

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 8 November 2016

Subject: Prevent Strategy

Responsible Officer: Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director
Strategic Commissioning

**Scrutiny Lead
Member area:** Councillor Phillip O'Dell (Corporate
Resources - Performance Lead)
Councillor Stephen Wright (Corporate
Resources – Policy Lead)

Exempt: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: Prevent Action Plan (Appendix 1)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out to outline the Council's approach to comply with the Prevent Duty and what the Council is doing to meet the duty, in partnership with others.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee endorse and support the approach being taken in Harrow to meet the requirements of the Prevent duty, as well as offer any improvements to the action plan.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a duty on specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Authorities subject to the provisions must have regard to the Prevent Duty Guidance when carrying out the duty.

Specified authorities include:

- Local authorities
- Higher/further education
- Schools and registered child care providers
- The health sector
- Prisons and probation (including Young Offenders Institutions)
- Police

By endorsing and supporting the approach being taken in Harrow, the Council will be working towards complying with the Prevent Duty.

Background

The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of the overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

There are four work streams within CONTEST:

- PREVENT: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
- PROTECT: to strengthen our protection against an attack
- PREPARE: to mitigate the impact of an attack
- PURSUE: to stop terrorist attacks

The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It has three specific objectives:

- Responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- Preventing people from being drawn into terrorism and ensuring that they are given appropriate advice and support; and
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

Terrorist groups often draw on extremist ideology, developed by extremist organisations. The Government has defined extremism in the Prevent strategy as ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces.’

The Prevent strategy was explicitly changed in 2011 to deal with all forms of terrorism and with non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit. Prevent is intended to deal with all kinds of terrorist threats in the UK.

Current situation

The current threat level for international terrorism for the UK is assessed as severe, which means that a terrorist attack is highly likely.

Preventing people from being drawn into terrorism is therefore a high priority for Government, and by introducing the Prevent duty, all named authorities must ensure that they have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Why a change is needed

The approach taken in Harrow has been to work in partnership with other named authorities bound by the duty, and to engage with communities in this challenging and high profile area of work.

Harrow’s approach has also been firmly rooted from a safeguarding perspective. The Prevent strategy states that ‘safeguarding vulnerable people from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding them from other forms of harm’.

In complying with the duty, a risk assessment has been carried out in Harrow (in partnership with Harrow Police and SO15 – Counter Terrorism Command) and a local Prevent Action Plan has been drawn up. A multi agency Prevent Action Plan Group has been set up to review progress of the action plan and where necessary to agree additional actions if required.

Some of the main areas of work to date have been around raising awareness of Prevent, staff training (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent – WRAP), establishing and effectively operating a multi agency panel for those individuals identified as vulnerable to radicalisation (Channel), and ensuring that publically owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists. All of these actions assist us in meeting the recommendations of the Prevent Duty Guidance which was issued in 2015 alongside the counter Terrorism and Security Act.

Implications of the Recommendation

This area of work has not received any designated Home Office funding (apart from £10,000 in 2015/2016), and is being delivered through existing resources.

Local authorities are expected to ensure that appropriate frontline staff, including those of its contractors, have a good understanding of Prevent and are trained to recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism and are aware of available programmes to deal with these issues. Over the last year over 1,500 people have been trained, by the Council, using the Home Office WRAP package – Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent.

Local authority staff are expected to make appropriate referrals to Channel (a programme that provides support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism, which has been put on a statutory footing by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act). Channel arrangements are established in Harrow and the multi-agency panel meets on a monthly basis.

Local authorities are expected to ensure that publically-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. This includes considering whether IT equipment available to the general public should use filtering solutions that limit access to terrorist and extremist material. Prevent advice (and Police recommendations regarding halls for hire), has been shared across the Council and with partners.

Local authorities are expected to ensure that organisations who work with the Council on Prevent are not engaged in any extremist activity and do not espouse extremist views. Currently, the Council is not delivering any specific Prevent projects.

Where appropriate, local authorities are expected to take the opportunity when new contracts for the delivery of their services are being made to ensure that the principles of the duty are written in to these contracts in a suitable form. Discussions around this have been started with procurement colleagues and commissioners.

Performance Issues

The Council priorities of

- Build a better Harrow
- Protect the most vulnerable

are impacted on. The safeguarding work of Channel offers interventions to protect vulnerable individuals, and by raising awareness of this safeguarding agenda it is intended to build a better Harrow, in partnership with other agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

Returns have to be submitted to the Home Office on the number of WRAP sessions delivered and attendee evaluations.

The Prevent area of work will be monitored by all inspection regimes, including Ofsted.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes (Recently Added)

There is a risk that we may fail to comply with the requirements of the duty and the statutory guidance – but this has been controlled by the actions identified in the Prevent Action Plan, which is being formally monitored by the Action Plan Group (a multi-agency group) since September 2016.

There is a risk that front line staff may not attend Prevent training – but this has been controlled by ensuring senior management and strategic boards (Local Safeguarding Children’s Board, Local Safeguarding Adults Board, Safer Harrow, Youth Offending Team Board) understanding of the agenda and its statutory footing.

There is a risk of disengagement by the local voluntary, community and faith sectors on Prevent – but this has been controlled by engagement with local community leaders, who have assisted in disseminating key messages.

There is a risk around the education sector not engaging (the National Union of Teachers and the National Union of Students have issued position statements on Prevent) – but this has been controlled by briefing sessions to head teachers, governors and designated safeguarding leads. Over half the schools in Harrow, and all of the colleges, have already taken up the offer of WRAP training.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

An EqlA has not been carried as this is not a service change, and is required by statute.

The Home Office undertook an EqlA ahead of the Prevent Duty coming in to effect.

Council Priorities

The Council’s vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

The safeguarding work of Channel offers interventions to protect vulnerable individuals, and by raising awareness of this safeguarding agenda it is intended to build a better Harrow, in partnership with other agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

Ward Councillors notified:

NO

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Samia Malik, Community Cohesion Senior Lead,
020 8420 9385

Background Papers:
Prevent Action Plan