



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Executive Board

Date: 1 April 2009

Subject: Leeds Prevent Programme

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report outlines the strategic context to the current national focus on Preventing Violent Extremism, now referred to as 'Prevent', and provides an update on the development of the approach to this work in Leeds.

Executive Board is asked to note the progress made to date in developing the Leeds Prevent programme and support the suggested way forward in relation to wider consultation on this agenda.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 National Level

2.2 PREVENT forms a key strand of CONTEST, the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy. Its key aim is to: **Stop people becoming or supporting violent extremists.**

2.3 The Prevent Strategy identifies that the UK faces a number of terrorist threats, primarily from Al Qa'ida influenced terrorism, right wing extremism and animal rights activism.

2.4 The current focus is on addressing the threat of Al Qa'ida influenced terrorism. The terrorism threat from this in the UK is currently rated as 'severe' and the Director

General of MI5 has put on record that there are approximately 2000 individuals who are believed to pose a direct threat to national security.

- 2.5 The Government's broad strategies to tackle extremism are to:
- challenge the violent extremist ideology and support mainstream voices;
 - disrupt those who promote violent extremism and support the institutions where they are active;
 - support individuals who are being targeted and recruited to resist the cause of violent extremism;
 - increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism;
 - address the grievances which ideologues are exploiting.

These will be supported by increasing the understanding of radicalisation and improving communications.

- 2.6 It is recognised that work to promote cohesion and prevent extremism is interrelated. Experience has shown that violent extremism can emerge from the most cohesive communities but that extremist messages are less likely to find support in this environment. Likewise, a community in which extremism is minimised is more likely to be one where people have more confidence to build relationships with one another and so increase community cohesion.

- 2.7 The Government is providing ongoing guidance and support to local authorities and partners on a number of key issues relating to extremism. Additional support is also provided via Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH).

2.8 **Sub Regional Level – West Yorkshire**

- 2.9 Partners in West Yorkshire have agreed a position statement on cohesion and a West Yorkshire contribution to the Prevent Strategy. These have been endorsed by the Leaders and Chief Executives of the five West Yorkshire Local Authorities, the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Police Authority. This provides a framework for the development of a more localised multi agency action plan for the Leeds District.

- 2.10 The West Yorkshire Chief Executives meet regularly with senior police colleagues through the 'West Yorkshire Community Cohesion Project Board' to discuss cohesion and extremism issues. The Association of West Yorkshire Authorities currently provides some support for the co-ordination of work across the sub region and has facilitated training sessions for partners in the sub region on preventing violent extremism. Through the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, Local Government for Yorkshire and the Humber will soon have some additional resources to support Local Authorities and Police Authorities with their work on cohesion and preventing violent extremism.

2.11 **Leeds District**

- 2.12 In addition to the issues identified above, there is a local context to the development of a multi agency approach and action plan for the Leeds District.

- 2.13 This work reflects the impact of the July 2005 bombings and their connection to parts of the Leeds District, and ongoing intelligence reports which suggest that Leeds remains a high risk area.
- 2.14 The plan builds on our previous experience of work on cohesion and preventing violent extremism and the links to the Safer and Stronger agenda and the outcomes and improvement priorities in the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11.
- 2.15 There is desire on the part of the Council, Police, Intelligence Services and other agencies to work closer together on this agenda. This will be achieved through the development of local multi agency structures to take forward and co-ordinate this work, and the need to engage a wide range of services and partners in an appropriate and systematic manner.
- 2.16 The plan seeks to balance the requirement for clear leadership and clarity with discretion and sensitivity, as well as considering urgent issues against longer term consequences.
- 2.17 These issues and the suggested approach have been discussed by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and colleagues from the Police and Counter Terrorism Unit have also shared information and their perspective on this work. Discussions have also taken place with the Stronger Communities Outcomes Group and Safer Leeds Executive.
- 2.18 In September 2008, the Police and Counter Terrorism Unit recruited additional staff to take this work forward in Leeds, and productive working relationships with officers in the Council have been developed.

3.0 Developing the approach in Leeds

3.1 Structures

- 3.2 The Leeds Prevent structures have been developed in line with national guidance and tailored to local circumstances, which include the issue of Leeds having three Basic Command Units. The structures to take forward Prevent were established in September 2008 and are set out below.

3.3 Gold Guardianship Group

- 3.4 The Gold Group provides a strategic steer for the delivery of the Prevent Objectives, based on the current and emerging terrorism risk to the Leeds area. The Group is responsible for oversight of the action plan for Leeds and briefings are provided on issues including mapping of risks and heat spots. The group has been meeting on a regular basis and involves senior officers from the Council, Education Leeds, Police, CTU and GOYH.

3.5 Sliver Review Group

- 3.6 The Silver Group's main objective is to identify and manage the terrorism risk to the City through risk assessment and control measures in the form of a comprehensive Prevent Action Plan. Representatives for this group have been drawn from LCC Regeneration, Safer Leeds, Children's Services, Education Leeds, Emergency

Planning, Probation, Police and CTU. The Silver Group meets fortnightly, though this is expected to move to monthly meetings in the very near future.

