

Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 12th March 2020

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Subject:

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PREVENT STRATEGY IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT

Summary statement:

This report outlines the approach to delivering the national Prevent strategy in the Bradford district and highlights work that has taken place over the last 12 months.

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1. SUMMARY

This report outlines the approach to delivering the national Prevent strategy in the Bradford district and highlights the work that has taken place over the last 12 months.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 21st March 2019 the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that the progress on work undertaken in implementing the Prevent agenda in Bradford and its approach to supporting vulnerable people, be acknowledged. .
- 2.2 Prevent is a distinct part of the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy, CONTEST. It focuses on early intervention through strategies which reduce the likelihood of individuals supporting a violent extremist ideology or becoming terrorists. The aim of the *Prevent* strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from all forms of terrorism, by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- 2.3 Since 2019 the UK has been subject to three terrorist attacks. Three people were stabbed in a shopping centre in Manchester in October 2019, while in London, two people were killed in the London Bridge attack in November 2019 and three people were stabbed in Streatham in February 2020. Since 2017, the police and security services have thwarted 24 terrorist plots, 16 Daesh/AQ inspired plots and 8 extreme right wing inspired plots. The terrorist threat is rapidly evolving, with much radicalisation taking place online. 'Low tech' attacks involving vehicles and knives are quicker to plan and deliver. The threat does not just come from organised terror groups but from 'lone actors' who, motivated by hate ideologies, work independently to carry out attacks.
- 2.4 Following the 2017 attacks, the Government ordered an independent review of the Counter Terrorism Strategy CONTEST of which the Prevent strategy is a part. The review found CONTEST to be well-organised and comprehensive. However, the review prompted a number of key changes, designed to disrupt terrorist threats in the UK earlier, to take account of the scale of the threat and the speed at which plots are now developing. Many of these changes were incorporated into the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019.
- 2.5 The Act streamlines the process for referring an individual thought to be at risk of being drawn into terrorism under the Prevent programme to a Channel panel so that they can get the help and support needed to turn them away from radicalisation. In addition, new programmes to rehabilitate offenders under the Terrorism Act, re-enforcing safeguarding at the heart of Prevent and an enhanced response to the growing threat from far right extremism, have all come out of the review.
- 2.6 The extreme far right is successfully tapping into political dis-engagement in society, with a narrative of 'betrayal' and 'traitors' often focusing on elected representatives. There is a continued increase in internationalisation of ideas, tactics, money and collaborative working with the adoption of the 'free speech' narrative enabling the far right to deflect from their own extremism and attract a

more mainstream audience. The far right has not gained significant traction in the district but this is the fastest growing risk in our society, especially given its online influence. Individuals can be very vulnerable to the on-line narrative.

- 2.7 Around 900 people of national security concern travelled from the UK to engage in the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Of these, approximately 20% are believed to have been killed in that conflict, and around 40% have returned to the UK. The vast majority of those returned are deemed to be of low security concern. It is assessed that many of the most dangerous individuals remain in Syria. The Home Secretary has made it clear that he will use all legal powers available to prevent the return to the UK of those who have travelled to support terrorist organisations abroad.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 An Independent Review of the national Prevent programme began on 12th August 2019. At time of writing this is due to report by August 2020, although the Chair of the review, Lord Carlile, stood down in December, following a legal challenge over his appointment, so the future of the review is uncertain. Critics have been calling for the review for some time and Bradford Prevent welcome the independent scrutiny and have a plan in place for when Bradford is called to give evidence to the Review.
- 3.2 Bradford Council and partners have always sought to tailor the Prevent programme to the needs of the District's communities, providing grass roots projects to help build resilience and to ensure support is offered to vulnerable people of all ages and backgrounds. We have continued to make efforts to engage communities and elected members and to build awareness of and engagement in the programme. This has been welcomed by all.
- 3.3 Recent terror attacks in November 2019 in City of London and February 2020 in Streatham, both by lone actors, have led to emergency legislation designed to end the release of people convicted of terrorism offences halfway through their sentence has been presented to Parliament and is awaiting Royal Assent. Under the government's proposals, people given a fixed or determinate sentence for a terror-related offence would be freed only with the agreement of the Parole Board and after serving at least two-thirds of their term. The measures are expected to become law by the end of the month.

