



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

DRAFT MINUTES

City Management and Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **City Management and Public Protection Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday 10 September 2019** in Room 18.2 and 18.3, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP

Members Present: Councillors Tony Devenish (Chairman), Barbara Arzymanow, Margot Bright, Paul Dimoldenberg, Matthew Green, Aicha Less, Pancho Lewis, Mark Shearer and Shamim Talukder

Also Present: Councillor Ian Adams, Member for Licensing and Public Protection, Sara Sutton (Executive Director of Environment, City Management and Communities), Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager) and Tristan Fieldsend (Senior Governance and Committee Officer)

Expert Witnesses: Julia Mayer (St Mary's Team Leader) Redthread

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Chairman sought any absences, apologies or substitutions to the committee's membership.
- 1.2 There was one change to the membership of the Committee, Councillor Pancho Lewis replaced Councillor Shamim Talukder.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 The Chairman sought any personal or prejudicial interests in respect of the items to be discussed from members and officers, in addition to the standing declarations previously made.
- 2.2 There were no declarations made.

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 Councillor Less queried a typo on page 10, paragraph 6.9, regarding Church Street, it was confirmed that Councillor Less made the comments and not Councillor Arzymanow. Councillor Green queried page 7, advising that the cost for the Extinction Rebellion had not been provided to date.
- 3.2 RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the City Management and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 June 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

4. CABINET MEMBER FOR LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

- 4.1 Councillor Ian Adams updated the committee on the Environment and City Management portfolio. He advised the committee that the Council had a very successful Notting Hill Carnival, with regard to noise in Bayswater and street cleansing. Councillor Adams advised that there had been positive developments in the provision of Markets and street traders, he informed the committee that the uplift in fees allowed the council to provide further support which had led to some good outcomes. Councillor Adams mention the letter published in the Times newspaper regarding short-term lettings, he emphasised that the council was not against short-term lettings, however wished to strike the right balance. Councillor Adams advised the committee that he would be meeting with the Leader and colleagues about what to do regarding short-term lettings and would report back to the committee.
- 4.2 Councillor Adams advised the committee that with regards to the BCU, he visited the newly opened Charring Cross Police Station, which was very impressive. He advised the committee that it had a new custody suite for greater engagement with drug users to assist with interventions. Councillor Adams informed the committee that rough sleeping was still a big challenge and a recent poll of 400 rough sleepers showed that that two-thirds were neither non-UK or Irish nationals. Councillor Lewis queried why rough sleeping was in Councillor Adams portfolio and not in Councillor Andrew Smith who deals with Housing. He also felt that the council were treating rough sleeping as a criminal element not as a housing issue. Councillor Adams advised the committee that the council does not treat rough sleeping as crime, he explained that his remit is public protection which is linked to enforcement; he informed the committee that rough sleeping is an enforcement issue. Councillor Adams advised the committee that residents welcomed the interventions and engagement work, he explained to the committee that cabinet members have broad and complex portfolios and he worked closely with Councillor Smith to provide a package of support.
- 4.3 Councillor Dimoldenberg questioned whether the council had thought of bespoke approaches and suggested giving a higher profile to good initiatives. Councillor Adams advised the committee that the council focus was on outreach, he

informed the committee that 8/10 new arrivals to the city do not spend a second night on the streets, because of the councils and its partners great engagement work. Councillor Adams stated that the council is trying a more sophisticated approach based on need, looking and the different types of rough sleepers, working with the Business Improvement District (BIDs), using new technology and shining a light on the hidden heroes who work hard. Council Adams mentioned the wide spread of human trafficking which was another serious issue linked to rough sleeping.

