

MINUTES OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 19 December 2018 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Pauline Morrison (Chair), James Rathbone (Vice-Chair), Sophie Davis, Sue Hordijkenko and Sakina Sheikh and Juliet Campbell

APOLOGIES: Councillors Colin Elliott and Alex Feis-Bryce

ALSO PRESENT: Abu Ahmed (Head of Local Delivery and Communications, Prevent Directorate, Home Office), Paul Aladenika (Service Group Manager, Policy Development and Analytical Insight), James Bravin (Principal Policy Officer), Becky Canning (Chief Officer) (National Probation Service, London Division, Southwark/Lewisham Cluster), Gary Connors (Crime Reduction Service Manager), Petra Der Man (Principal Lawyer), Tayo Disu (LCPCG Hate Crime Working Party chair) (Safer Neighbourhood Board), Martin Gormlie (Prevent Manager), Barrie Neal (Head of Corporate Policy and Governance), Lucien Spencer (London Community Rehabilitation Company) and Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5 November 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Sophie Davis declared a personal interest in item 7 as she worked for the Behavioural Insights Team and the London Community Rehabilitation Company, the National Probation Service and the Home Office were clients of the organisation.

3. Response to Referral from Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on the Employment Profile

RESOLVED:

That the response be noted.

4. The Impact of the Prevent Strategy and Stop and Search policy on community relations - Evidence Session

4.1 The Committee heard evidence from Abu Ahmed, Head of Local Delivery and Communications at the Home Office. Abu introduced himself and his background and said that his presentation would broadly cover three areas: the

current UK threat level; why they believe people are being drawn to terrorism; and the Prevent model. A copy of the presentation will be included with the agenda documentation. During the presentation to the Committee, the following key points were noted:

- The threat from terrorism in the UK is severe. The main threat the government is concerned about is from International terrorism and within this the particular concern is from Daesh. The government has made a conscious decision not to call the group “Islamic State” as they don’t believe they are Islamic or a state.
- There are a range of other threats faced by the UK including the threat from Northern Irish related terrorism in Northern Ireland and a threat from al-Qaida.
- Terrorists recruit and radicalise in a different way now to in the past – for example increasingly using social media such as Twitter, Facebook or Instagram with slick sophisticated propaganda. In this way they reach out to a broader range of people than groups such as al-Qaida did 10-15 years ago.
- Around 900 people from the UK have travelled to conflict zones in Iraq and Syria. Around 40% of those people have returned to the UK. Around 20% of people who went have sadly lost their lives.
- As Daesh’s territory has contracted their calls had become less about people travelling and more about inspiring so called ‘loan actor’ attacks in the UK and other parts of the world.
- There were 4 Daesh inspired terrorist attacks in the UK last year.
- The UK Police services have disrupted 25 Daesh inspired plots since 2013, 12 of which were in the last year.
- Toxic, manipulative propaganda leads to vulnerable people becoming involved in terrorist activity.
- After every Daesh terrorist attack the UK sees a rise in far right and extreme right wing activity. Using the attacks to create division. There has been a surge in the threat from the extreme right wing around the country in recent years. The ideology of the extreme right wing is explicitly violent for example National Action. There have been a number of arrests in recent years.
- The propaganda from far right groups is now focusing increasingly specifically on anti-Muslim rhetoric.
- Sometimes mainstream media outlets pick up on misguided reports.
- The reasons people get radicalised are diverse and there is no single profile. The majority of people are male but there are women and girls who become involved in terrorism too. There is a range of ethnicities and education levels of people who become involved in terrorism. Few people have a deep knowledge of faith, this can then be exploited. Some patterns regarding past criminal activity and people who have problems with alcohol or substance misuse. Mental health problems in individuals is a factor and groups with nefarious intent can use this to exploit vulnerable individuals, the same is the case with people on the autistic spectrum who also have the potential to be exploited and manipulated. Those without a supportive network of people or who have experienced a particular challenge in life they are struggling to overcome are also vulnerable.