3.3 PREVENT IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT

Bradford Prevent Delivery

- 3.3.1 The programme in Bradford has been made transparent with local Prevent Delivery Plans being made available to the public. There has also been significant engagement with the local democratic framework via regular reports to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3.2 Elected members have been positive in attending Prevent training sessions in the district. This not only allows for elected members to contribute ideas on delivering Prevent but enables them to take a greater community leadership role and adds transparency and accountability to the local agenda. To date, 57 elected members

have attended training/awareness sessions, with the most recent session in June 2019 being attended by 16 elected members. In addition to this, an event to showcase the work of the Safer and Stronger teams, including Prevent, was attended by 36 elected members in February 2020.

- 3.3.3 A community roundtable event was delivered very successfully in September 2019 in the Central Hall Keighley. A further 3 events are planned for delivery before the end of this financial year and this will mean that all constituencies will have had the opportunity to attend a roundtable in the last two years. These events are organised in partnership with the Area Coordinator's Office and include local and voluntary community organisations, faith establishments and local residents. This has proved a successful way to engage at a grass roots level. There are many misconceptions around Prevent and this provides a forum for community members to hear what delivery actually looks like on the ground.
- 3.3.4 Under the Prevent strategy the local authority and partners develop projects to reduce the risk of people becoming involved in terrorist activity. Funding granted for the 2019/20 period was £343 598. The full list of funded projects can be found at Appendix A. Most projects are community and education based, focusing on the key risks in our district. Some of the key work is listed below:

Mothers Against Radicalisation: A six module programme is delivered to educate and support mothers on understanding the digital world and its impact and danger, safeguarding children and young people from online grooming and radicalisation. Mothers will also be equipped with the knowledge of the signs and symptoms of radicalisation and how to challenge and seek support. 50 women of different backgrounds have taken part in the programme this year with excellent feedback and a ripple effect into communities. This is an established group and now has an Ambassador's Group who are instrumental in passing on their learning to communities and working to raise awareness of Prevent related issues.

Bradford Hate Crime Alliance: This project was well regarded in the Prevent Peer Review and is centred on supporting individuals at risk of radicalisation through one to one mentoring and support. The project delivers training in schools and community settings to encouraging critical thinking and link individuals to appropriate support. To date this year the project has delivered 167workshops and worked with 2132 participants.

Supplementary Schools Against Radicalisation: Bradford district has over 100 madrassah's with many thousands of our young people attending 5 or 6 days per week. The project supports Imam's/teachers with the skills to coherently challenge the Daesh narrative, essential in building resilience in young people and the confidence/knowledge to seek appropriate support. The programme this year has so far delivered 46 workshops to 685 participants in 14 Madrassahs, with a further 34 sessions planned before the end of the financial year.

Safeguarding Against Violent Extremism for school staff: A bespoke course that focuses on developing leadership, communication and activism skills, underpinning key Prevent messages and enabling the embedding of these values in school. The sessions are bespoke to individual schools' needs, activity based

and interactive. The sessions will enable staff to facilitate students to discuss relevant issues in a safe environment, develop counter narratives and challenge extremist thought. They will use this to communicate to the school community and make changes according to their needs, thus building resilience to extremism throughout the whole school. To date this project has worked with 31 teachers from schools across the district.

Sharing Voices: The project works with individuals from BME/Muslim backgrounds who have mental health and special educational needs vulnerability (Asperger's/Autism) and are at risk of extremist radicalisation. It also runs community awareness raising seminars in relation to Mental Health/SEN and vulnerability, as well as delivering a training and development programme for Mental Health and SEN Practitioners in relation to mental health/SEN and extremist radicalisation. They have delivered to 122 people so far this year.

