



## **Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 18th March 2021**

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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 progress made in the last twelve months against the District Prevent Action Plan

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**Portfolio:**

Neighbourhoods & Community Safety

**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

Corporate

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:**

The risk of radicalisation and extremism continues to be highest in the 18 and under age group. All extremist groups have largely moved all their activity online due to Covid. Online schooling and lockdown has meant an increase in online activity for all age groups, but particularly those 18 and under. Those referred to Channel across the West Yorkshire district continue to be highest in the 18 and under age group. This number has reduced somewhat this year due to Covid related school closures. The overwhelming amount of those referred continue to be male, which reflects the national trend. A significant number of Prevent referrals and cases taken up by Channel include those who have long term mental health issues or are diagnosed with ASD. Again, this has been exacerbated by issues related to Covid, including prolonged time at home and online. Our work this past year and our plans for the future, reflect this.

The Council's Prevent programme makes a positive contribution towards the Council's Equality Objectives. In the first objective: Community Relations- ensure that the people of the district get on well together. This is hugely encouraged and supported within the projects that are funded. The 'Empowering Mothers Against Radicalisation' project particularly, brings together different communities via mothers and works to understand their commonalities and build their education about and resilience towards radicalisation and extremism. All the projects celebrate diversity and the work of the Prevent Education Officer gives invaluable support, advice and resources to educational establishments across the district, to build understanding across communities and celebrate diversity.

## **1.SUMMARY**

This report outlines the approach to delivering the national Prevent strategy in the Bradford district and highlights the progress made in the last twelve months against the District Prevent Action Plan.

## **2.BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At the meeting on 12st March 2020, the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that:
  - *This Committee requests that the independent review of the national Prevent Programme be presented to this Committee in September 2020, as soon as it is available after its publication.*
  - *That the outcomes against the projects being delivered as part of the Prevent Strategy for the District be presented to the Committee.*
  - *The report should also include the details of the Social Value of the projects being delivered as part of the Prevent Strategy for the District.*
- 2.2 The Prevent review was suspended for a time and so has yet to be completed. A new reviewer has recently been put in place, William Shawcross and the review process has now resumed. Bradford welcomes the review and will report the findings from the review to this scrutiny committee as soon as it is in a position to do so.
- 2.3 At the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2022, the Committee requested that the outcomes against projects being delivered as part of the Prevent Strategy for the District be presented to the Committee and also include the details of the Social Value of the projects being delivered. The attached appendices address these requests. (Appendix 1 and 2)
- 2.4 The following report is an update on the Prevent work that has been undertaken over the last twelve months, how it meets the threats in our district and the impact that this work has had. It also addresses our plans for future Prevent work for the next twelve months.

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The Covid pandemic has had a considerable impact on the risk from extremists and radicalisation. The Commission for Countering Extremism published a report on How Hateful Extremists Are Exploiting the Pandemic. (Appendix 3). This looks at how organisations are using the online space to spread hate, conspiracy theories and mistrust between communities. The continually evolving online sphere is the ideal environment to take advantage of people, particularly young people, who are working online more and more due to home schooling. Lockdown has meant that extremist groups have adapted to ensure that their materials and groups have moved to the virtual space and this has increased their risk.

- 3.2 Self- initiated terrorism remains a risk, due to the low sophistication of methods used and the ease at which things can be planned. This is a risk across all types of terrorism. Extreme right wing extremism and terrorism continues to be a growing risk, successfully tapping into uncertainties around Covid and also international events. The development of their tactics to use online platforms and push a ‘free speech’ narrative and discuss conspiracy theories, enables the extreme far right to deflect from their own extremism and attract a more mainstream audience. Individuals can be very vulnerable to the on-line narrative.
- 3.3 Around 900 people of national security concern have travelled from the UK to engage in the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Of these, approximately 20% have been killed in that conflict, and around 40% have now 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 risk around Syrian travel has been somewhat abated this past year, due to difficulties in travel worldwide because of Covid.
- 3.4 As previously mentioned, an Independent Review of the national Prevent programme is due to resume imminently and at time of writing is due to be completed by August 2021. Bradford Prevent welcome the independent scrutiny and have a plan in place for when Bradford is called to give evidence to the Review.