3.7 Bronze Delivery Group

3.8 The main role of Bronze is to undertake, co-ordinate and monitor counter terrorist Prevent activity. Bronze is the key tasking and implementation group for the delivery of the Leeds Prevent Strategy, taking direction and leadership from the Gold and Silver Groups. This group involves a number of new frontline Police, Safer Leeds officers, Counter Terrorist Unit staff and LCC officers, employed specifically to deliver Prevent activity in the city. More recently, officers from Education Leeds, Area Management and Probation have begun attending these meetings. Bronze currently meets on a fortnightly basis.

3.9 Engaging Members In the Development and Delivery of Prevent

3.10 The Council Leader and the Executive Member for Community Safety have received briefings on the development of the Leeds approach to Prevent as it has evolved. However, as our approach becomes more visible within communities, the involvement, support and leadership of all Members will be crucial in ensuring its success.

3.11 It is proposed that moving forward Leaders of each of the main political parties receive quarterly progress briefings from the Chief Community Safety Officer and / or Neighbourhood Services Manager. Furthermore, Area Managers involved in the Silver Group will provide regular Prevent briefings to Area Committees on issues and priorities which are relevant to the neighbourhoods and communities which the Area Committee serves.

3.12 Protocols will be developed which ensure that local Ward Members are made aware of local Prevent related issues which may have an impact on the local community (e.g. consultation events / visits), and Members will be invited to Police / Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU) led events such as Operation Nicole and Act Now, which will also involve community representatives.

3.13 Regular progress reports will also be provided to the Executive Board and Safer Leeds Board.

3.14 Nationally, the Local Government Association (LGA) Group is embarking on a programme to increase the engagement of Elected Members with the Prevent Strategy. The programme will underline the importance of Members in providing community leadership, and support them to become more involved in developing the right approach within their local areas.

3.15 One of the first actions the LGA wish to undertake is to convene an informal meeting of 20-30 Elected Members from across the Country to discuss the agenda and obtain a nationally representative voice that will inform the LGA Group programme and form the basis of an ongoing support network.

3.16 An invitation for one Elected Member to attend this initial meeting has been extended to Leeds. It is recommended that the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing represents the City at this meeting.

3.17 Community Engagement and Influence

3.18 In addition, discussion is currently taking place to consider the formation of a community reference group, whose role would be to help shape and advise key officers on the development of the programme, providing challenge and a 'critical friend' viewpoint. Representatives would be drawn from across the city, with an initial focus on representation from the Muslim community.

3.19 Leeds City Council Resources

3.20 Leeds has been allocated a total of £589k through the area based grant to develop and deliver Prevent activity to 31st March 2011. A joint approach between LCC, Police and the CTU has been developed as an effective way to deliver Prevent using mainstream resources and the area based grant.

3.21 As the Leeds Prevent Strategy and Action Plan was developed, it became clear that a central coordination and support function was required to ensure that actions/activities are developed in a consistent and appropriate fashion across the city. The coordination of Prevent will be key in keeping partners and colleagues engaged in the process and ensuring that there is a single approach between the Council, Police, CTU and other stakeholders.

3.22 In order to achieve this, a dedicated citywide team has been established, with 1x0.5FTE area based Prevent Officer for each AMT/Police Division (1.5FTE), 1xFTE Prevent Coordinator and 1xFTE Prevent Project Officer to provide support and assistance to both LCC and Police Prevent staff. All staffing costs will be recovered through the area based grant allocation to 31st March 2011. Posts have been offered on a fixed term basis, subject to review by 31st March 2010.

3.23 The area based Officers will be co-located with Area Community Safety Officers, and will work closely with existing NPTs and the CTU/Police managed Prevent staff. Having dedicated LCC funded resources operating within Area Wedges/Divisions alongside the Police and other key partners will enable a locally focused and more tailored response to be developed within those communities that have been identified as vulnerable or at risk of extremism. The Prevent Coordinator and Project Officer will be based centrally within the Regeneration Service at Merrion House.

3.24 All the LCC funded Prevent Officers commenced employment in March 2009, and work is now well underway to take forward the Leeds Prevent Action Plan through a multi-agency approach.

3.25 Leeds Action Plan

3.26 Senior Officers from the Police and LCC worked together to develop the first multi agency action plan to direct Prevent activity in Leeds, linked to the work to date and the framework provided by the West Yorkshire statement and the West Yorkshire Police Implementation Plan. The action plan was agreed through the Gold Group in December 2008 but has been designed to be a flexible document that can adapt to changing needs and circumstances. It is proposed that consultation on the action plan begins with communities and partners early in the new financial year.

3.27 The structures and resources highlighted above will be a key component in moving the agenda forward and ensuring there is sufficient co-ordination and oversight of activity across Leeds and across partners.