Small Steps: This project delivers sessions to some of our most marginalised young people in white communities. The sessions are in schools, PRUs and to youth groups primarily and address staff and young people. They provide counter narratives and a sustainable response to the growing far right threats we face as a district. Sessions have not yet been delivered but all 20 planned sessions are fully booked up for the rest of the year and it is anticipated they will reach 1800 people.

- 3.3.5 Bradford Prevent has commissioned a company to do an independent evaluation of three of its long standing projects. This is due to be presented at the end of March and will look at the overall effectiveness of each project and make recommendations to improve their effectiveness, if applicable. It will also provide tools to aid accurate reporting of delivery.
- 3.3.6 From the outset, Bradford Council has prioritised education as one of the key foundation stones in the battle against extremism. The internet, and social media specifically, has opened up new ways to promote extremism. Online radicalisation is identified as an area for a priority response. In addition to our funded projects, the Prevent Education Officer has delivered a range of sessions that develop critical thought, understanding of citizenship, supporting tolerance and providing counter narrative to extremist ideologies. These sessions have been delivered in schools, PRUs, youth groups, children's homes and to Designated Safeguarding Leads across our district.
- 3.3.7 A key part of the Prevent strategy is the "Channel" safeguarding scheme. The local authority leads a panel of safeguarding professionals including police, social workers, NHS staff, schools and the justice system to identify those at risk of being drawn into terrorism, assess what the risk might be and then develop tailored support for those referred to them. This could range from mentoring to things like confidence building, managing stress or drug and alcohol programmes. Participation in Channel is voluntary. Bradford Prevent undertook a review of the Terms of Reference of the Bradford Channel Panel and these were shared and agreed by the CONTEST Board in January.
- 3.3.8 Of the 561 individuals nationally who received Channel support, 254 were Referred for concerns related to far right extremism and 210 were referred

for concerns related to Daesh/AQ related extremism. This is the first time that Far Right extremism is the highest figure. Due to the small numbers of participants and the voluntary nature of Channel, it is not possible to give local detail on Channel referrals. The possibility of being identified may discourage some people from participation.

- 3.3.9 To support understanding of safeguarding processes and to help increase confidence in staff to recognise, respond and, where appropriate, to refer concerns around extremism, training is available to staff through the 'Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent' (WRAP). Using actual UK case studies of extreme right-wing and Daesh extremism, the course explores factors which may contribute to an individual's susceptibility to a terrorist ideology. Feedback strongly indicate that WRAP is an easy to understand and non-alarmist method of raising awareness of Prevent. To date, over 20,000 staff in the District have received WRAP training.
- 3.3.10 The Prevent team across the Police and Council has developed a network of 'Prevent Champions' who will lead on the safeguarding function and be kept informed of current patterns of extremism. To date the network is functioning in Bradford Police, across schools and has been introduced within CBMDC.
- 3.3.11 Guidance is being prepared for places of worship to support them in minimising safeguarding risks and keeping congregations safe. This will include advice on what to do if contacted by a far right group, how to respond to hate crime and where to access community safety support.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 There are no direct costs attributable to Bradford Council in relation to the engagement of the Prevent Coordination function. All funding for this work is provided by a Home Office annual grant.
- 4.2 A central government grant of £343 598 was made to Bradford Council in 2019/20 to fund Prevent work in the District. Of this £181 540 is supporting relevant posts, and their on-costs, including a Local Authority Prevent Co-ordinator, Prevent Engagement Officer, Prevent Education Officer and Administrative support for the delivery of Prevent work. An outline of the work undertaken by the Prevent team at Bradford is attached as Appendix B. The remainder of the funding supports delivery of projects which contribute to delivering key Prevent objectives in the District. Bradford has secured funding to deliver six projects in 2019/20 at a total cost of £160 058 (see Appendix A).
- 4.3 Partners across health, education, probation and the Police have dedicated resources to ensuring that safeguarding processes are in place and where appropriate, that education services seek to steer people away from extremism and towards a more cohesive society

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 Governance - Local delivery of the strategy is overseen through the Bradford CONTEST governance mechanism, see (appendix two). The structure involves

partnership at all levels with a range of agencies needed to ensure that we successfully deliver CONTEST in Bradford and the Prevent Strategy within this. Partners should be commended for the commitment and resources they have dedicated to making this structure an effective one.

