment

### **Summer Reading Challenge**

**6.9** The Summer Reading Challenge (SRC), now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, is a national annual initiative organised by The Reading Agency, part-funded by Arts Council England, and delivered by libraries. It encourages children to visit their local library and read during the summer holiday, which stops children's reading levels dipping during the break. Children are challenged to read at least six books for which they get a certificate and medals. Libraries also run linked events to encourage children to visit the library and participate in the challenge. This year's challenge "Space Chase" was themed on space and aliens.

**6.10** The SRC is popular, with over 1600 children signing up, participating and attending events throughout the summer although the number participating in 2019 decreased slightly by 2.5% on last year's figure of 1647. However, Maida Vale and Church Street libraries both increased the number of children joining the challenge, up by 69 and 44 respectively. Officers reported that getting access to primary school assemblies which is the most effective marketing for the SRC is becoming more challenging and are looking into mitigating actions to ensure children and their parents are made more aware of the initiative before next year's challenge.

- 6.11** The completion figures were also down on last year's, with a 6% drop from 753 in 2018 to 709 this year. Some libraries increased the number of children reading at least six books with Maida Vale up from 100 to 115, Paddington from 74 to 81 and Victoria library from 35 to 47. 80% of the children at Victoria that joined went on to complete the challenge, compared to the average ratio of 44%.
- 6.12** Actions have already been identified by library officers to raise awareness of the challenge within schools, via social media and when children and their parents/carers visit the library both before and during the summer and these will be implemented before next year's challenge.
- 6.13** The competition from other activities is squeezing the time available for children to participate. The competition includes other events and activities occurring locally as well as what occupies children at home, such as computer games and social media.
- 6.14** The events programme supporting the SRC is increasing in popularity and will be maintained and developed. Library officers are working with partners to increase the number and range of activities provided for free or at a low cost.
- 6.15** Library officers will also be working with The Reading Agency to develop the SRC, which is being reviewed nationally in any case, so it adapts to meet the local needs of children and families in Westminster.

### **Co-working Spaces**

- 6.16** The workspace pilot offering affordable workspace for creative businesses such as art, fashion, design film and media start-up businesses at a cost of £200 per month on the mezzanine level at Westminster Reference library continues. The offer has been adapted to include desk rental by the day, to test the best usage model for the space. Current fixed desk usage is taken up by two users. A feasibility exercise has started to look at other opportunities across library sites.

### **EU Settlement Scheme**

- 6.17** Support to EU nationals through the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) service continues by offering ID and document scanning verification at Victoria, Charing Cross and Paddington libraries. The service has completed 1,548 appointments for residents and non-residents between June and November 2019.

## **7 REGISTRATION SERVICE**

- 7.1** The Registration Service is responsible for the registration of all births, deaths, stillbirths and civil marriages and partnerships that take place with the boundaries of Westminster, as well as conferring British Citizenship on successful naturalisation applicants. The service issues certificates from and has legal custody of the registers containing these life events since the start of civil registration in 1837.

- 7.2** Each local authority is required by law to register the life events that occur within their district, and each Registration Service is overseen by the General Register Office (GRO), a department within the Home Office.
- 7.3** Over 6000 births and 1600 deaths are registered a year, and the service exceeds the KPI for offering 95% of customers appointments to register a birth within five days and register a death within two days. An out of hours service for deaths is available every day of the year, excepting Christmas Day. Over 3000 residents become British citizens through the registration service each year.
- 7.4** Old Marylebone Town Hall is among the most popular venues in the country for weddings and ceremonies with 3535 ceremonies have taken place since it reopened in January 2018. Ceremonies are available seven days a week, 363 days a year, with up to 26 available on Saturdays. Over 80% of bookings are made by non-Westminster residents.
- 7.5** Ceremonies are also delivered in over 150 licensed venues across Westminster, including Home House, the Ritz hotel and London Zoo. Westminster has the largest number of licensed venues in London, and one of the highest in the country.
- 7.6** The Civil Partnership (Opposite-sex Couples) Regulations 2019 came into force on 2 December, allowing heterosexual couples the ability to form a Civil Partnership. Westminster Registration Service already has its first booking for 4 February 2020 and are dealing with multiple enquiries now the final Parliamentary Orders have been passed.