Haringey PREVENT Approach

Approach, Performance, Partnerships and Communication Service

November 2008

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1.   Introduction

This country, like many others, faces a real and serious threat from terrorism driven by violent extremism. This is not a new position and the historical context is worth considering, whether it is the threats to central government from the likes of Guy Fawkes to the threats to local economies by the actions of groups like the Irish Republican Army. Indeed the threat to local community cohesion has been exploited by far-right political groups in recent times.

Most recently, however, the most severe terrorist threat would appear to come from groups and individuals who aim to carry out criminal behaviour justified by a distorted approach to the peaceful religion of Islam. The approaches adopted now must be flexible enough to be reassessed as soon as the local intelligence suggests that the threat has moved to another group or area of society.

This threat must be considered in the context of the perceptions of the wider Muslim communities, the majority of whom are law abiding citizens facing the same daily concerns as the rest of society. Whatever work carried out under the guise of Preventing Violent Extremism must align to existing good work under the community cohesion, hate crime work and the inter-faith work taking place.

Consideration must also be given to communities' concerns around the potential rise in Islamaphobia that may occur in the misinterpretation of the messages around this work.

Whilst not underestimating the threat from the far-right groups and international terrorist groups, the current threat from groups who seek to hijack Islam to support their cause is the subject of the CONTEST counter Terrorism Strategy. CONTEST is the government's long-term strategy to counter terrorist activity. It has been in operation since 2003 and aims to reduce the risk from international terrorism through four main strands:

- Pursue - to stop terrorist attack;
- Prepare - where we cannot stop an attack to mitigate its impact;
- Protect - to strengthen our overall protection against terrorist attacks (supported by National Indicator 36); and
- Prevent - to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremists (supported by National Indicator 35).

On 3rd June 2008 the Government launched the National Prevent Strategy. The Strategy highlights the commitment from Communities and Local Government, Home Office, Department of Children, Schools and Families and Employment and Training Corporation to work together on this agenda.

Alongside the Strategy, guidance was issued to Local Authorities and Partnerships to help them work closely with their communities to address issues locally. Subsequent Government publications to support this work include:

- Promoting freedom of speech to achieve shared values and prevent violent extremism on campus (DIUS)

- Learning to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. (DCFS)

These documents, alongside publications and reviews from the likes of HMIC, IDEA and the Audit Commission have been considered in the preparation of our local response.

The local context

Haringey has been awarded a Beacon Status for community engagement work that takes place across the borough. Haringey historically has low levels of recorded hate Crime and this could be seen as evidence of a high level of community cohesion; this cohesion makes Haringey the unique place that it is. Our Hate Crime work continues to support this agenda.

Challenges, however, do exist. Whilst an extremist violent threat could come from several groups in society, currently, we cannot ignore the fact that with a large and varied Muslim population there will be some individuals who are vulnerable to the propaganda used by violent extremists. We also cannot ignore that a small number of extremists have hijacked the term Islam to recruit innocent and often vulnerable members of the community. This position may change in the future and we should be flexible enough to respond to a change in threat should it arise.

During the consultation that has taken place with our self-defined Muslim communities the following themes have emerged and will inform our work over the life of the Local Area Agreement:

- There is evident discomfort at the use of descriptors such as 'the Muslim Community' because this is seen as misleading and, to some extent, as a denial of individuality and self-expression. Such concerns are most evident when referring to central government approach.

- The Government's Prevent Strategy comes in for some criticism because it is not seen to differentiate between individuals and communities of Muslim faith, but allows stereotypical images of faith-inspired violence to be strongly associated with Muslims.

- At a majority of the interview sessions it was argued that taking part in violence and extremist behaviour is much more 'generation based' than a function of faith and culture. This is not to deny that some young Muslims are attracted to such activity; but it would be to ignore historical and other current examples of young people being drawn into such behaviour. There is agreement that deprivation and social isolation are contributory factors which can lead to people feeling marginalised and, possibly, more susceptible to being drawn into antisocial or

even criminal behaviour. The growing violent behaviour amongst students in France is one example.

- Social isolation is seen to occur within families where parents not only often possess very limited English skills but may also have limited communication skills in their traditional languages. Many women are not literate in their own language and it is widely agreed that these contribute to communications problems within many families where children have learned English and communicate naturally in English.