### **3.5 PREVENT IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT**

#### Bradford Prevent Delivery

3.5.1 Bradford Council and partners have always sought to tailor the Prevent programme to the needs of the District’s communities and the ever developing risks they face. We provide grass roots projects to help build resilience and to ensure support is offered to vulnerable people of all ages and backgrounds to meet these risks. We continue to make efforts to engage communities and elected members and to build awareness of and engagement in the Prevent programme across the district.

3.5.2 Bradford Prevent has tailored the Prevent programme to meet the ever growing risk from online extremism across all ideologies. Projects, training and support are very mindful of this ever developing risk, especially during the Covid pandemic.

3.5.3 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 annual reports to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.5.4 Elected members have been positive in attending online Prevent training sessions. 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. Last year, elected members attended an online session on developing critical thinking and spotting fake news and conspiracy theories.

3.5.5 Community roundtable events were unable to be delivered due to Covid constraints this year but are planned for the year ahead. 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.

3.5.6 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 2020/21 period was £339,572.82. The full list of funded projects can be found in Appendix 1. 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 a 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.

**Supplementary Schools Against Radicalisation:** Bradford district has over 100 madrassahs 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.

**Small Steps:** This project delivers sessions to some of our most marginalised young people in white communities. The sessions are in schools, Pupil Referral Units 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.

**Bradford Peace Museum-** This session explores how to tell if information online is suspect or distorts the truth, and what to do if you see online material that promotes extremism.

The session equips you with an understanding of the difference between traditional online safety learning, namely around online bullying and personal safety, and how the internet is used to spread extremist messaging. The workshops use methods that make these issues meaningful for young people and provides a safe space to explore them.

**Oddarts-** Blame and Belonging is an interactive forum theatre performance and workshop using professional actors and specialist facilitators to explore key issues around radicalisation. This performance focuses on the adult influencer, female radicalisation and Islamophobia. It explores people inspired by the extreme ‘far right’ and also Daesh.

3.5.7 Bradford Prevent commissioned a company to do an independent evaluation of three of its long standing projects and they presented their findings to CONTEST in 2020. The feedback was very positive and provided tools to help the projects in the future. CONTEST were reassured of the effectiveness of the projects after the presentation.

3.5.8 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 narratives to extremist ideologies. These have continued to be delivered online where possible during lockdown.

3.5.9 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. Of the 697 individuals nationally who received Channel support, there is still a relatively even balance in the types of extremism cited. 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.

3.5.10 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. Training staff and Train the Trainer models continued during the lockdown period.

3.5.11 The Prevent team across the Police and Council have 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.

3.5.12 Guidance has been provided for places of worship to support them in minimising safeguarding risks and keeping congregations safe. This includes 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. Training and guidance was also provided for local authority Reception staff following a visit to local authority buildings by Britain First. Following this, Reception staff were educated about the group and similar groups and given advice about what to do in the event of a future visit. This was welcomed by the staff.

3.5.13 The Prevent team have secured funding to deliver a comprehensive package of Prevent support work in the next financial year totalling £312 132. The package specifically relates to the key risk areas that we face locally and nationally. It includes projects from those organisations funded last year and an additional project, Votes For Schools. VFS are a highly regarded organisation who encourage debate and discussion of key issues in schools, locally and nationally.

#### **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.
- 4.2 A central government grant of £339,572.82 was made to Bradford Council in 2020/21 to fund Prevent work in the District. Of this £193 622.82 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. 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 5 projects in 2020/21 at a total cost of £145 950.
- 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. 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 Bradford CONTEST arrangements sit within the context of a wider, West Yorkshire CONTEST. This meets quarterly to share information and best practise.
- 5.3 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.

5.4 Links with CONTEST governance and the Council's Safer Communities Partnership have been strengthened with an annual report being delivered.

## **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 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no sustainability implications apparent within the context of the report.

### **7.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

There are no Greenhouse Gas implications apparent within the context of the report.

### **7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.31 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

- 7.3.2 Prevent sits within the context of the District's Community Safety Plan and reports annually to the District's Safer Communities Partnership.

## **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 in the context of the report.

## **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.

## **7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

There are no implications apparent within the context of this report.

## **7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

There are no implications 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**

- 10.1 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 one – Prevent Projects delivered in 2020-21
- 11.2 Appendix two- Roles and responsibilities of the Bradford Prevent team
- 11.3 Appendix three – Commission For Countering Extremism- ‘How Hateful Extremists Are Exploiting The Pandemic.’

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 12th March 2020