- 4.4 Councillor Less commented on the rough sleepers' tents on Park Lane and the litter that is left as a result. Councillor Adams advised that there was a number of operations with TFL, Police and the council's Integrated street team to clear hidden encampments. He advised that they were limited to how much they could do and needed to lobby the Government for more powers. Sara Sutton informed the committee that there were concerns regarding barriers to engage as the council wants to put support in place before any action is taken. Councillor Less made enquiries regarding gun crime stats and was informed by Ms Sutton that this would be provided. Councillor Shearer queried why there had been a 14% increase in EU nationals' rough sleepers. Councillor Adams responded to the query and advised that this could be linked to human trafficking. Councillor Shearer mentioned Whitley's and other development sites where noise and noise monitoring had been an issue, he asked if officers could provide clear learnings for the future.
- 4.5 Councillor Green thanked the Street outreach teams that had helped a vulnerable person in his ward. He commented on rubbish and the stats of commercial fly-tipping, he advised that he was surprised at the low number of fixed penalties notices for bad presentation of waste in his ward. Councillor Green stated that the presentation of rubbish in his ward was awful and there needed to be an education and if necessary, penalty notices issues to the commercial premises on Edgware Road, he queried what the council could do to address this issue. Responding to Councillor Green's query, Ms Sutton advised the committee that council was trialling a new approach with Heart London Business Alliance, which had been successful and will be rolled out across the City. Councillor Green also raises a query regarding the failed CCTV in Bayswater unable to capture vehicle registration numbers and the next steps for the Big Black Bin site. Ms Sutton advised the committee that they were looking at different options including new bin designs, understanding the different approaches and then evaluating each in turn, she confirmed that the next step will be to work with Ward Councillors.
- 4.6 Councillor Bright made a comment on noise from the Whitley's development site, referring to the report where it mentioned the hours of work were being reduced, she felt that Whitley's were being accommodating. She also raised a question regarding short term lettings, suggesting greater synergy between leaseholders and disposal short term tenants waste. With regard to the Whitley's development, Councillor Adams advised they hours have been changed, but had not been

reduced, he felt that the residents really want the developers to get on with the demolition which is schedule to finish in November and he will continue to support community engagement. Ms Sutton advised the committee that with regards to short-term lettings and Westminster Housing provision, her team viewed the subject as a cross portfolio issue and was working with Councillor Smith. Ms Sutton advised that to her knowledge short term-lettings were not permitted and the WCC housing team do investigate, build cases and take action, she referred to the successful case regarding a tenant. Ms Sutton briefly outlined some areas that would be looked at when dealing with short-term lettings involving lease holders.

- 4.7 Councillor Arzymanow informed the committee that she was approached regarding the locations for the new door step recycling posters which are intended for Airbnb. She advised the committee that she had requested a number of the posters to be placed on Big Black Bins. Councillor Arzymanow raised a query regarding Noise SMS and circumstances where individuals did not have access to a mobile phone. Councillor Adams advised that issues can be reported via the council website or by phone, he informed the committee that Noise SMS text allows customers the ability to update the council on the complaint, by responding to the SMS text, if the noise is continuing or has stopped. Councillor Adams informed the committee that the SMS service reduced officer interactions with cases by an average of 40% per month.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CITY MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

- 5.1 Councillor Tim Mitchell provided a report of the Environment and City Management Member's portfolio. Members of the committee were invited by the Chairman to submit questions regarding the report to Policy and Scrutiny Officer by email after the meeting.
- 5.2 Councillor Less raised a query regarding an Active Streets event that took place on the 23rd August in her ward. She advised that photographs were taken of children that were not from the ward and requested further information on who these children were. Councillor Lewis raised a query regarding climate emergency and whether Cllr Mitchell will consider setting up a committee for reducing emissions across the borough. Councillor Lewis requested an update on food waste recycling and noted a case against the deregulation of waste collection.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