- It is widely recognised that Muslim communities are not a united entity and that many groups do not want to work together.   This can make it difficult for the council to evaluate the effectiveness of grants and finance.

By considering these factors and engaging the various communities in the resulting work we will give Haringey a community mandate to continue with this work.

The use of language around this work will need to be agreed at an early stage of the work in order that appropriate terms are agreed and the possibility of offense being caused is minimised. Whilst it is accepted that formal terms will need to be used when communicating with government and partner agencies; the terminology used with communities will need to be handled more sensitively.   The steering group will also advise upon and agree appropriate terminology.

It is also acknowledged that communities do not exist solely within the boundaries of one borough, we will therefore engage with our neighbouring boroughs to establish what work can be carried out in partnership with them.

2.   Scope and Definition

This approach will begin our work in support of the five key strands of the national Prevent strategy:
- challenging the violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices;
- disrupting those who promote violent extremism and supporting the institutions where they may be active;
- supporting individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism;
- increasing the resilience of communities to violent extremism; and
- addressing the grievances that ideologues are exploiting.

These are supported by two cross-cutting work streams which are key enabling functions in delivering the strategy:
- developing understanding, analysis and information; and
- strategic communications.

The national guidance clearly states that Community Cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism are two related but clearly separate agendas.

We will strengthen our understanding of the communities likely to be affected by this work by carrying out in the very early stages a strategic mapping exercise around our Muslim communities in Haringey and by then consulting widely with those communities around this agenda. We will consider the impact of those people who self-define as Muslim and those people who are practising Muslims, this distinction will inform where we carry out our work. The communities will be asked to nominate representatives to sit on a Prevent Steering Group for Haringey. This group will

comprise officers from local partnership agencies and community representatives. The group will then be responsible for making recommendations to the Safer Communities Executive Board and ultimately to the Haringey Strategic partnership Board about the direction of travel and any subsequent action plans.

3.   Aim

This approach aims to engage and support communities in resisting those people who would promote violent extremism and create an environment where the mainstream voice can be heard and grievances addressed.

4.   Roles and responsibilities

This work is lead by the Cabinet Member for Enforcement & Community Safety.

The PREVENT steering group is chaired by the Principal of the College of North East London and made up of the following representatives:
- Head of Safer Communities
- Head of Equalities
- Police PREVENT Lead Officer (Chief Inspector Safer Neighbourhoods)
- YOS Manager
- CYPS Senior Development Officer
- Partnership PREVENT officer
- Community representatives

The PREVENT steering Group will be directly responsible to the Safer Communities Executive Board.

5.   The legal context

This approach supports the government's PREVENT strategy and in turn by the CONTEST strategy. There is no direct legislative context, however the **Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005** and the **Human Rights Act 1998** will have a bearing on the outcomes and outputs of this work.

6.   Principles

This approach is based on the principle that effective consultation and engagement with the relevant communities is essential to:
- deliver the best possible outcomes for the communities involved
- ensure that the partnership has a community mandate for this work
- reassure the communities involved that this work is about supporting them

7.   Equalities and diversity

Equalities Impact Assessments - a description of how legal obligations will be met to determine what effect the approach may have on equality for those affected by the outcomes.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) should be carried out at an early stage of approach development. It will assess the effects the approach may have on people depending on their racial group, disability, gender, age, belief or sexuality.

The EIA guidance and form can be downloaded from Harinet via the following link:

http://harinet.haringey.gov.uk/intranet/directorates/pppc/performance_and_approach/equalitiesanddiversity/equalitiesimpactassessment.htm

List the date of the EIA, its findings and the date of its review and attach the EIA as an appendix.

Equalities monitoring and mainstreaming*- a description of the ways to evidence how all relevant equalities strands will be met and integrated into the approach. Recording of equalities data is mandatory.*

8. Audit

The PREVENT steering group will meet quarterly to audit actions against the action plan and receive exception reports from commissioned projects in support of the approach.

9. Review

The approach will be reviewed quarterly by the steering group, any major changes will be referred to the Safer Communities Executive Board.

10. Appendices

- Haringey PREVENT Action Plan

- National PREVENT strategy