- Prevent is around trying to develop a program of work that intervenes in some of these drivers. The Prevent model is about safeguarding people from getting involved in terrorism.
- The Home Office were hoping to involve building resilience in local communities, creating safe online spaces and a strong focus on safe-guarding for those at risk. This could include support through mentoring, helping family etc. This would be through the Channel Panel.
- The newest part of the Prevent programme is the Engagement Programme which is focused on rehabilitating people within the prison system.
- The foundation of the Prevent program is about working with community groups on the ground such as KIKit Pathways and working with parents and schools. Over 1 million frontline workers had been trained as part of the program to understand the safeguarding concerns around radicalisation, helping people to know where to go if they have concerns about people.
- Prevent tackles far right extremism as well. Every area around the country has a duty around Prevent.
- The Channel Program is optional for individuals. There is a mandatory program as well.
- Prevent has been seen as controversial. The Government was trying to increase transparency by publishing regional data and rolling out community engagement programs and to better understand the concerns of local communities.

4.2 During the question and answer session that followed, the following key points were raised:

- The Desistance and Disengagement Program (DDP) was the mandatory part of Prevent which may be used for example when an individual is released from Prison on Probation. On Channel, consent is required, where there is no consent to take part the Police need to manage on a case by case basis.
- Currently the DDP is a pilot program. The review function is currently through the Prevent Oversight Board led by the Home Secretary. Different elements of the Prevent Program have different levels of scrutiny.
- In order to address the sometimes negative narrative in mainstream newspapers and sometimes inaccurate reports both on Prevent issues and in terms of promoting stories with racist currents and undertones, the Home Office was trying to engage with local communities to increase understanding and talk about the Far Right threat more. It was not the Government's role to control the press and there were complex issues around freedom of speech etc. so increasing understanding was seen to be key. The Government also has an integration strategy and an "Anti Muslim-Hatred Working Group" within the MHLG.
- Members of the Committee felt that more needed to be done at Government level to understand the link between Anti-Muslim narratives in the press and the rise of the far right and extreme right.
- Members of the Committee raised concerns they had heard from constituents around Prevent around the duties on and effect on front-line staff. For example "turning frontline staff into border guards". Training staff

around Prevent could create a culture of suspicion. There should be more scrutiny of what the program was doing.

- The model of Prevent was about Safeguarding – individuals are groomed in the same way that they could be around a range of issues. The Home Office was reviewing their training, targeting the designated safeguarding leads and additional training around Channel Panels. There were still mistakes being made such as the Parson's Green bomber.
- The subjects of Channel Panel are considered victims often in the same way that those of other cases of grooming.
- The Police have said there were 3000 individuals who were of special interest in terms of terrorism and 20,000 who were known. Plots were moving from conception to execution very quickly. Therefore it was increasingly important to help vulnerable individuals early.
- When asked "who monitors the success of the program and community groups who were funded?," the Committee were informed that some things were easy to quantitatively prove i.e. how much terrorist propaganda had been taken down. The range of projects funded was diverse. An example of the organisation "London Tigers" was given where feedback forms before and after the workshop to measure a change in opinion were completed. The Home Office had Commissioned Manchester University to look at analysing the success of projects on the ground.

4.3 Gary Conners, Strategic Crime, Enforcement, and Regulation Service Manager, and Martin Gormlie, Prevent Manager, presented to the committee. During the presentation and discussion the following key points were highlighted:

