

TITLE OF REPORT: Preventing Violent Extremism – Progress Update
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Summary

Preventing Violent Extremism is one of the four key elements of the national Counter Terrorism Strategy. The report, and accompanying presentation, provides Committee with an update in relation to the latest Counter Terrorism Local Profile, a summary of the key activity we have carried out in the last twelve-months as well as the details of referral and support processes we have established. It builds on the regular updates provided to Committee following its review of Prevent – which ended in March 2016.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on the work/activity that has taken place in relation to the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda as well as an update in relation to the latest Counter Terrorism Local Profile for Gateshead.

2 Background / Context

- 2.1 As a reminder, the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism has responsibility for the strategic direction of the activity undertaken to disrupt international terrorism. The Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy was initially published in April 2011 and refreshed in 2018 and highlights actions connected to:

- **Pursue** aims to stop terrorist attacks both in the UK and against interests overseas. Northumbria Police are responsible for activities conducted under this work stream (with no direct involvement from Gateshead Council).
- **Protect** aims to strengthen our protection against terrorist attacks in the UK or against our interests overseas, and reduce the vulnerability of targets, through improving protective security arrangements for crowded places.
- **Prepare** aims to mitigate the impact of a terrorist incident where it cannot be stopped. This includes work to bring a terrorist attack to an end, and to recover from subsequent aftermath. From a Council perspective, Resilience and Emergency Planning co-ordinates activity around these workstreams.
- **Prevent** aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This includes challenging extremist ideas that are conducive to terrorism or

are shared by terrorist groups, countering extremist ideology and helping to build more cohesive communities. From a Council perspective, Community Safety function co-ordinates the activity linked with this work stream.

- 2.2 Under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, specified authorities (including the local authority) in the exercise of their functions, are expected to have “*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*”. To support in this duty, the Home Office published a series of self-assessment toolkits and guidance to help share best practice and ideas to help comply with the legislation – with the latest publication being released in September 2018.

3 Progress

- 3.1 There continues to be a wide range of actions carried in Gateshead in relation to the Prevent agenda in the last 12 months. Some of the key activities include:

- Frontline practitioners in key services across the Council continue to receive training in relation to the formal ‘Preventing Violent Extremism’ training.
- To supplement the formal training, a shorter awareness session has been developed and has been delivered to 7 x Team Meetings across the Council with more than 120+ employees attending. These have proven to be well received and further sessions have been planned with Care, Wellbeing and Learning in the coming months.
- Prevent business cards continue to be supplied to those attending training. These include information on the ‘Notice, Check, Share’ principles and the different ways in which to make a Prevent referral in Gateshead and acts as a brief reminder of the vulnerabilities/signs to look for considering Prevent.
- Commissioned voluntary sector organisations to deliver bespoke Prevent Awareness sessions to Governors and Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools across Gateshead. Two sessions for School Governors and six sessions for Designated Safeguarding Leads to take place during 2018/19.
- Worked alongside the Council’s Commissioning Team to arrange training sessions for commissioned providers and to explore ways to include clauses within contracts to mandate training.
- Community Safety has worked with ICT Security and Facilities Management to ensure Gateshead Council’s ICT Security Policy, which references visiting sites which focus on extremism or incite hatred, are robust.
- A Members Seminar took place with Special Branch in April 2018 to share findings of the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) and to provide an updated picture of the local/national threat.

- Arranged two Preventing Violent Extremism training sessions for Councillors which will cover the purpose of Prevent, the process of radicalisation, how to identify when someone may be vulnerable to radicalisation and how to raise concerns in Gateshead.
 - Arranged bespoke sessions aimed at Directors across Northumbria to help provide a better understanding and appreciation of the processes involved when dealing with vulnerable people susceptible of radicalisation.
- 3.2 Community Safety continues to complete regular self-assessments to help us to identify gaps, barriers and future focus across the Council and partner agencies to ensure our response to Prevent remains effective.
- 3.3 The latest self-assessment has shown additional work needs to be progressed in the coming months on:
- Identification and training of Channel Panel Chairs
 - Review and refresh the current Prevent referral pathway and local Channel Panel process
 - Ensure we have a more robust mechanism for recording and monitoring cases of interest (following changes to referrals into Special Branch)
 - Embed the new reporting mechanism within CareFirst
 - Support the roll out the Joint Contest Board and set future dates for the Prevent Strategy Implementation Group

Operation Dovetail

- 3.4 In addition, another element that the Council will need to plan for will be the roll out of Operation Dovetail – which will see increased responsibility being placed on Local Authorities. For information, the Home Office piloted a new approach to the delivery of Channel during 2017/18 and was designed to test how local authorities could take more responsibility for running the Channel programme. Operation Dovetail was expected to be implemented nationally this year – however, the approach has been delayed. Gateshead will be in the last tranche of Local Authorities to roll it out (expected in late 2019/20).

4 Presentation

- 4.1 To accompany this report, members will also receive a Prevent Awareness presentation during Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee which will cover an introduction to Prevent, update from the Counter Terrorism Local Profile, an overview of local incidents and how to raise a Prevent concern.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to:
- (i) Discuss and comment on the contents of the report;
 - (ii) Identify if there any issues/areas linked to Prevent that OSC would like to scrutinise in greater detail at a future Committee meeting.