

To: The Executive
Date: 17 October 2023

Prevent Strategy 2024-27
Executive Director: People

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The Bracknell Forest Prevent Strategy 2020-23 has now expired and a revised strategy for 2024-27 has been prepared.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the Executive approve and adopt the Bracknell Forest Prevent Strategy 2024-27

3 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.1 Prevent is one of the four elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Home Office works with local authorities and a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent Strategy.

3.2 Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and its revisions places a duty on specified authorities to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" in the exercise of their functions.

3.3 In addition, the December 2019 update of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, introduced a new duty for local authorities to "provide support to people vulnerable or susceptible to being drawn into terrorism or violent extremism".

3.4 Bracknell Forest's response to both duties is the Prevent Strategy which draws together how it will work with partners to comply with the duties and prevent harm.

4 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 No alternative options have been considered for the following reasons:

- The duties are laid down in law
- A published strategy and action plan sets out our identified priorities as well as how we plan to tackle them
- Prevention and support for those at risk of radicalisation is a multi-agency process which is best co-ordinated through a strategy and action plan
- Acts of terrorism and radicalisation destroy communities and lives, causing deaths and injuries to many and leaving communities living in fear and sometimes divided by hatred and confusion. Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies.

5 Supporting Information

Context

- 5.1 In addition to the 2015 Act described above, there is the UK Strategy for Countering Terrorism (known as CONTEST) which is a delivery plan made up of 4 strands: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. The aim of CONTEST is to reduce the risk to the UK and its citizens and interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

Principles of the Bracknell Forest Prevent Strategy 2024-27

- 5.2 These comprise the following:

- Prevent is everyone's business. Therefore, the aim of this strategy will be to make basic awareness training mandatory for all Local Authority staff, and specified partnership authorities will be required to complete a training assurance update for the quarterly Prevent Steering Group
- Actions taken will always be proportionate to the risk identified for Bracknell Forest
- Prevent is part of the wider safeguarding agenda and focuses on providing support and re-direction to vulnerable individuals who at risk of being drawn into terrorism

Governance and Monitoring

- 5.3 Governance and monitoring take place through the Prevent Steering Group which is a multi-partner group made up of representatives shown in the table below.

It is chaired by the BFC Assistant Director: Chief Executive's Office.

The Prevent Steering Group is a sub-group of the statutory Community Safety Partnership which is held to account annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's Crime and Disorder Committee.

Bracknell Forest Council	Chief Executive's Office
	Community Safety
	Youth Justice
	Children's Social Care
	Adult Social Care
	Community Engagement and Equalities
	Education Safeguarding
	Adult Safeguarding
	Executive Member: Culture, Delivery and Public Protection
Police	Counter-Terrorism Policing South East
	Bracknell and Wokingham Local Police Area
Health	Bracknell and Ascot Integrated Care Board
	Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
	Broadmoor Hospital
Probation	The Probation Services

Fire	Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Bracknell and Wokingham College	Prevent/Safeguarding Lead

It is noted that Prevent comprises a safeguarding function and, therefore, the Prevent Steering Group has a line of accountability to the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board too, allowing those members to have reassurance of the ongoing work as well as being able to input to further development.

- 5.4 Where a person is identified as being at risk of radicalisation, they are referred to Counter-Terrorism Policing South East who assess the referral. If appropriate, they are referred into a Channel Panel which is a multi-partner group who meet to compile and put in place a support package for the individual. Support could include assistance with education or employment, health support, and ideological mentoring to provide vulnerable individuals with the skills to protect themselves from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity or supporting terrorism.
- 5.5 The Bracknell Forest Channel Panel schedules monthly meetings to discuss any referrals. It also holds 2 separate meetings to discuss and share good practice and learning. It is chaired jointly by the Business Manager of the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board and the BFC Community Safety Prevent Lead.