3.28 A tiered model of interventions/activity will be used to provide a structure against which to identify the level / nature of response required. This covers:

Tier One	Universal Approach	All Members of the Community
Tier Two	Targeted Approach	People Vulnerable to Extremism
Tier Three	Interventionist Approach	People Moving Towards Extremism
Tier Four	Enforcement Approach	People Actively Breaking the Law

3.29 Examples of actions covered in the draft action plan include:

- activity which celebrates community cohesion and promotes positive messages.
- ensuring that tension monitoring arrangements fully reflect the Prevent Strategy, that routes in and out of the process are clear and comprehensive and that the right people are reporting, receiving and acting on information
- developing and agreeing robust intelligence sharing arrangements to enable targeted responses.
- developing community profiles in each Division to bring together intelligence from local partners.
- developing a Leeds Prevent Commissioning Strategy for the remaining Prevent area based grant (approx. £250k) to be delivered by local agencies and organisations
- identifying service areas and key contacts where staff are most likely to work with vulnerable groups and understand current issues
- establishing briefing and training sessions for groups of staff and Elected Members to increase awareness and give clarity on reporting arrangements
- identifying key contacts for advice, training and support around difficult and sensitive issues and experienced judgement in assessing local concerns
- the delivery of the DCSF schools toolkit
- identifying key community leaders in each Division to provide support, conflict resolution training and media training to assist with communication of appropriate messages in communities
- agreeing priority settings for work with small groups in localities to support an increase in capacity in communities and better ability to resist violent extremists, building on current interventions e.g. Safer Schools Initiative, youth participation and leadership programmes, mentoring initiatives.

- sharing intelligence on local arrests, people charged and timetabling of court proceedings where feasible
- ensuring that Emergency Planning arrangements are fit for purpose and that plans are in place to protect and prepare places considered to be vulnerable to terrorist attacks

3.30 Other Resources

3.31 In addition to the LCC area based grant, there are a number of other resources available to support Prevent work in the city. Additional funding has been made available to the Police for extra Police and Counter Terrorism Unit staff to be based locally. The Youth Offending Service is in receipt of funding from the Youth Justice Board in the region of £100,000 to 31st March 2010 to support work with vulnerable young people. A small resource has been given to the Authority to support the roll out of the DCSF schools toolkit – Learning Together to be Safe. CTU & GOYH have developed a range of products which are available free of charge to educational institutions and communities including: Act Now, Watch Over Me and Miss Dorothy. LCC has also secured additional funding of approximately £150k from the CTU to deliver a number of pilot projects in educational institutions and communities. This work commenced in the 4th quarter 2008/09 and will conclude June 2009. Activities include:

- expansion of the Foundation for Peace leadership & development programme and work with young people who have been identified as ‘high risk’
- delivery of ‘From one extreme to another’ drama production within schools and youth groups
- the launch of the ‘Act Now’ product with schools, FE’s & HE’s
- developing Prevent related activity in FE & HE establishments
- developing small scale local projects which seek to raise the profile of the Prevent agenda within localities, allow groups/organisations to become involved in the delivery of locally based projects and begin debates on Prevent related topics
- the delivery of an accredited leadership and communication programme with young people aged 16 – 26 years old
- the delivery of a Prevent multi agency conference

3.32 Leeds has also taken part in a number of consultation sessions with Central Government Departments which include a learning and development exercise conducted by the Audit Commission and HMIC; a Prevent Review undertaken by the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit and a National Prevent Conference hosted by the Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

3.33 Next Steps

3.34 The key next step in the development of Prevent in Leeds is to begin consultation with partners and, most importantly communities, about how we deliver this agenda in a sensitive and considered manner. Prevent activity is not something we should deliver to communities, but with them, and it is therefore important that we carefully consider how we approach this sensitive and, for some, controversial area of policy.

- 3.35 Two events are planned to take place to begin this process. The first will specifically seek to engage with senior representatives from educational institutions, Members with responsibilities for the safeguarding of young people, Gold and Silver representatives and Safer Schools Officers. The event will take place 31st March 2009, with the agenda covering subjects such as:
- Outlining the Leeds approach to Prevent and key actions relating to young people
 - Showcasing the 'Act Now' product – facilitated by Officers from CTU
 - Outlining the other products available to schools, FE's & HE's
 - Presentation about the radicalisation process
- 3.36 A second event will take place on April/May 2009, which will primarily focus on delivering Prevent within communities. This event will specifically target local community organisations, faith centres, community leaders and representatives, and other key individuals working within a community setting. In developing this event, careful consideration will be given to the content and language used to ensure that this is appropriate and that the right messages about our approach in Leeds are communicated.
- 3.37 The proposed community event will launch the Leeds Prevent Charter. This will be a short and digestible document which will cover the approach in Leeds and how communities can get involved.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Executive Board are asked to:
- note current progress on the Leeds Prevent programme
 - nominate the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing to represent the City at the initial meeting convened by the Local Government Association to discuss the Prevent Elected Member Engagement programme

Background Papers

Contest - National Counter Terrorism Strategy

Prevent - A guide for local partners

Preventing Violent Extremism: A strategy for delivery

Department for Schools Children and Families - Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism

Preventing Violent Extremism Learning & Development Exercise: Report to the Home Office and Communities and Local Government

Report to Safer Leeds Executive September 2008