

Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 10th March 2022

AF

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**

**Jason Longhurst
Strategic Director- Place**

Portfolio:

Safer and Stronger Communities

**Report Contact: Ian Day
Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods
and Customer Services
Phone: (01274) 01274) 433507
E-mail: ian.day@bradford.gov.uk**

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Corporate

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

The 18 and under age group is still the age group where the risk of radicalisation and extremism is the highest. Extremist groups still focus most of their activity online. 2021 saw continued national lockdowns and school closures, both leading to increased time spent online by the majority of the population. Those referred to Channel across the West Yorkshire district continue to be highest in the 18 and under age group and continue to be mostly male, as reflected nationally. A significant number of Prevent referrals and cases taken up by Channel continue to have long term mental health issues or specific learning needs. Again, this has been exacerbated by issues related to Covid, including prolonged time at home and online. This continues to be a priority for our current and future work.

The Council's Prevent programme makes a positive contribution towards the Council's Equality Objectives. In the first objective: Visibility, leadership and accountability, we publish our Prevent Plan for the District on the Bradford Safeguarding page. We also consult with our new Prevent Advisory Group about Prevent related issues in the District, as well as listening to the views of those across the District in our quarterly roundtables. These also help to fulfil the Community objective, as do the work of our roles and projects. With regards to Services we ensure wherever possible that we pick projects that are from the local area and understand local issues as well as supporting the local economy.

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

2.1.1 At the meeting on 18th March 2021 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 2021, or as soon as it is available after its publication.
- That more detailed outcomes against the projects being delivered as part of the Prevent Strategy for the District be presented to the Committee.

2.2 The Prevent review has been granted an extension and is yet to be published. William Shawcross, the head of the Review and his team visited Bradford in April to gather evidence. Bradford welcomes the review and will report the findings from the review to the Committee as soon as it is in a position to do so.

2.3 At the meeting on 18th March 2021, the Committee requested more detailed outcomes against projects being delivered as part of the Prevent Strategy for the District be presented to the Committee. The attached appendix addresses this request. **(Appendix 1)**

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 As the Covid pandemic continues, it is still having a considerable impact on the risk from extremists and radicalisation. These groups continue to utilise the online space to spread hate, conspiracy theories and mistrust between communities. Far right groups particularly, have continued to use conspiracy theories about COVID-19 as a recruiting tool to attract younger supporters into their realms during 2021. The use of memes and conspiracy theories are attractive to a particularly younger audience and have been used to attract new support. Groups across WY have been using the anti-lockdown etc. as a facade to promote their extremist views and in turn hopefully attract more members.

3.2 Self- initiated terrorism continues to be a risk, due to the low sophistication of the methods used and the ease at which things can be planned. The continued isolation and suspicion amongst some individuals, makes the potential for such attacks high. This is not linked to any particular ideology and very much taps into

suspicion over the pandemic, narratives associated with free speech, conspiracy theories and those with mixed, unclear and unstable ideologies.

- 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 continues to be somewhat abated this past year, due to difficulties in travel worldwide because of Covid. Tighter travel restrictions imposed throughout 2020/21 makes travel by extremist / radicalised individuals to conflict zones highly unlikely and indeed the same restrictions mean it is unlikely that any UK citizens who have previously travelled abroad to fight for and against Daesh will return to the UK in the near future, even as travel restrictions begin to lift as we head further into 2022
- 3.4 The Independent Review of the national Prevent programme is due to be published. Bradford Prevent has fully participated and welcomes hearing the results.

PREVENT IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT

Bradford Prevent Delivery

- 3.4.1 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 are committed to engaging grass roots projects wherever possible 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.
- 3.4.2. Bradford Prevent have tailored the Prevent programme to meet the ever growing risk from online extremism across all ideologies, including newly emerging risks such as Left Wing and Single Issue Terrorism and Mixed, Unclear and Unstable Ideologies. Projects, training and support are very mindful of these ever developing risks and their potential to increase due to the vulnerabilities created by COVID.
- 3.4.3 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 regular reports to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Prevent training offered to elected members. We have also introduced a Prevent Advisory Group who meet twice a year. This is made up of representatives across the district. It includes youth workers, EMAR ambassadors, former police officers and community workers. We share information on or current Prevent work and strategy and seek advice and input on future work, as well as discussing Prevent related issues.
- 3.4.4 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. Elected members attended Prevent training in November of 2021, making them aware of local and national risks and how to combat these.

- 3.4.5 A community roundtable was held in last year and was very well attended. Another event was cancelled due to Covid restrictions but further events 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.
- 3.4.6. 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 2021/22 period was £312 132 and we were awarded the full amount of what we bid for. The full list of funded projects can be found at **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.