5.6 **Profile**

The Bracknell Forest Counter-Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) produced by Counter-Terrorism Policing South East, informs our awareness and understanding of the local terrorism risk. Due to the sensitive nature of the content, it is shared with a restricted group of partners.

Bracknell Forest is graded as a low-demand and low-risk area in terms of threat of active terrorism. The CTPL for 2023 designated it as a Tier 3 non-priority area.

In 2022, referrals for right-wing (white supremacy) terrorist behaviour outnumbered those for Islamist referrals in all of Berkshire. This type of terrorism is also the most prominent threat of extremism in Bracknell Forest (CTPL, 2023).

Increased focus on terrorism have meant an increased role for policing in recent years. This has led to some communities feeling uncomfortable with a sense of being under scrutiny. Prevent work in Bracknell Forest does not stereotype communities and takes measures to counter this. It recognises that it is important to have and maintain communication across communities and to make this work accountable to people within them.

5.7 **Comparison to the 2020-23 Prevent Strategy**

There has been no change to the local threat, harm and risk to Bracknell Forest since the previous strategy. Bracknell Forest is still a non-priority area for threat of terrorism and extremism, the Channel Panel receives low numbers of referrals, and the new strategy will prioritise awareness-raising and training which are fundamental.

Our approach has been strengthened in the new strategy by adopting the considerations raised in the latest Thames Valley CTLP:

- the referral pathway to the Channel Panel is to be clearer and more transparent to all referring agencies

- six and 12-monthly reviews of all closed cases should take place to review concerns and lessons learnt
- a focus on awareness raising with older adults, the private sector and LGBTQ+ groups and communities is recommended (as this has been identified as a gap in referrals across the Thames Valley)
- the impact of asylum hotels and the cost-of-living crisis on hate crime and Prevent referrals should be monitored and explored.

5.8 Home Office Benchmarking Performance

In June 2023, an evaluation of Bracknell Forest’s implementation of the Section 26 Duty (referenced in 3.1 above) was undertaken by a Home Office Regional Advisor.

The feedback below highlights where we are doing well but also indicates that we need to consider a more robust approach to training:

‘Overall assessment of implementation of the Prevent Duty in Bracknell Forest is that is it performing well across the core benchmarks of the Duty. There is strong partnership engagement and buy-in, good understanding of the local risk and strong leadership across Prevent from Justin and from Bracknell Forest as a whole.

The key areas of focus going forward should be around the training strategy and including mandatory training for staff and/or a process to better understand the numbers around training. Bracknell Forest has a strong risk assessment, referral process, and partnership plan but currently due to gaps in training, it is hard to evidence that these are filtering down to the wider partnership and key members of staff. A training strategy to differentiate and identify key staff that should be trained will also help’.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 The legal issues are addressed within the report. There is a general duty on specified authorities, which includes local authorities, pursuant to Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism when exercising its functions. Section 20 of the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 amended Section 36 of the 2015 Act, to include as a part of a local authority’s assessment and support to identify individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 There are no financial implications to adopting this strategy.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 The Prevent Steering Group
 The Community Safety Partnership
 The Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4 Attached

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5 By completing a Bracknell Forest Prevent Strategy and Action Plan, Bracknell Forest Council is complying with the duties placed upon it by law.

In addition, without an understanding of our local profile of risk of terrorism as well as a co-ordinated and collaborative approach set out through objective setting and a work plan to monitor progress, prevention and response to those who are vulnerable to radicalisation is reduced.

Climate Change Implications

6.6 The recommendation in Section 2 above is expected to:

Have little or no impact on emissions of CO2. Meetings will be held on a virtual platform. In the event any in-person meetings occur, we will be taking steps to reduce waste by encouraging members and partners to use public/active travel to get to the venue, minimise printing by promoting the use of digital copies and encouraging the use of sustainable and re-useable refreshment resources.

Background Papers

Bracknell Forest Prevent Strategy 2024-27

Equalities Impact Assessment

Contact for further information

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