

<b>AGENDA ITEM: 5</b>							
<b>Report Name:</b>	<b>The Prevent Duty: Update on Progress</b>						
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board</b>						
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>January 2016</b>						
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<b>Outcome Required:</b>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Information Only:</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Decision Required:</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Feedback/comments required:</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Information Only:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Decision Required:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feedback/comments required:	<input type="checkbox"/>
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## Summary

This brief report for the information of members provides background and context to the introduction of the Prevent duty on Barnet and an update on work undertaken and progress achieved in this area.

As outlined in the previous report on this subject to the committee (24 June 2015), local authorities have a statutory duty to have '*due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to prevent people from being drawn to terrorism*' under the provisions of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. In complying with this duty, the local authority is expected to work in partnership with a range of statutory partners including the police, prisons and the probation service, the health service, as well as schools and education providers.

After designating Barnet as a 'tier 2 priority area' under the Prevent scheme, the Home Office have provided funding for a Prevent Coordinator who joined the authority in December 2015. Additional funding has also been made available to provide training and community-based interventions during FY2015/16. Funding arrangements for the next financial year have yet to be confirmed by the government, but Barnet is expected to remain a Prevent priority area and a process of forward-planning is currently underway based on this assumption.

Now that a Prevent Coordinator is in post, the overarching priorities for the year ahead in relation to Prevent will be:

- i. To ensure that the council is fully-compliant with the statutory Prevent duty across all of its departments and functions.
- ii. To coordinate the necessary partnership action in response to the risks and recommendations outlined in the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP).
- iii. To provide relevant and appropriate briefings and training to council staff, elected members, and partners when necessary.

## 1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

To provide members with background and context to the implementation of the Prevent agenda in Barnet, this report should be read in conjunction with **Appendix 1**, which provides a detailed summary of the action that has been taken and the progress achieved thus far in this area, as well as an indication of future work being planned.

After the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 came into law in February 2015, the Prevent duty was placed on a statutory footing and local authorities were amongst a number of specified authorities required to take appropriate steps necessary to adequately mitigate and respond to local risks from extremism and terrorism.

The Prevent duty provides one of the four key strands of CONTEST, which since 2003 has served as the UK's national counter-terrorism strategy. CONTEST aims to "*reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.*" The strategy is comprised of four distinct but connected workstreams, colloquially known as 'the four P's': namely *Prevent*, *Pursue*, *Protect*, and *Prepare*. Local authorities have clearly-defined statutory responsibilities under the *Prevent*, *Protect*, and *Prepare* strands of the strategy in the context of combatting terrorism.

The specific purpose of the Prevent agenda is "*to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism*", which includes work to address both violent and nonviolent extremism in all its forms. The approach to countering extremism more broadly has been outlined in the government's revised Counter-Extremism Strategy, which was launched by the Home Secretary in October 2015.

The purpose of the *Protect* and *Prepare* strands of the counter-terrorism strategy are "*to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack*" and "*to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack*" respectively – work that relates to secure and protecting people and places. The *Pursue* strand relates directly to the disruption of terrorist attacks through intelligence, detection and prosecution, and falls principally under the remit of the security services and law enforcement.

As summarised previously, the effective delivery of Prevent was made a legal requirement in the 2015 Act for local authorities and a range of other statutory agencies. The Act created the overarching '*due regard*' duty as well as specific defined responsibilities, and included in it a range of enforcement mechanisms to enable the Secretary of State to enforce compliance in cases where a body has failed to adequately discharge its duties. Within an individual local authority, the emphasis of the legislation is on individual service areas and functions to *own the duty* and to ensure that adequate resources are directed towards ensuring compliance within their respective areas of work.

In the course of 2015, Barnet was designated as a 'tier 2 Prevent priority area' for 2015/16 based on intelligence and a thorough assessment of local risk. For information:

- Four large-scale metropolitan hubs are currently considered 'tier 1' areas, including Birmingham and Manchester.

- Barnet is one of a small number of authorities to have been designated as new 'tier 2' priority areas within the last two years – other areas include Portsmouth, Slough, and Bradford.

The designation of Barnet as a priority area means that the Home Office has provided funding for a Prevent Coordinator, who formally joined the authority in mid-December 2015. The continuation of Prevent funding for the next financial year has yet to be confirmed by the Home Office, but is fully expected and due to be announced by March 2016 at the latest if not before.

In addition to funding for training and resources, Prevent priority areas have access to small pots of in-year funding with which to deliver specified local projects and interventions within their communities. Once funding for FY2016/17 has been confirmed and an updated catalogue of 'best-practice projects' has been provided by the Home Office, the core membership of the Counter-Terrorism & Prevent Working Group will meet to determine which projects would be most suitable and relevant to the borough for delivery in the year ahead. Local authorities are expected to provide robust evaluation and monitoring of all projects and activities undertaken in the context of delivering Prevent, with the Home Office providing additional oversight and auditing of local delivery.

As referenced previously, the Prevent agenda serves a key function in combatting the threat of terrorism to local communities and the UK as a whole, but can also be understood in the wider context of countering violent and nonviolent extremism. The recent revision to the government's Counter-Extremism Strategy aims to provide a coherent and wide-ranging strategic response, not only the growing threat from ISIS and Islamist extremism, but also to the increasing risk to the UK from extremism in all its forms. The strategy is framed around four pillars, all of which are essential to the successful delivery of Prevent as well as to the implementation of the CONTEST strategy more generally:

- **Countering extremist ideology:** How to strengthen institutions and provide local and national counter-narratives to contest and undermine extremism ideology within communities and online.
- **Building a partnership with all those opposed to extremism:** The need to develop effective partnerships between statutory partners and within communities – including the key need to develop local networks of individuals and groups to act as mainstream voices against extremism.
- **Disrupting extremists:** Early sight of new legislative proposals to increase the powers available to target individuals and groups involved in promoting or supporting extremism or terrorism in the UK, including new powers to ban extremist organisations and restrict the harmful activities of the most dangerous extremist individuals.
- **Building cohesive communities:** Recognition that isolation, division, and inequity within communities can exacerbate an individual's vulnerability to grooming by extremism and increase the appeal of extremist narratives. The government sets out a number of tools to improve community cohesion and social integration and emphasises the importance of this work within a local context.

In terms of the delivery of Prevent within Barnet, a key strategic priority is to ensure that effective and wide-ranging partnerships are put in place between the local authority, a range of statutory and non-statutory partners, community groups, faith institutions, and others to

ensure that the borough as a whole can take all the steps necessary to protect its residents, support its diverse communities, and help mitigate the risks from terrorism and extremism to both people and places.

For this purpose, the Prevent Coordinator is currently developing a revised Local Action Plan, due to be completed by March 2016 after input from relevant service areas and reference to the Counter-Terrorism Local Profile for the borough. The Action Plan will substantively build on the activity plans that are currently in place, and will provide elected members, partners, and the public with a clear two-year forward-view of the topline priorities to be pursued in aiming to ensure that Barnet can fully comply with all relevant legislation, and can move towards national best-practice status across areas of Prevent local implementation.

Prior to the production of a revised forward-strategy and Local Action Plan, the '*Progress Report and Expected Outcomes*' document attached as **Appendix 1** provides a detailed and up-to-date summary of the action undertaken to implement Prevent within the council and externally, as well as clear indications of further action to be taken in the months ahead. This activity is asked to be noted by members, and any questions or queries in relation to the Prevent agenda are welcome.