

<b>Date:</b>	13 September 2022
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Communities and Public Protection
<b>The Report of:</b>	Councillor Aicha Less, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection
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**1. Key decisions made in the preceding period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated 23 June 2022:**

- 27 July 2022 – Changes to the Ward Budget Programme.
- 17 August 2022 – Refreshing Equalities Objectives.

**2. The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date of the new administration:**

**2.1 Public Protection**

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Work continues to develop the new 5-year ASB strategy and supporting ASB Policy and the final drafts are being produced. A public consultation plan is also in place.

City Inspectors

City Inspectors have been tackling the issue of dockless bikes causing obstruction to the public. Several bikes have now been removed and contact has been made with relevant companies. The response has been positive with some companies advising their users on how they should be parking dockless bikes and action that will be taken if these regulations are not followed. Since this work began, there has been a noticeable reduction in the amount bikes parking in a dangerous manner.

Candy Shop Enforcement

The team has been processing evidence for prosecutions and have carried out test purchases to support the prosecutions. The service was also gathering evidence for a closure order at one premise, though this is on hold because the business is now compliant. After a joint visit with the HMRC to some premises, we will investigate whether any other closure orders on Oxford Street are necessary.

Busking and Street Entertainment

Officers will be working with colleagues from Policy to inform the review of the policy. From September, the central shifted teams will pick up the bulk of the reactive and proactive visits in relation to the enforcement of the policy. There remain some locations, such as Leicester Square,

Piccadilly, and Covent Garden where there is regular non-compliance, but officers are working to tackle the worst offenders.

### Food Safety

The Food Standards Agency Road Map is in place which gives local authorities deadlines for completing inspections. We have met the June deadline and are now working within the September deadline.

Monkeypox is still prevalent within England, and Public Health recently contacted the Food Service to help advise a nightclub in Villiers Street to stop an event. The nightclub went ahead with the event with mitigation measures in place.

There have been four business closures recently due to poor food hygiene, serious risk of contamination and serious risk to health.

The service has received £36,000 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for enforcement of the new prepacked for Direct Sale legislation (Natasha's Law). We have commenced a project whereby businesses will be inspected and provided with an information leaflet and advice to assist them in complying with this.

### Night Stars

We have been awarded the only grant in London from the Home Office Safer Streets 4 in support of our Night Safety programme. A total of £283k has been awarded to the council which will allow us to expand our Night Stars service to both additional days and potentially new locations. The remainder of the Night Safety programme will support other potential projects which are subject to approval. It is intended that the Night Safety Programme will be supported by a Women's Safety Forum that will advise and become the sounding-board for the programme.

The deployment of the Night Stars is producing significant results. Our volunteers are supporting many women and vulnerable people out in the night-time economy and are ensuring that they receive the support they require.

### British Summer Time Concerts

The Environment Health Consultation Team undertook pre-opening site inspections, and also inspections for food hygiene, health and safety and the licensing of over 50 street food stalls and over 30 bars. The team also undertook real-time monitoring of noise levels during concerts to ensure compliance with sound levels set under the Licence. The sound level condition was not breached over the three concert weekends.

### Notting Hill Carnival

This year will be the first Notting Hill Carnival on the streets of Westminster for three years, and plans are underway ahead of the Bank Holiday weekend. Officers from across the council will be supporting the carnival over the course of the weekend, including City Promotion Events & Filming, Licensing, City Inspectors, Emergency Planning, Communications, Parking, Highways and Housing.

In Westminster, there will be:

- Six static sound systems.
- Street trading across two main locations - Westbourne Park Road and Talbot Road.
- The Judging Zone on Great Western Road.
- Toilets installed across various roads to ensure broad coverage and access for those attending.

- Significant parking restrictions for the weekend. The first restrictions will take effect on Wednesday 24 August to allow the building of the supporting infrastructure.

Leaflets have been delivered to residents in affected wards (Lancaster Gate, Bayswater, Westbourne, Queen's Park, Harrow Road). Booking for the after carnival clean up service is now open for both Council and private occupiers.

## **2.2 Communities**

### Community Investment Strategy

Engagement with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Council officers have revealed the need for a centralised approach around defining needs, identifying outcomes, streamlining grant processes, and measuring the impact of the grants. We are preparing the options for the delivery of a community grants programme. Further work has started to review the council's approach to VCS rental of our properties.

### Westminster Connects

The newsletter was rebranded in partnership with our VCS partner *One Westminster*. They have contributed opportunities for volunteers, developed a handbook for volunteers, created an advisory group from volunteer residents, and begun regular introduction sessions for new volunteers. A new range of volunteer opportunities with Adult Social Care are being developed to provide more volunteer support to people in their homes.

### VCS contracts

Two new contracts for Healthwatch (the Advocacy Project) and for the voluntary sector infrastructure support and volunteer development (One Westminster) started on 1 July, and the redesign process for the Westminster Advice Service Partnership is beginning to develop a new contract for 23 September.

### VCS networks

The food poverty network, which has run for two years as a monthly forum of VCS partners, was extended to include energy poverty work. The network oversees developments in food banks and food pantries and advice services, and tracks levels of need and gaps in provision, and has been contributing to the distribution of the hardship fund and the Cost-of-Living Strategy.

### Engagement Deep Dive

We gathered feedback from residents, amenity societies, and community organisations in January and February on their experience of the Council. Feedback was summarised into six categories and will be used to transform how we involve the community in decision making. We have started joint staff and community workshops and Cllr Sanquest has been involved and attending these. We are now preparing recommendations for discussion.

### Approach to equalities

The service will update our Equality Objectives, setting out our measurable priorities. We will also be reviewing and transforming our approach to equality impact assessments, making them mandatory for all decision making. As members have now supported the inclusion of socio-economic impact as part of our equalities consideration, we will ensure this is undertaken and are working with experts in the field. The team published the refreshed objectives in August 2022 and thereafter will start to scope the remit of a wider external equalities plan.

## #2035

This programme is in collaboration with partners in Westminster to reduce the life expectancy gap and improve the health, wealth, and well-being of local communities through a cross-sector place-based strategy and looking at the wider determinants of health (housing, crime, employment, access to health services, neighbourhood and community connection). The partnership includes the Police, DWP, Imperial College Healthcare, GP Commissioning, Public Health and Communities. Recently we showcased this work to NHS England on their visit to Westminster. We are in the process of scoping priority areas to where partnership approaches will add value.

## Inspiring Communities

This is a digital and event campaign, which will showcase the career and life stories of sporting and other professionals, leading community members and internal staff. We plan to launch our digital campaign across the borough in Autumn 2022, until March 2023, using a variety of digital media platforms and videos. The campaign will be supplemented by a series of themed in person community events. The first event took place on Thursday 21 July and focused on inspiring women.