6. KNIFE CRIME REPORT

- 6.1 Council Adams advised the committee that the report highlights trends, key drivers and who is primarily involved in knife crime. Paying particular attention to robbery, Councillor Adams informed the committee that robbery was a key driver to knife crime and tackling robbery was a significant priority for WCC. He advised that the council would be working closely with the police to make sure resources are directed accordingly. Council Adams advised the committee that Public Health had adopted violence as a key priority and would be working more closely with health services. Ms Sutton advised the committee that violence is a multi-agency priority going forward and as such all agencies are accountable in combating knife crime.
- 6.2 Ms Sutton advised the committee that WCC had a disproportionate level of knife crime which had increased by 56% and robbery had also increased by 60%, she also informed the committee that 37% of offences were linked to possession. Ms Sutton noted that The Serious Youth Violence Task Group continued to provide the council's focus on working together across Council departments, the MPS and with partner agencies to adapt to the changing nature of violence in Westminster. Ms Sutton explained to the committee that The Task Group looked at how we could 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. Ms Sutton advised the committee that The Task Group is leading on a number of initiatives, one in Church Street which include a tool kit for parents, supporting young people in education, public health violence workshops and community engagement.
- 6.3 Ms Sutton informed the committee that a number of options were being developed including the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit (IGXU) which is a multi-agency team funded by Community Safety, Family Services, MOPAC and the Home Office, consisting of partners and professionals. Ms Sutton advised the committee that the IGXU identify and work with vulnerable and exploited young people aged between 10 and 24 who are involved in group violence or on the periphery of gangs to improve their life choices, social integration, reduce associations with gangs and reduce incidences of serious youth violence. She noted that the IGXT had also widened its focus beyond just gangs to deal with criminal exploitation (e.g. County Lines). Ms Sutton advised the committee that there was a focus on a community response providing a framework to respond to families and the wider community. She informed the committee that there is likely to be a report commissioned to better understand how we meet needs of these young people. Ms Sutton advised the committee that this was a complete integrated approach, bringing in health partners and robust interventions.
- 6.4 Ms Sutton informed the committee on the PAN London activities taking place including the MOPAC Violence Reduction Unit, she advised that the VRU will share information about what works in spotting the early signs of what might lead

to criminal behaviour and focusing attention and resources on what makes a difference. Ms Sutton advised the committee that the council is working closely with the police and highlighted a few key areas, such as council officers and the Police operating regular community weapons sweeps, regular meetings with Members, the Leader of the opposition and MPs. Ms Sutton handed committee members a briefing note with some of the outcomes from the work of the Serious Violence Task Group and the Knife Crime action plan. Ms Sutton reminded the committee that the police now had S60 authorities to safeguard communities in geographical areas where violence is believed to be likely or has occurred, allowing officers to search without grounds specific areas. She added that the S60 was subsequently in place this evening across North Westminster.

- 6.5 Councillor Arzymanow made further inquiries regarding the S60 and stop and search powers, asking if it was possible to quantify the benefits of stop and search vs controversy, ultimately quantify the impact. Councillor Margo Bright queried what facilities were in place to deter young people from knife crime. Councillor Adams explained that the council was about to spend £500,000 on youth club provisions across the city and will support the broader community. Councillor Green raised the point of test purchase operations to restrict the sale of knives, he queried what the WCC trading standards team was doing to test sales specifically with smaller retailers. Councillor Adams informed the committee that he took part a Knife Crime Action Day in June, where test purchases were carried out, he advised that the main message that came from that day was storing knives in the back or well out of easy reach, he noted that ongoing education continued.
- 6.6 Ms Sutton further explained that Trading Standards had a regular programme of visit and test purchases which was carried out across the borough, she explained that a major problem was online retailers and the team collected stats on the illegal ordering and selling of knives, which Ms Sutton agreed to share with the committee. Councillor Shearer queried what the council intended to do to clear up Cambridge Circus area as it experienced high levels of knife crime. Responding to the query raised, Councillor Adams explained that there had been some improvements and the MPS were cracking down on robberies, however crime continued to persist and there was more work to do in this area. Councillor Shearer raised a further query regarding a reduction in detection rates and sought further information on the time scales on recruitment for the integrated team.
- 6.7 Councillor Less noted the surge of robberies involving older people during the day time, commenting on an incident in Church Street. Ms Sutton advised that there is usually an organised element to this and there is a focus to crack down on this type of crime and provide care to victims. Councillor Dimoldenberg commented on further communication required inform members on how the funding for youth provisions would be allocated. He advised officers that he would like to know the current status of how the money is being spent. Ms Sutton advised the committee that she was meeting with provider and would report back to the committee. How Councillor Lewis agreed that Cambridge Circus had a lot of problems and queried