Key objectives: Educate and support mothers regarding the digital world and its impact on young people. Give them the tools to protect against digital harms. Build relationships across the district to share ideas and information on 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.

Key objectives: Providing support and reassurance quickly to those with vulnerabilities that may be vulnerable to radicalisation but may not meet Channel criteria. Target specific schools/ communities to focus on vulnerabilities to radicalisation.

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.

Key objectives: To give young people, parents and madrassah staff the skills to have discussions around difficult and often complex topics in a safe environment, in order to build resilience to the Daesh narrative.

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.

Key objectives: To give you the ability to recognise when you are being manipulated towards extremist views online and what to do if you are concerned.

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.

Key objectives: Giving young people the opportunity to explore and discuss key extremist issues in a safe environment. The drama helps to visualise how these things may manifest in their own lives. .

Votes For Schools

Selected schools will have a Votes for Schools license so they can to deliver a weekly debate on a topical or controversial issue; and the young people will have a chance to gain knowledge, debate and vote on the issue. Topics will cover (in an age appropriate way) extremism, radicalisation, conspiracy theories, online harms, crime, hate crime etc. This knowledge will help mitigate being drawn into extremism. It will create a space to regularly talk about issues and give teachers the knowledge and confidence to conduct these sessions. Vulnerable young people will gain knowledge; and also build critical thinking skills, confidence in having a voice, tolerance and respect: thus mitigating being radicalised and being drawn into terrorism.

Key objectives: To give staff the opportunity and structure to have discussions on key topics with young people. To give the young people the opportunity, skills and experience to participate in reasoned debate. This will help to mitigate the risk of people being drawn towards extremist narratives in everyday life.

3.4.7. 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 continues to deliver sessions that develop critical thought, an understanding of citizenship, support tolerance and provide counter narratives to extremist ideologies. She has also continued to develop the Prevent Champions Network and delivered numerous sessions to staff and students.

- 3.4.8 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 those who received Channel support, there is still a relatively even balance in the types of extremism sited. 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.
- 3.4.9 To support the 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 an adaptation of the ‘Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent’ (WRAP). The Prevent team have trained staff this year across the District including in schools, NHS staff, Safeguarding staff, Housing staff, Probation staff, DV staff, Environmental Health staff. They have also provided Prevent related training in critical thinking and how to deal with risks online to community champions across the district, elected members, ward officers, refugee and asylum staff and members of the public in community roundtables. Feedback strongly indicates that WRAP is an easy to understand and non-alarmist method of raising awareness of Prevent and that Prevent related training is extremely popular and seen as very relevant.
- 3.4.10 The Prevent team continue to developed the network of ‘Prevent Champions’ who lead on the safeguarding function and be kept informed of current patterns of extremism. This is already established in education and the Police but has now developed across the Local Authority and other agencies across the district. Representatives are provided with detailed Prevent related information to disseminate to their teams and extra training. This has really developed this year and we have a wide variety of representation. An event is planned for the coming months in conjunction with the Police.
- 3.4.11 Training and guidance has been delivered to Housing staff on how asylum seekers and refugees may be exploited and potentially radicalised. Staff are aware of the referral mechanisms for those who are vulnerable and have also been given WRAP training. Advice on how to protect yourself from extremism has been provided to the refugee and asylum community in various languages.
- 3.4.12 Training about the links between the links between domestic abuse and extremism has also been delivered and links with the Domestic Abuse team have been made,

so that further training can be developed in the coming year.

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 £312 132 was made to Bradford Council in 2020/21 to fund Prevent work in the District. Of this £194 052 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. **(Appendix 2)** 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 6 projects in 2021/22 at a total cost of £115 330.
- 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 3)**. 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 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

7.3.1 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

7.3.2 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.

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

7.4.1 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.

- 7.4.2 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.

7.5 TRADE UNION

There are no trade union implications apparent in the context of the report.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The nature of patterns of extremism in the District mean that over time risk will vary across the district and the different ideologies that are a risk will also vary. 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. We hold quarterly roundtables, meetings with Ward Officers and a wide variety of Prevent project sessions, particularly in schools.

7.7 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

Activities outlined in the report contribute to priorities within the area ward plans and will be reported to area committees on an annual basis.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

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

11.2 Appendix one – Prevent Projects delivered in 2021-22

11.3 Appendix two- Roles and responsibilities of the Bradford Prevent team

11.4 Appendix three - Bradford CONTEST Terms of Reference

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee minutes 18th March 2021