5.2 Two strands of the CONTEST Strategy, Protect and Prepare, deal with emergency planning, civil contingencies and business continuity. Separate plans are in place for the delivery of this work.

5.3 Links with CONTEST governance and the Council's Safer Communities Partnership have been strengthened with an annual report being delivered and a new performance framework agreed

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 puts the Prevent programme on a statutory footing and makes delivering the Channel scheme a legal requirement. Specifically, the Act:

- Creates a new duty on certain bodies to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The duty will apply to bodies including local authorities, the police, prisons, providers of probation services, schools, colleges, and universities.
- Allows the Secretary of State to issue guidance to those bodies on how the duty should be fulfilled.
- Gives the Secretary of State power to direct a body to take certain action, which would be used to enforce compliance where the Secretary of State is satisfied that the body has failed to discharge the duty.

6.2 The Channel scheme being statutory has:

- required local authorities to ensure a multi-agency panel exists and chair the panel;
- required the panel to develop a support plan for accepted cases and signpost to other support where cases are not accepted;
- ensured consent is sought prior to support being provided;
- placed a duty to cooperate on panel partners;
- required partners to pay due regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- and allowed the Secretary of State to indemnify intervention providers that provide ideological/ theological support for the Channel programme.

6.3 The Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 enables local authorities, in addition to the police, to refer an individual at risk of being drawn into terrorism for discussion at a Channel panel. At the moment, this power is only available to the police. To achieve this change, the Act amends sections 36 and 38 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

- 7.1.1 Despite the increased emphasis on far right extremism, the current assessment of threat, harm and risk indicates that the main threat to UK is through terrorism inspired by Daesh or groups with a similar ideology.
- 7.1.2 Threat conditions can change very quickly but the context which shapes Prevent delivery is focused where risk actually exists. This is evidence based and not influenced by propaganda or media reporting but using the information that is available across agencies.
- 7.1.3 Partners across Bradford District work hard to engage communities in safeguarding whilst at all times ensuring that any actions are in line with equality and diversity policies.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no sustainability implications apparent.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

There are no Greenhouse Gas implications apparent.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.4.1 The Prevent Strategy for Bradford District is central to reducing the threat of terrorism and extremism through a partnership structure engaging a wide range of agencies including West Yorkshire Police
- 7.4.2 Prevent sits within the context of the District's Community Safety Plan and reports annually to the District's Safer Communities Partnership. Tackling the threat to community safety and harmony is central to Prevent delivery in the district.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

- 7.5.1 Terrorism has an impact on human rights, in particular the rights to life, freedom, respect and expression. Terrorist acts can destabilise Governments, undermine civil society, jeopardise peace and security, threaten social and economic development, and can affect the strength and resilience of our communities.
- 7.5.2 The Prevent Strategy provides a means for developing our partnership arrangements and ensuring we build resilience in the community and put in place effective counter terrorism measures.

7.6 TRADE UNION

There are no trade union implications apparent

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The nature of patterns of extremism in the District mean that over time risk will vary across the district, whether this is extreme right wing, Islamist or other. This will impact on the levels of engagement required to mitigate any emergence of extremism and can change. Prevent work, however, does take place widely across the district, for example, through education programmes in schools.

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

None apparent within the context of this report.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None apparent within the context of this report.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the delivery of Prevent Work across Bradford district and make any recommendations for further Consideration.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee acknowledge the progress on work undertaken in implementing the Prevent agenda in Bradford and its approach to supporting vulnerable people.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A – Prevent Projects delivered in 2019-20

11.2 Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities of the Bradford Prevent Team.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 21st March 2019