

Minutes

EXTERNAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 October 2015

Meeting held at Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



HILLINGDON
LONDON

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors John Riley (Chairman), Ian Edwards (Vice-Chairman), Tony Burles, Phoday Jarjussey (Labour Lead), Allan Kauffman, John Oswell and Michael White</p> <p>Also Present: Fiona Gibbs - Stronger Communities Manager, LBH</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Nikki O'Halloran</p>
26.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Brian Crowe.</p>
27.	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That, unless it became apparent otherwise during the course of the discussion and questioning, all items would be considered in public.</p>
28.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 17 SEPTEMBER 2015 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
29.	<p>PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Ms Fiona Gibbs, the Council's Stronger Communities Manager, advised that the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 had come into effect earlier this year. The Act placed a duty on certain bodies (including health, schools, local authorities, higher and further education and the prison service), in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from supporting or being drawn into terrorism. Ms Gibbs was clear that extremism covered a broad spectrum of groups.</p> <p>The local Prevent Partnership Group (PPG) had been in place since 2008 and now included representation from schools to co-ordinate a local response to the Government's Prevent strategy and to support different agencies in meeting their duty under the Act. It was noted that effort was being made to ensure that staff received the right training to address this duty and that they were aware of how and where to refer for support. Ms Gibbs was the main contact at Hillingdon and regularly liaised with partners to coordinate a multi-agency holistic approach.</p> <p>A programme of Prevent training for staff and other stakeholders was in place and had been attended by 800 staff from across the Council and partner agencies since October 2014. Ms Gibbs was clear during these training sessions that Prevent was not</p>

about policing people's views or faith, those who were radicalised came from all walks of life and backgrounds (e.g., social status, gender, etc). Prevent was about supporting those who might be vulnerable to radicalisation and becoming involved in supporting terrorism or harming themselves or others, and offering appropriate support as part of safeguarding responsibilities. The training had helped agencies to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities and duties were aligned with building stronger communities. Schools, in particular, had been increasing their demand for support, advice and training to ensure that they were able to meet the requirements of the new duty. Supporting staff in schools to offer healthy challenge and debate in an open forum rather than trying to stop someone from having a point of view was part of the process for building resilience to radicalisation and underpinned Prevent objectives.

Members expressed concern that those who wanted to radicalise others often preyed on individuals that were isolated, but it was recognised that providing an opportunity for discussion was a positive step. Ms Gibbs advised that there was never a 'one size fits all' approach employed by the different agencies, as every situation was different. She noted that partners were good at working sensitively with vulnerable individuals and their families, which would often then result in no further action or perhaps the development of a safeguarding plan.

Through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), the Council was working collectively with partners to ensure that any safeguarding concerns were managed effectively and in a co-ordinated manner across all agencies. Ms Gibbs had drafted guidance on the Prevent duty and how to respond and make referrals when there were concerns. It was anticipated that this would be disseminated to local organisations by the end of October 2015.

Members were advised that the work undertaken by partners was about supporting the needs of individuals, which could be in relation to mental health, ideologies or other safeguarding issues, to ensure that these needs were met. It was important to build resistance to extremism by promoting a sense of belonging in the community and engaging with individuals. To this end, Ms Gibbs worked closely with local communities and faith groups to provide support. She also worked with schools to raise awareness, develop an understanding of how to interpret social media, promote an understanding of others and to look at the provision of support to those who were vulnerable and at risk of being taken advantage of. It was noted that the Strong and Active Communities Partnership underpinned this positive challenge approach that was being undertaken across the board.

The Home Office had developed a referral management process called Channel (a key part of the Prevent strategy) and provided a multi-agency approach to protect and support people at risk from radicalisation. Ms Gibbs advised that there was a Channel panel in place in Hillingdon, chaired by the local authority in partnership with the Channel police team. Ms Gibbs stated that anyone who was referred to the Channel Panel was aware of the referral. Where necessary, Home Office funded intervention providers could be accessed to mentor and support vulnerable individuals as part of a holistic package of support.

Ms Gibbs advised that she had regular monthly meetings with police colleagues to discuss local concerns and any specific challenges for the Borough. It was noted that Hillingdon did not have a dedicated Police Prevent Engagement Officer but there was a good relationship in place between police and the Council to manage Prevent and other related matters.

Members were aware that the media and politicians had an important part to play and

that they needed to be circumspect about what they said and did and how this would impact on others. The language used was very important when it came to people's perception of what Prevent was, who was referred and how it was implemented.

Ms Gibbs advised that involving individuals in building strong community relations and a sense of community would help to reduce the risk of radicalisation. Everyone had a part to play in acknowledging that there was a collective responsibility. It was suggested that consideration be given to Members being invited to attend Prevent training sessions.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. consideration be given to inviting Members to attend Prevent training sessions; and**
- 2. the presentation be noted.**

30. **WORK PROGRAMME 2015/2016** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme. The next meeting, scheduled for 17 November 2015, would receive updates from the local health agencies in the Borough. To ensure that the Committee gained the most value from the meeting, witnesses would be asked to ensure that they only covered issues not included in the report in their presentations. Members should forward any issues that they would like covered at this meeting to the Democratic Services Manager so that they could be highlighted and addressed.

It was noted that consideration would need to be given to the topic for discussion at the meeting scheduled for 16 February 2016 in relation to crime and disorder. The Democratic Services Manager would contact Mr Ed Shaylor to identify possible issues so that they could be circulated to the Committee for a decision.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. Members forward any health-related issues that they would like addressed at the meeting on 17 November 2015 to the Democratic Services Manager;**
- 2. the Democratic Services Manager contact Mr Shaylor to identify possible topics for consideration at the meeting on 16 February 2016; and**
- 3. the Work Programme be agreed.**

The meeting, which commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.03 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nikki O'Halloran on 01895 250472. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.