how much communication was had with perpetrators to understand their motives for committing knife crime. Ms Sutton informed the committee that lots of work had been done with perpetrator and victims, she explained that there was a focus on contextual safeguarding and how to better support people. She advised that the IGXT had had good success as they are focused on engagement with young people.

- 6.8 **Expert Witnesses** Julia Mayer (St Mary's Team Leader) from Redthread, address the committee and provided an overview of Redthread and what they do at St Mary's Hospital. Ms Mayer advised the committee that the service was embedded in the hospital and provided intense support to young people at the earliest opportunity, engaging with young people and offering help, then continuing to engage when that young person has left hospital and is back in the community Ms Mayer informed the committee that the engagement levels were high and that her team build strong relationships, she confirmed that her team worked very closely with the IGXT.

RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

7. **EVENING AND NIGHT TIME ECONOMY TASK GROUP REPORT**

- 7.1 Councillor Green addressed the committee asking that they approve the recommendations presented in the report. Councillor Green provided an overview of the report, advising the committee that the task group was established following a number of allegations made about discrimination and lack of inclusivity in late night premises in Westminster. He explained that the task group's aims were to investigate people's experiences from the perspective of visitors, residents and the industry. Councillor Green explained that to provide focus, the task group concentrated its investigation on nightclubs as they were the subject of the original complaints. The task group also limited the investigation to discrimination based on the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2 Councillor Green advised the committee that a number of solutions were discussed during the course of the task group's work and these largely focus on three themes. He explained the first theme was establishing best practice across the industry and a standard to which venues can be held accountable. Councillor Green informed the committee that the second theme was avoiding situations where decisions can be misunderstood as being discriminatory and ensuring that there is contemporaneous evidence to help establish either way. Councillor Green advised the committee that the final theme was ensuring that there are proper procedures for clubgoers to bring complaints of discrimination which also allow venues to present their side. Councillor Green concluded by advising the committee the task group proposed a number of recommendations with the main

recommendation being the Code of conduct, he noted other recommendations which included transparency, training, technology and encourage inclusivity.

- 7.3 Councillor Bright raised a query regarding Stonewall and the reference point for the figures stated in the report (1 in 6 LBGT and 1 in 5 Disabled) people had been discriminated and required the context for the figures. In response to the query raised Councillor Green advised the committee that Stonewall had been invited to give evidence to the Committee, they chose not to and instead provided the written evidence provided in the report. Aaron Hady, Policy and Scrutiny Manager advised the committee that Stonewall had provided a reference point and this would be included in the final report.

RESOLVED: The committee approved the report.

8. COMMITTEE TRACKER AND WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

- 8.1 Aaron Hardy (Policy & Scrutiny Manager) presented an updated report on the current version of the work programme for 2019/2020 and also provided an update on the action tracker.
- 8.2 Mr Hardy advised that there had been a slip in time scale regarding the Energy Strategy and report could not be available for the next meeting. Mr Hardy advised the committee members to e-mail him if there were any suggestions for items for the next meeting.
- 8.3 RESOLVED: The committee noted the report.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Councillor Less queried if the police would be attending the next meeting. Councillor Adams agreed that the committee's questions would be forwarded to the police with written responses received before the next meeting. Councillor Less also requested feedback on how Autumn Nights was received.

10. FUTURE DATES

Wednesday 20 November 2019 at 7.00pm
Wednesday 29 January 2020 at 7.00pm

The Meeting ended at 8:47 pm.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE: _____