- A number of agencies and communities were involved. The Team had found that the work was usually very well received in the Lewisham community.
- Lewisham was a Tier 2 borough based on a government model of assessment of risk. Lewisham had a Home Office funded Prevent Manager and a Prevent Education Officer. Lewisham also received Home Office funding to help support individual local projects.
- The Home Office Good Practice models currently included a Lewisham Project: Second Wave, who produced a project focused on radicalisation. There was currently a Lewisham project drawn up focusing on the Extreme Right threat and Lewisham was working with LB Bexley and RB Greenwich on that.
- Lewisham had trained around 1000 people on Prevent in the last year and a half. The training package was felt to be good and members of the committee would be able to attend a training.
- As a Prevent borough Lewisham had to have a Prevent Delivery Group. The group met quarterly and was made up of a range of officers including representatives from: Probation, Children's services, Goldsmiths University, SLAM, Counter-Terrorism Police colleagues and different community groups. The current two community groups that sat on the board were Second Wave and the Afghan and Central Asian Association.
- Lewisham also delivered a range of training to different organisations within the borough including GPs, Children's Services practitioners,

teachers, youth groups etc and briefings to colleagues and partners. Lewisham's duty also involved developing a local risk assessment.

- Lewisham engages with a number of community groups through different mechanisms such as the Interfaith Forum.
- The team had done work with schools and libraries around embedding safe IT usage. The team also worked with Councillors and delivered training sessions and made proactive contact after major events.
- There had been two main projects over last few years – a Lewisham Muslim outreach project for women run by the Afghan and Central Asian Association and the Shadow Games Theatre Project run by Second Wave around how someone could be radicalised online.
- The latest Home Office regional Prevent figures had just been published. Committee members would be e-mailed the most recent report.
- Counter-extremism strategies looked at the wider harms of extremism not limited to radicalisation this could include hate crime, community cohesion etc. The role works across Faith Groups and works with the Lewisham Interfaith Forum. This would also include looking at extremist speakers. The role also provided community groups support to bid for Home Office funding.
- **Standing orders were suspended at 9.00pm.**
- Members requested that they be able to see the training offered to frontline staff and for feedback from the sessions on how helpful people found it.
- Members of the committee requested that further information on Lewisham specific Prevent figures be shared. They were informed that the figures for Channel were owned by the Home Office. Abu Ahmed informed the Committee that the Home Office did not publish at sub-regional level as it could be possible to identify individuals or families as the numbers were sometimes so small.
- As a response to this a member of the committee stated that the remit of the Committee review required the information. It would not need to be the specifics of an individual case, ie exact age or schools, but the overall numbers by ethnicity. The Home Office Policy of not disclosing this data potentially opened it up to charges of a lack of scrutiny. If there was a National Review, the Committee member felt strongly that building in a method of regional scrutiny was essential.
- The Committee heard that although the NUT publicly spoke against Prevent Policy, the Prevent Manager's experience in Lewisham was that the training had been well received and people understood the purpose and place of Prevent sitting in the school's safeguarding responsibilities.
- Briefings for LSCB and LSAB were also undertaken. Their evaluation of the Prevent part of their training could be shared with the Committee.
- Any organisation with whom the Council has a contracted relationship had an obligatory Prevent duty.

4.4 The Committee heard from Tayo Disu, Chair of the Lewisham Safer Neighbourhood Board. During her presentation and in the discussion that followed the following key points were raised:

- Tayo Disu, Chaired the Lewisham Safer Neighbourhood Board and currently their Stop and Search Sub-Committee.
- The monitoring group was run by volunteers. It had been a challenge to find people with the community engagement skills as well as the ability to work with partners and the Police.
- There had not been many meetings in the last two years due to challenges getting the engagement.
- The Lewisham SNB Stop and Search group (Community Monitoring Network) had not been attending the pan London Monitoring Network due to challenges maintaining and engaging the local group and attracting people with the right skills and experience and time. It was important that they were able to engage with this group to improve chances of influencing policy at a London-wide level and to share good practice.
- There has been less consistency in the Police dedicated stop and search lead and some challenges getting the data needed in a format that was clear to group members.
- The group had not had the capacity to do the checking of stop and search slips at the Police Station.
- The Council had supported the group analysing data at two of the meetings held recently and they were hoping this this could be continued until the group were able to do this themselves.
- There could be challenges between sharing data.
- Some community members could get very frustrated and angry around this issue.
- The SNB were working with VAL to get volunteers with the skills needed. With the monitoring Board there was a level of confidentiality and people needed to commit to a length of time.
- There was a requirement for the SNB to have a stop and search monitoring sub group.
- Members requested that Tayo provide some information to the Committee on what she felt could be done to support the stop and search sub-group.

RESOLVED:

That the report and evidence be noted and the expert witnesses be thanked for attending.

5. Exclusion of press and Public

Press and Public were note excluded at this meeting.

6. Part 2- The Impact of Prevent and Stop and Search on community relations - Evidence Session (partial)

This meeting did not go into Part 2 session and press and public were not excluded.

7. National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company Update

7.1 Becky Canning, National Probation Service (NPS) and Lucien Spencer, Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) presented their reports to the Committee. During the questions and discussion that followed, the following key points were highlighted:

- The CRC were unable to break down the attendance and attrition data at a local level. They reported across the London and Thames Valley region as per their contractual obligations.
- The CRC was subject to annual inspections and had just had its third inspection in 4 years.
- There was a range of Service level agreements built into the CRC contract and penalties for not meeting certain targets. The CRC were working with supply chains to measure quality of services. For example Safer Street commissioned by MOPAC included alcohol and abstinence monitoring.
- The 2017 HMIP inspection had challenging recommendations, following a request regarding the safeguarding training from a Committee member, the Committee heard that all CRC staff had now had safeguarding training.
- The NPS had access to the Violent and Sexual Offender register. All NPS staff who used it needed Met Police vetting. The NPS's IT had been updated. There was now better information sharing and the Police and Probation Services were better working together.
- Following a question requesting information on what the NPS had undertaken around the HMIP recommendation 4 on improving understanding of rehabilitation activity; the Committee were informed that this had been improved with the new framework and web-based toolkit and the increased use of the accredited programme. There was still more work to be done in this area.
- A question was asked on what action had taken place around HMIP recommendation 2 to the CRC noting that there were no interventions targeted at the BAME Community despite 51% BAME service users. The Committee heard that all managers had undergone training on unconscious bias. The staff employed reflected the local community they served with 70% of staff being from Black or minority ethnic backgrounds. There were currently two non-accredited programmes for women "Thinking Ahead for Women" and the "Heal Programme". Women offenders were managed by women.
- Following a question on the HMIP recommendation 3 to the CRC on unpaid work, the Committee heard that there had been improvements but delivery was complex. Sometimes there was a need to over-subscribe individuals to community groups to ensure that if somebody didn't attend there were enough people to commit to the work agreed for the partner organisations. More work was being undertaken to strategically look at this issue.
- There was an increased focus on workload of staff at the CRC and not just numbers on the caseload to look more holistically at staff's wellbeing.

7.3 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and Becky Canning and Lucien Spencer be thanked for attending.

8. Demographic Change Lewisham

8.1 James Bravin, Policy Manger, gave a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which will be included in the agenda documentation. During the discussion the following key points were highlighted:

- The Lewisham population had increased by 1% in the last year, however the rate of increase has decreased since 2014 due to an increase in internal migration and less International immigration.
- The borough was getting older. The average age had increased from 33.6 to 34.7 since 2013.
- Members of the Committee requested whether it would be possible to get up to date details of the ethnicity via age cohort.
- The Committee heard that the ONS did not publish that data but the GLA did. The methodology for their populations predictions and projections were different but with that caveat it would be possible to provide that data to the Committee.

8.2 RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

9. Select Committee work programme

9.1 Katie Wood presented the report to the Committee and highlighted the items due at the next meeting. During the discussion the following key points were made.

- Tayo Disu should be invited to attend the next meeting should she wish.
- Members of the Committee agreed that the start time of the next two meeting should be amended to 6.30pm due to the number of items on the agenda.
- The Committee requested that in future if there was a section 60, members of the Committee should be informed. This request would be made to the Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People.

9.2 RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

That the next meeting of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee start at 6.30pm.

10. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

There were no referrals to Mayor and Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair:

Date:
